



## EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS OF COLLABORATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA'S MUNICIPALITIES: THE CASE OF THE ACCOUNTING FOR BASIC SERVICES PROJECT

Sindi-Leigh McBride – Isandla Institute

The term good governance is fixed in the vernacular of the international development arena, but is fantastical in reality, as it has no single or exhaustive definition, neither is there a universally accepted delimitation of its scope. As this term is normalised in governance literature, there is the risk of it being accepted as a traditional narrative – a sacred story immune to interrogation. Discussing conventional governance myths on the World Bank's "People, Spaces, Deliberation" blog, research fellow David Booth alleges that 'In some areas of development policy, deep-rooted assumptions are extremely hard to dislodge.



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LIKE SCIENCE-FICTION androids or the many-headed Hydra, these are monsters that can sustain any number of mortal blows and still regenerate. Capable researchers armed with overwhelming evidence are no threat to them' (2015, 26 February). One of the myths he unpacks is the importance of good governance for development, questioning whether certain ideals, such as 'transparency in public affairs, accountability of power-holders to

citizens, ability of citizens to make demands', are necessary conditions for development success. His answer is "clearly not", citing the economic history of human progress as proof that 'governance ideals are realised over time on the back of economic progress, not the other way round' (2015, 26 February). Institutionally speaking, this may well be an expected position from the World Bank, but stands at odds with the practice and principles of Isandla Institute.<sup>1</sup>

Booth's assertion therefore provides an interesting prism through which to reflect on the Accounting for Basic Services Project (the ABS project). In the context of the Good Governance Learning Network's emphasis on accountability and collaboration as key values and activities driving democratic development at the local level of government in South Africa, this reflection also allows for the ABS project to be functionally chronicled so as to contribute to project implementation.

As a disclaimer, the ABS project is only halfway through its two-year implementation cycle and at the time of writing, the author (and researcher tasked with documenting the project) is still on the cusp of fully grasping the intricacies of a project of this nature. Her evidence is not yet overwhelming, neither are her capabilities infallible. That said, the dynamic synchronicity of this social accountability project has proven to be both a challenge and a capacity-building opportunity: much needed collaborative relationships are being built between citizens, civil society and the public sector while at the same time, active citizenship is being motivated through targeted capacity building. The ABS project speaks to the interdependence inherent in the concepts of accountability and collaboration, in that it has a chicken-or-egg type of tension regarding what is more imperative: the *need* to build those relationships (i.e. in response to corruption or poor service delivery as systemic challenges) or the *attempt* to motivate individuals and institutions to collaborate to improve accountability.

This paper is an attempt at reflecting on and learning from the experience of utilising accountability and collaboration in tandem, through the ABS project, in the local governance space. A summary of the context in which this paper is written is provided, namely, the ABS project as a good governance endeavour and experiment at the local

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level. Thereafter, a brief summary of the approach, theoretical foundation and value framework grounding this research is given. This structure allows for a summary of the pertinent details of ABS project activities, followed by emergent findings put forth as preliminary evidence to support the importance of accountability and collaboration for good governance specifically, and development more broadly.

## CONTEXT: SETTING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SCENE AND THE ACCOUNTING FOR BASIC SERVICES PROJECT

The ABS project aims to strengthen community engagement with local government budgeting processes for the purpose of ensuring equitable and effective use of municipal funds.<sup>2</sup> For the project partners, it is a collaborative introduction into social accountability methods, informed by current practice and inspired by the potential for innovation in terms of existing budget transparency initiatives. The project arose out of the realisation that for the vast majority of citizens, public finance is difficult to decipher, and that this is further complicated by intricate intergovernmental power-sharing arrangements between national, provincial and local government. At the same time, the budget is a critical planning and decision-making tool and as such, warrants public scrutiny.

The context in which this project takes place is exigent. In theory, the 287 municipalities comprising South African local government are governed by innovative legislative frameworks. Despite this, two-

thirds of these municipalities are in a state of distress, if not dysfunction (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2014). This manifests in multiple ways: inadequate service provision (Statistics South Africa 2012); service delivery protests becoming entrenched in the socio-political landscape; irresponsible financial reporting and unimpressive audit outcomes (Auditor-General of South Africa 2015); declining fiscal health (Financial and Fiscal Commission 2014); and by government's own admission of the plummeting of public trust in local government (in CoGTA's "Back to Basics" document), as a direct result of poor governance and accountability (Accounting for Basic Services Project Proposal, 2014:18-19.). Under-resourced or ill-equipped municipalities often eschew the legislative frameworks intended to instil institutional norms and values, opting instead for ad hoc governance. Unlike provincial government departments, standardised policy implementation is relatively nascent at the local government level.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, because municipalities are expected to generate revenue to sustain themselves, good governance is often constrained by the pressures of profit-seeking. Without the tools to demystify and navigate the maze-like nature of municipal finance, money flows in the local government space can be quite an indecipherable mishmash. Making sense of what this means for service delivery in poor communities can be even more mind-boggling. For the citizens and people most often affected by local government failures such as service delivery breakdowns, the lived experience of abject poverty and social exclusion is often accompanied by low education levels; this means that in addition to inadequate access to services, or none at all, those most in need of an accountable local government, and best placed to directly hold municipal officials accountable, are curtailed by an inability to engage

in technical governance processes, such as development planning and budgeting. Inadequate communication with communities can be directly traced back to the deficits of existing local level accountability and oversight mechanisms.

Recognising that improved community-level capacity means improved public participation processes – including increased engagement with officials and the possibility of collaboration between communities and municipalities – the project partners designed this project, based on global (and local) practice and evidence. Using social accountability methods, the ABS project aims to build budget literacy and demystify budget information to increase transparency and accountability. This aim means that while the ABS project does respond to service delivery disappointments, it is more than simply a palliative remedy, aiming instead for incrementally progressive development outcomes, rather than quick wins.

The researcher's role in the project has been to lead research into municipal budgets, social accountability and budget expenditure methods, and develop knowledge products, from the 'Training of Trainers' manuals to policy briefs. This has required working with a team of community development practitioners (facilitators), supporting their efforts to identify and access information; as well as designing capacity-building opportunities; engaging with both local and international knowledge professionals from the governance community; and presenting the ABS project at relevant opportunities to encourage the uptake of knowledge created and exchanged. The project also involves keeping track of the ever-growing body of information gathered by investigation and inferred ideas, and distilling collective wisdom from the facilitators. In addition to having eager appetites for new methods, the facilitators are motivated by a strong commitment to capacity

building that is based on both knowledge and experience.

In the context of budget transparency work, this motivation is important because the competencies required are two-pronged: on the one hand, you need a normative understanding of key concepts associated with social accountability methodologies, while on the other, a technical aptitude and sanguine attitude is necessary to work with the big numbers in municipal budgets.<sup>5</sup> Balancing these skill-sets is not always easy and often requires layered and multidirectional collaboration between individuals, community leadership structures, civil society organisations (CSOs) and municipalities. As the ABS project progresses, the work of the facilitators demonstrates in visible ways the relations between all three levels of public accountability: macro, community and individual. While a comprehensive study of the work of the ABS project is beyond the ambit of this paper, applying the dual lens of collaboration and accountability to good governance efforts is not. Applying this dual lens does, however, need a theoretical scaffold able to support the interrelationship of the two concepts and the interdependence inherent in a multi-partner, multi-stakeholder, multi-level project.

## APPROACH: THEORY AND VALUES

### TOWARDS GOOD GOVERNANCE THROUGH SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY METHODS

The ABS project was conceived out of a direct concern for the advancement and progressive realisation of socio-economic rights, as established in the South African Constitution, with a specific focus on the role local government can and ought to play in realising such rights. This collective concern in turn shaped the project design, which seeks to challenge social exclusion – and its root causes,

poverty and inequality – through formal public participation processes. These processes relate to the development of the local governance space, the relations between community, civil society and government actors, as well as the transactions and mechanisms of social accountability taking place between them. Framing this accountability ‘universe’ requires an approach that is able to investigate the relationship between good governance and economic development. In this context, social accountability refers to the array of mechanisms and methods that citizens can engage in to hold government accountable, as well as the actions taken by officials, civil society organisations and other actors to facilitate citizen efforts (World Bank 2006).

According to Camargo, two of the most important recognised challenges to social accountability approaches is the absence of a clear theory of change and inadequate contextualisation to local characteristics and needs (2016). In the ABS project, addressing these challenges means attempting to establish causality between citizen participation and decreased corruption, an often assumed link. With many social accountability initiatives ‘focused on increasing transparency and amplifying voice, without examining the link of these with accountability and ultimately responsiveness’ (Camargo 2016: 15), the ABS project is an attempt to provide empirical evidence of community-specific efforts to improve governance in the delivery of basic services. In turn, it is hypothesised that by holding municipalities

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accountable for improving the quality of the services provided to them, communities will be better placed to participate formally, both politically and economically. The project design is suitably adaptive to respond to the rigorous accountability demands and mutable community collaboration. In sum, with the support of the coordinating partner (Heinrich Böll Foundation) and research partner (Isandla Institute) the community development partners (Afesis-corporan, BESG and Planact) have partnered with community leadership structures to provide training on social accountability and budget expenditure methods.

### THEORY: TOWARDS A SOCIAL JUSTICE OF COMMUNICATION

In terms of theory, the social accountability approach is well suited to applying Jürgen Habermas' theory of 'Social Justice of Communication' (Morris, 2009: 134) to the governance field. This theory is elaborated on in Habermas' deliberative theory of democracy, a school of thought claiming that political decisions should be the product of fair and reasonable discussion and debate among citizens. Deliberation may be thought of as 'necessary precondition for the legitimacy of democratic political decisions' (Bohman and Rehg 2014, August 4). Together with John Rawls, Habermas was an early influence on deliberative democratic theory, claiming that 'fair procedures and clear communication can produce legitimate and consensual decisions by citizens' (Bohman and Rehg 2014, August 4). For this theory of communicative action to be rational however, it

rests on the assumption of equal capacity between deliberating subjects. While Habermas provides a solid theoretical foundation, this assumption is problematic in the context of local governance in South Africa, where citizens are not sufficiently equipped or empowered to contribute to the fair procedures and clear communication necessary for communicative action that leads to collaborative relationships between citizens, civil society and the public sector.

According to the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration, while governance terminology certainly 'enlarges and better illustrates what Governments should be focusing on', the term does not seem to be theoretically consistent (2006: 3). The committee begins its review of the many iterations of the term with reference to the United Nations Development Programme's 1997 policy document, Governance for Sustainable Human Development, which defined governance as: 'The exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences' (Bohman and Rehg 2014, August 4). This definition allows for an interpretation of governance as a process of political communication<sup>6</sup>. This discipline is relatively unexplored terrain in the domain of governance discourse, but like Habermas, the author imagines communication in terms of the realisation of social justice, grounded in a logical order of 'communicative rationality' (Morris 2009:135). This is the idea that, 'one accepts or rejects a speaker's claim to validity on the basis of a 'warranty' implicit in the communicative offer, namely, that reasons can be given that would secure the claim to the satisfaction of speaker and

The people closest to what is being implemented are able to provide rapid and valuable feedback to those implementing the plans when these plans run into challenges, and they are able to assist in finding the necessary steering measures to ensure that implementation moves back on track.

hearer' (Habermas, 1984, in Morris 2009:147). For this process to be valid however, it is critical for both the speaker and the listener to reciprocate mutual understanding (Morris 2009). A fundamental condition for mutual understanding is the freedom to accept or reject claims on validity. For many citizens, this freedom is as much a mirage as the pipe-dreams presented by politicians. The power imbalance inherent in formal public participation processes is precarious. Government officials are free to accept or reject citizens' efforts to engage, but the same cannot be said conversely. This governance gap is potentially mitigated by Habermas' exploration of discourse ethics, which 'at its most elemental requires actual participation' (Morris 2009: 150). According to Bohman, this means 'effective social freedom' to avoid the 'political poverty' of citizens and people since democracy is contingent on 'effective participation in a public process of decision-making' (1997: 334).

Discussing necessary conditions for effective participation, in addition to the uptake or recognition by others, Habermas explores 'the cooperative search for truth' (1990: 91), suggesting that 'one of the goals of deliberation is cooperation itself' (Morris 2009: 151). If governance is thought of as a process of political communication, then deliberation can similarly be conceived of as a process of mutual accountability, and cooperation akin to collaboration. But what if one stakeholder is more amenable than the other? Or the political poverty of one constrains their social freedom to effectively participate? For example, more than one of the ABS project communities reside in informal settlements, and municipalities are often reluctant to engage on basic service delivery issues that threaten to open the Pandora's box of tenure security and land ownership. Or, many of the community members are illiterate, so formal public participation is unlikely because they

cannot read the notices advertising when the next public meeting will be held. These tensions may be described as half-spaces, where, through the 'raising and redeeming of validity claims' (Morris 2009: 151), the gap between communicative action and social bonding may be filled by good governance. Stated more simply by Kaizer Chiefs football coach Steve Khompela, 'that's also the future of the game, how are you able to operate in half spaces' (Sportsclub 2017).

Before discussing the ABS project as a promising play by a micro-network of good governance players, it is important to be alert to the notion that 'context is an important aspect of collaboration' (Hicklin et al. 2008 in Romzek et al. 2011: 20) and that 'network effectiveness is highly responsive to structural, historical and environmental features' (Romzek et al. 2011: 20). Despite the lionisation of South Africa's post-apartheid liberation movement, and the political emancipation that this has achieved, the context of dire economic development, and resultant social exclusion of poor South Africans means that many live like pariahs; it is imperative that this is acknowledged by all stakeholders in the local governance space, given the critical role that a transformed local government sector has in changing this reality<sup>7</sup>. To this end, a discussion of the structural and environmental features of the local landscape should first be theorised in terms of the values that are beneficial for transformation: accountability and collaboration.

#### VALUES: TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION THROUGH ACCOUNTABILITY AND, COLLABORATION

Exploring shared accountability in service delivery, Edwards (2011) unpacks the accountability framework developed by the World Bank (2003), which specifically calls for a strengthening of relationships that allow for the poorest of the poor

to reimagine their experience of governance, through improved service delivery relationships, summarised as follows:

- *citizens* (and clients) influencing policy makers;
- *policy makers* influencing providers; and
- *(service) providers* delivering services to citizens/clients (Commins 2007:1).

Relative to Habermas' communicative action theory, she explains that the 'relationship between citizens and government is where "voice" is heard' (Edwards 2003:8) and cites Rocha Menocal and Sharma when warning that 'there is no evidence that increasing citizens' voice on its own makes public institutions more accountable to citizens' needs' because 'efforts to increase "voice" may not work 'without a parallel effort to build the effectiveness and capacity of state institutions to address growing demands and expectations' (2008, in Edwards 2003:10). By problematizing the World Bank's framework and simultaneously providing the solution, Sharma entrenches the perspective of voice and accountability as a two way relationship: '...voice can strengthen accountability, including by pushing for more transparency, whilst accountability can encourage voice by demonstrating that exercising voice can make a difference' (Sharma, in Edwards 2008: 9).

This conceptual collaboration is similarly engaged with by Romzek et al. when exploring informal accountability dynamics in service delivery networks, where it is recognized that in public management, 'collaboration is based on the value of reciprocity' (O'Leary et al., 2009 in Romzek et al. 2011:5). Collaboration is even suggested as a 'higher form of cooperation because it is dynamic and evolutionary, and because it incorporates: the interdependence of stakeholders, the ability to

address differences constructively, joint ownership of decisions, and collective responsibility' (O'Leary and Bingham 2006, in Romzek et al.: 5). While community engagement is vital for improved service delivery, expecting collective responsibility in the South African local governance space is impractical. This is a half-space, ripe for reimagining: from the hierarchical, bureaucratic, rule-bound system traditionally tasked with service delivery provision to a fundamentally different networked system of interdependent organisations (Romzek et al. 2011: 5). Bryson et al. explain that networks offer the potential for innovation and a diversity of ideas in dealing with society's 'wicked problems,' especially in an environment of 'sector failure' (Bryson et al. 2006, in Romzek et al. 2011: 3).

There are however challenges associated with managing a network. The challenges include, among others: goal dissonance; incompatible organisational cultures; and instability (Romzek et al. 2011: 3), and they are not to be taken lightly, even if only because they 'challenge managers to find new ways to elicit the behaviours and responses considered necessary for successful integrated service delivery to citizens' (Romzek et al. 2011: 3).

The following section provides an overview of project activities, highlighting moments in the project where challenges were mitigated by informal accountability between the collaborating project partners. Informal accountability is understood as norms and facilitative behaviours, 'governing mechanisms likely to influence collaboration effectiveness' (Bryson et al. 2006: 49). These norms and behaviours include, but are not limited to activities such as 'informal information sharing, trouble-shooting and targeted communication' (Mandell and Keaston, 2007 in Romzek et al.: 6).

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

### PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The first half of the project has been surprisingly successful. In the six communities that the ABS project partners have been working in<sup>8</sup>, community leadership structures were either identified or grew out of the project partners community development work. Priority issues to be addressed through the municipal budget were determined in consultation with the aforementioned and skills development workshops facilitated in a way that has proven to be instrumental in sensitising the participating community members to the lay of the local government land, and giving them tools to build better lives. The core tool is of course budget analysis, given the project's focus on budget transparency. The first ABS project output successfully communicated to the six municipalities was a set of submissions into the respective municipal budgets. The response has been positive, with communities being invited by municipal leadership to promising opportunities for collaboration. We are now about to begin the first leg of the second year, focusing on budget expenditure monitoring.

This success is a surprise because municipal budgets are as much a policy document as their planning partners, Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), and like all policy development work, social accountability efforts are quite a nebular strand of work, prone to being influenced by the temperature of many things. External constraints delayed, but did not deter, the efforts of the project partners. The project inception coincided with the 2016 local government elections, a dangerous time in South Africa, with assassinations of politicians and protests leading to the decimation of municipal property. Facilitators were forced to pull back from their community mapping

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activities because of threats to both their physical safety and the integrity of project implementation. These events meant that we were forced to be alert and ready to spring into action, always a good modality for applied research methods.

Social accountability methods have been spearheaded by organisations like the Social Justice Coalition and Equal Education, but these have been limited to provincial, single-issue advocacy campaigns, with intense analytical support from the International Budget Partnership. This situation means that while there is certainly a localised precedent for budget transparency efforts, there is no history of a nationwide effort to deepen the practice. After surveying existing literature, developing a repository of knowledge products, like training manuals, *and* getting help from the international experts, it became clear that paying close attention to the people on the ground is the only sure-fire route to responsive service delivery. This strategy is particularly important if, as a development practitioner, you are unsure of how to provide the services required for development, or worse, you have no idea of what is needed in the first place.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Below is a ten-point learning plan, drawn from lessons of the ABS project to date, to mentally prepare for the normative understanding, technical aptitude, and optimistic attitude necessary for social accountability activities, including, but not limited to, budget analysis and advocacy.

1. When faced with an overwhelming assault of information, records management can save the day. The facilitators had a wealth of information from the community mapping processes, in need of capturing in a way that identified the heart of the communities' concerns, as well as threats and opportunities for municipal engagement. A situational analysis template, developed from a combination of information in the project proposal and a review of the ABS partners' existing community mapping exercises, proved useful. Detailed note-taking simultaneously keeps track of developments and holds people accountable.
2. Accessing information is the bane of this business. When preparing to analyse the contents of their respective municipalities' budgets, facilitators often found that the municipal website had an outdated version online, and would struggle to obtain the most recent version from municipal officials. For tips on accessing municipal finance information, check out the Local Government Guide to Budget Analysis and Advocacy.<sup>9</sup>
3. Holding politicians, policymakers and administrative staff equally accountable is imperative. Political actors are often resistant to engaging unless it benefits them, and this means that their supporting administrators often act as gatekeepers, not only withholding information, but also access to individuals in positions of policymaking power. Find the professionals motivated by a shared desire to contribute to development, befriend and collaborate.
4. Expertise takes time. Demystifying municipal finance is not easy, and needs patience, but it is possible, once the fear of big numbers is overcome. Besides, everything is relative; economists are as scared of big words as politicians are of engineering textbooks.
5. Coordination is key. Public policy essentially deals with the questions of "who gets what?" and "who benefits?" The context of budget transparency and improving good governance through accountability and collaboration demands comprehensive management, as the "devil is in the details". When developing budget submissions and advocacy campaigns, we soon realised the importance of having a handle on easily-overlooked details that can make or break concerted community efforts to formally engage government. For instance, confirming that the online versions of municipal calendars are up to date can determine whether community members get to present their research and recommendations at the appropriate fora; having technically sound referencing similarly determines whether municipal officials trust the reliability of the number-crunching behind the analysis in a budget submission.
6. Responsive development requires flexibility. The budget submission templates developed went through multiple iterations, and still did not meet everyone's preferences, which meant targeted back and forth communication, until troubleshooting resulted in satisfaction that everyone had something, tailored to their own needs, which worked.
7. Structured dialogue facilitates strategic deliberation. The ABS project has an Advisory Group that crowd-sources insights from identified experts to improve project uptake. Similarly, there is an internal Facilitator's Forum, intended to be a space to process and crowd-source lessons from each other, culminating in a reflection session twice a year to touch base more substantively. These forum and events are important for making sure that individually, we hold ourselves accountable by making sure our activities achieve their intended impact.

8. Sharpen your tools. The ABS project initially highlighted the need for improved gender awareness which has proven to be a critical governance gap, and we are responding to it by developing a Guide to Gender Responsive Budgeting. Similarly, the ABS project seeks to improve public participation, which can take more than one shape or form. We are developing policy briefs to feed recommendations directly to policymakers.
9. Prepare for informality. Casual exchanges often prove to be the richest, whether coming from a ward councillor or a contracted consultant sharing information on the latest developments.
10. Plan for incremental innovation. Policy development is inherently experimental, and is a course of action tentatively adopted without being sure of the eventual outcome. Similarly, budget transparency work requires dual competencies, and comparative computing of the two opens up a world of opportunity for good governance experiments.<sup>10</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Preliminary learning outcomes from reflecting on the ABS project practices suggest 'informal norms

and inter-organizational dynamics can lead to the development of reciprocal relations and a sense of partner accountability' (Romzek et al. 2011:6) while simultaneously reducing implementation uncertainties. Additionally, the observation that 'repeated interactions among network members in recognition of their interdependence in pursuit of their shared goal(s) (Romzek et al. 2011: 6) can lead to a shared perspective is very encouraging. This belief implies that shared professional accountability can become shared orientation, and that 'accountability to one's fellow professional is strong enough, in some cases, to supersede dynamics and incentives associated with bureaucratic, political or legal accountability' (Romzek et al. 2011: 6).

The ABS project team has been sufficiently, and unsurprisingly, successful at working towards both accountability and collaboration in a way that transfers power to citizens and people, enabling them to make demands that lead to improved openness and answerability in the local government space. In this instance, the ABS project demonstrates, in visible ways, that the values of accountability and collaboration, as examples of good governance ideals realised over time, lead to economic progress, not the other way around.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

### 1. Project objectives

Overall objective: A transparent, accountable and responsive local government has improved the state's capacity to provide basic services to marginalised communities in informal settlements, townships and rural areas, hence advancing the realisation of socio-economic rights for the majority of South Africa's population.

Specific objective: Marginalised communities in informal settlements, townships and rural areas have engaged with, and held to account local government stakeholders (including municipality, CoGTA, treasury etc.) for the improved utilisation of state resources as well as the provision of basic services

### 2. Community, municipality and priority issues

Facilitating project partner:	Planact
Community:	Masakhane
Municipality:	Emalaheni Local Municipality (Mpumalanga)
Issue:	Lack of basic services (water and sanitation)
Facilitating project partner:	Planact
Community:	Kwazenzele
Municipality:	Lesedi Local Municipality (Gauteng)
Issue:	Housing shortage, lack of basic services
Facilitating project partner:	Built Environment Support Group
Community:	Mpolweni
Municipality:	Umshwati Local Municipality (Kwa-Zulu Natal)
Issue:	Housing shortage, lack of basic services (water and sanitation)
Facilitating project partner:	Built Environment Support Group
Community:	KwaNxamalala
Municipality:	Msunduzi Local Municipality (Kwa-Zulu Natal)
Issue:	Youth unemployment, poverty and lack of basic services
Facilitating project partner:	Afesis-corplan
Community:	Glenmore
Municipality:	Nqushwa Local Municipality (Eastern Cape)
Issue:	Rectification of a poorly constructed sports and recreation facility
Facilitating project partner:	Afesis-corplan
Community:	Chris Hani
Municipality:	Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (Eastern Cape)
Issue:	Housing shortage, poor construction of existing houses and lack of basic services (water and sanitation)

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### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Isandla translates as 'hands' and the notion of hands supporting one another informs the organisation's approach to development.
- <sup>2</sup> The Accounting for Basic Services project is funded by the European Union and jointly implemented by Afesis-corporation, the Built Environment Support Group (BESG), the Heinrich Boll Foundation (HBF), Isandla Institute and Planact between May 2016 and June 2018.
- <sup>3</sup> Key legislation relevant to local government in South Africa include the Constitution; the Municipal Systems Act; the Municipal Structures Act; and the Municipal Financial Management Act (MFMA). Importantly, the National Development Plan (2011) emphasizes that for South Africa to meet its transformation agenda, functional municipalities and capable machinery at a local level are needed to create safe, healthy and economically sustainable areas where citizens and people can work, live and socialise.
- <sup>4</sup> For instance, it was only in 2016 that the National Treasury introduced the municipal Standard Chart of Accounts (mSCOA) as part of its ongoing budget and reporting reforms geared at aiming financial reporting. mSCOA aims to achieve the consistent application of the municipal 'accountability cycle' from planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and reporting and ultimately improved service delivery. According to a National Treasury statement at the time: "With effect from 1 July 2017, all municipalities will have to capture all their financial transactions against a predefined classification framework, which will result in uniformity of line items in terms of revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities." It is unclear how many municipalities have adopted this in the year since it was introduced.
- <sup>5</sup> A note of thanks to the International Budget Partnership (IBP) for partnering with the ABS project team and providing a five day foundation-skills training on local government budget analysis.
- <sup>6</sup> 'Political communication is an interactive process concerning the transmission of information among politicians, the news media and the public. The process operates down-wards from governing institutions towards citizens, horizontally in linkages among political actors, and also upwards from public opinion towards authorities.' (Norris 2004:1)
- <sup>7</sup> It is also important to keep in mind that non-citizen residents of South Africa living in poverty are severely socially excluded, and suffering as a result.
- <sup>8</sup> See text box
- <sup>9</sup> This guide was developed by the IBP, based on the training support provided to the Social Justice Coalition and ABS project, with financial support for publication provided by the ABS project.
- <sup>10</sup> The Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Budget Vote Speech 2017/18 included mention of "ward-based service delivery dashboards." Surely we can motivate "citizen-driven service delivery vehicles" to respond to those dashboards. For example, the Sakhingomso Youth Organisation based at kwaNxamalala community in Ward 3 Msunduzi Municipality is interested in forming a co-operative for refuse removal, having identified that this service isn't adequately provided, in a community plagued by high youth unemployment.