

Social Justice in Planning
A Case Study of The eThekweni Municipality IDP

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1. Introduction

The requirement for local government to produce contextualised Integrated Development Plans is legislated in South Africa. One of the most important components expected in any development plans such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is social justice. The complexity of defining social justice is challenging and requires an open mind to issues such as inequality, empowerment and participation of all relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries of development. According to Odendaal (2007), integrated development planning represents an opportunity to forge a stronger relationship between planning and implementation, something, some would argue, that planners have generally been weak at achieving in the past. This paper therefore, outlines social justice indicators as one of the ways in which social justice can be incorporated through integrated development planning.

2. The Background and Geographical Context of the eThekweni Municipality

The eThekweni Municipal Area (EMA) is located on the eastern seaboard of South Africa within the province of KwaZulu-Natal and covers an area of 2 297 square kilometres. While the total area of the eThekweni Municipality Area is only 1, 4% of the total area of the province, it contains just over a third of the population of KwaZulu-Natal and 60% of its economic activity (eThekweni Municipality IDP, 2003-2007). Furthermore, the newly demarcated boundary for the eThekweni Municipality Area increased the boundary of the previous Durban Metropolitan Area by 68% whilst increasing the population by 9%. The eThekweni Municipality Area has a wide diversity of land uses. Only 35% of the EMA area is predominantly urban in character, with over 80% of the population living in this area. The majority of the densely populated informal housing is also located within this area. Fig. 1 below shows the geographical location of eThekweni Municipality in terms of regional, local context as well as in terms of District/ Metro Municipal Areas (eThekweni Municipality IDP, 2003 – 2007).



Figure 1: District/Metro Municipal Areas of KwaZulu-Natal
Source: Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2006

3. Conceptualisation of Social Justice in the eThekweni Municipality IDP

The conceptualisation of social justice is critical to its effective incorporation in the integrated development planning process. There is however no universal definition of what social justice is and as Miller (1992 cited in Visser, 2000) states developments in political science and sociology suggest that social justice discourses can, and in fact should, be influenced and reworked by considering how the decision-makers and communities they represent interpret social justice. Furthermore, the studies related to the definition of social justice, suggest that both the findings and theoretical concerns are currently omitted from the literature of geographical theorisation of social justice, and the understandings in various empirical settings are vastly more diverse and more widely located in geographical and historical contexts, than current debates suggest.

The researcher adopts Adams et al (1997)'s holistic definition, which is seen as a foundation for choosing the topic. Social justice includes a vision of the society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and where all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. In the latter society, individuals are both self determining (able to develop their full capacities), and interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with others). Furthermore, social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole.

The process for attaining the goal of social justice should be democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change (Adams et al, 2007). The researcher does not believe that domination can be ended through coercive tactics and agrees with Kreisberg (1992, cited in Adams et al, 1996) in a "power with" versus "power over" paradigm for enacting social justice goals. Furthermore, developing a social justice process in a society steeped in oppression is no simple feat.

It can be argued that moving towards a thicker conceptualisation of social justice implies recognition of geographical and historical contexts in which development is to take place. Moreover, if there are essential human needs to be satisfied anywhere and at any time, the extent of the shortfall and the specific goods and services required to meet this will depend on the here and now of actual human experience. For instance, the relevance of such categories as ethnicity, gender and race will also depend on the context, including the historical legacy of specific forms of discrimination and the grounds on which political mobilisation and struggle are most effective. In relation to the question of the best possible institutional arrangements to achieve distributive justice, these will depend on the capacity to change the existing structure of a society, and on the broader (international) context within which it functions.

The research data collected at eThekweni municipality revealed that 70% of Planners believe that social justice means different things to different people; their understanding of what social justice is in general was thought to be about redressing past imbalances and ensuring social equity in terms of race, gender and geographical location. 30% of the interviewees believed that social justice is about individuals being treated as citizens and about everybody making a contribution, even if it is R20 per annum.

4. Areas of Contestation in the eThekweni Municipality

In the eThekweni Municipality, there are areas of contestation where local residents do not see the need to contribute even a cent towards their development as they believe that the government owe them a lot because of the injustice that apartheid created.

The ward committee members interviewed stated that it was difficult for them to participate meaningfully in the IDP preparation process as it depended on the dynamics of party politics as people's inputs were limited which created challenges. One of the challenges they stated was the political atmosphere, for instance when they referred to "public" they might refer to "Political Party X", hence the ward councillor will not appoint people from "Political Party Y" and the whole process became a lip service.

It was therefore deduced that the lack of a meaningful participation of ward committee members who are supposed to be the representatives of women, youth, the poor, people who are living with HIV and elderly citizens in the integrated development planning process hindered the meaningful incorporation of social justice as the nature of marginalisation excluded people's voices during the preparation stage of the IDP.

This paper therefore, propose, social justice indicators developed by the researcher which planners can use in the assessment of holistic inclusiveness of all relevant stakeholders for local municipalities. The social justice indicators are outlined in Table 1 below. Although there are a number of key focus areas that the social justice indicators outline, the paper focus particularly on the Representation indicator.

5. Social Justice Indicators

Social justice indicators aim to assist municipalities who are faced with integration from a spatial, economic and social integration perspective ensure that all relevant stakeholders (people living with disability, the youth, women, people living with HIV and AIDS as well as the elderly) are able to contribute meaningfully to the Integrated Development Plan preparation process. In South Africa representation is seen as something that ensures inclusiveness and democracy, hence does justice to its citizens. The research aimed to explore whether indeed that is true from the citizens and planners of eThekweni Municipality. The findings were as follows:

Representation in Stakeholder Forums

The representation indicator assessed whether there was adequate representation of all stakeholder groups and whether they reflected the range of different interests and concerns of all stakeholders. It further attempted to establish if participatory structures were set up in ways that allowed partnerships to develop over time.

| Integrated Development Planning Process | Stakeholders | | | | |
|---|--|----------|--|--|---|
| | Capacity (ability) | Building | Representation (who attends?) | Resource Access (availability of resources) | Safety and Security (what safety measures are put in place?) |
| Preparation | The ability of all relevant stakeholders to contribute meaningfully to the IDP preparation process. | | Is there adequate representation of all stakeholder groups and do they reflect the range of different interests and concerns? Are participatory structures set up in ways that allow partnerships to develop over time? | Has a specific budget been allocated to deal with the analysis that will be required? | Are venues that are going to be used safe and secure for all interest groups to access and participate freely? |
| Analysis of Stakeholder Engagement | Have all the appropriate tools been used to analyse the situation and engage the communities and all stakeholders in the process? | | Have all the planning profession and stakeholder representatives been invited? | Are stakeholder analysis mechanisms put in place for engagement? | Is the venue used for the analysis accessible to all involved? |
| Visioning and Strategy | Have all decisions taken, ensured that all voices of the 'previously marginalised groups' are part of the vision and strategies developed? | | Have all the Municipal Strategic Planning Units ensured that the visions and strategies are developed in the presence of the community and all other relevant representatives? | Are all stakeholders familiar with the mechanisms used to formulate the visions and strategies of respective municipalities? | Is the venue used for visioning and development of strategies accessible to all stakeholders? Is the venue safe and secure for all stakeholders? |

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|---|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Project formulation</p> | <p>Are planners and relevant stakeholders conscious about prioritising issues?</p> <p>Are issues of inter - governmental relations considered?</p> | <p>Affected local municipalities, business people, interests groups (environment and social).</p> | <p>Budget informed by priority issues in place.</p> <p>Project solutions include existing human capital found in local municipalities. For instance, people living with HIV/AIDS are able to secure employment on initiatives within their localities without prejudice.</p> | <p>Identified and prioritised projects must be forwarded to the affected stakeholders for approval.</p> <p>The venues used must be safe for everyone to engage freely.</p> |
| <p>Evaluation and Monitoring</p> | <p>Municipalities have indicators (qualitative and quantitative) for capacity building put in place?</p> <p>Have these been developed in consultation with all relevant stakeholders?</p> | <p>Are all relevant stakeholders aware and familiar with the evaluation and monitoring mechanisms used by their respective municipalities?</p> | <p>Have policy documents that speak to prioritised issues been produced?</p> | <p>Are all relevant stakeholders able to view and comment on such policies? For instance, if a draft IDP document has been produced, are local people able to read and give feedback in an environment that is safe and non-intimidative?</p> |

Source: Researcher (2010)

7. Findings from My Research

(a) Municipality

One of the Senior Planners in the Strategic Planning Unit of eThekweni Municipality highlighted that the planning process has consciously ensured that groups who have been historically disadvantaged are consulted and their concerns are included in the Integrated Development Plan. Ten people per ward usually attended the stakeholder forums; they were representatives from mainly political parties but also from civil society organisations. Furthermore, the *Amakhosi* workshops which are similar to the stakeholder forums were held so as to ensure that rural justice was achieved. For instance, faith based, non governmental organisations and disabled people were heard in the City Hall in August 2009. The informant believed that this was an indication that the municipality tried to reach out to the most vulnerable groups as a conscious effort had been made. The eThekweni Municipality named this engagement with its citizens, Key Development Dialogues. Fig 6 illustrates this approach.



Fig 6: EThekweni Municipality's Key Development Dialogues
Source: Draft IDP 2011 - 2016

It was acknowledged by the officials of eThekweni Municipality who were interviewed that the municipality recognised the importance of fair representation of all stakeholders. The structures were set up; however, it was not clear whether they allowed for meaningful and penetrating participation. The latter is supported by one of the respondents' responses from eThekweni Municipality which said:

IDPs are mere legal requirements, please don't quote me on this as it is off record, everything about the Integrated Development Plans is bullshit. The respondent further highlighted that initiatives like Imagine Durban¹ are far more effective than the IDP. Municipalities are still faced with challenges regarding a clear understanding of conceptualisation of social justice, let alone its incorporation in the planning process.

(b) Participation in Ward Committees

All four ward committee members interviewed, including the ward councillor who was the chair of the ward committee in Lamontvilleⁱⁱ expressed dissatisfaction with their representation in the preparation phase of Integrated Development Plans. This was due to a number of contributing factors such as the inability to constitute a required number which is ten members for them to be recognised as a committee. Two ward committee members stated that the lack of knowledge on what they were supposed to table and discuss in meetings was another contributing factor. Another two commented that meetings with ordinary residents were rarely called by the councillors.

It was established by the researcher from the field survey that the representation and participatory structures that allowed partnerships amongst all stakeholders were questionable. The fact that a ward councillor did not call meetings or avail himself during ward committee meetings made the whole process flawed. The latter is supported by Smith and Visser (2009) when they states that ward committees had been involved to a limited extent in the eThekweni Municipality's IDP consultation process they had only attended a meeting at a City Hall where by-laws were discussed. 80 % of ward committee members interviewed made mention of the challenge of taking back information to their constituencies. One informant stated the following:

“My presence in stakeholder meetings is one thing but taking it away to constituencies is another”

(c) Participation in IDP Forums by Ordinary Residents

Ordinary residents randomly interviewed in Chesterville and Lamontville noted that they do not normally attend IDP meetings as they did not even know what they are about but their councillor normally calls for community meetings, informing and updating them on future developments and proposed plans. Mainly meetings had been about informing residents about housing provision and possible employment opportunities for the youth.

Overall ordinary residents were very proud of their councillors and at a certain level trusted them to represent them in order to forward their issues. However, it was clear that people did not fully inform the agenda of future proposed initiatives due to the fact that they are normally informed what the councillors think they need or want, rather than asked.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

It will be a mistake not to recommend that planners need to stop conforming to the legacy that apartheid has left within the South African cities, peri urban and rural areas. During the apartheid, in order for planners to be able to plan as Scott-Brown, (1964:165 cited in Harrison et al 2008) put it, their dilemma was that they had to say less than they knew and plan less then they could. This paper therefore recommends that planners responsible for producing the IDPs must say more and work together with the most marginalised groups in society in order to improve their quality of life at an individual, institutional and societal/cultural level.

The correct implementation of social justice will be influenced by the planners' understanding and conceptualisation of social justice. Visser (2001) suggest that, if geographers or urban planners engaged in the development of an empirically based understanding of social justice, very different social justice frameworks would be

suggested as guidelines to planning practice, since what ordinary citizens deem to be socially just, challenges the post-structuralist/structuralist debates in geographical social justice discourse. Furthermore, the recent development in political science and sociology suggest that social justice discourses can, and in fact should be influenced and reworked by considering how decision-makers and communities they represent interpret social justice (Miller, 1992).

Endnote

ⁱ **Imagine Durban** is about realizing that the choices we make today will affect our children and grandchildren tomorrow. So if we are committed to handing down a safe, healthy and prosperous world to future generations, we need to make the right decisions today. Of course the best way to make the right choice is to make an informed choice, and this is where the ideas and the knowledge of the people of Durban come in. Available ONLINE at: <http://www.imaginedurban.org/index.php/Imagine-Durban-Imagining-tomorrow-today.html> (11/07/10)

ⁱⁱ Lamontville was established in 1934 and named after Rev Lamont, Mayor of Durban from 1929 to 1932. It is the oldest African township in Durban and was intended to contain and co-opt the African middle class. Available ONLINE at: <http://www.durbanhistory.co.za> (09/07/12)

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