

EXPLORING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AS A TOOL FOR PRO-POOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

by

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Thesis

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UFS

Research Declaration

I, Bongokuhle Saselihle Khumalo, declare that the research titled "**EXPLORING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AS A TOOL FOR PRO-POOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**", is my original work carried out under the supervision of Prof Lochner Marais, in the Department of Economics and Management Sciences. This research is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Development Studies at the University of the Free State. I have not submitted the same work at another institution of higher learning.

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Conclusion

I acknowledge that any breach of the declarations may result in rejecting my research or other appropriate actions deemed necessary by the academic authorities.

Date: 30 November 2024

Signature



Bongokuhle Saselihle Khumalo

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I would like to thank my ancestors and family for strength of being the first in the entire generation to make it this far. This journey has been full of support from my family especially my mom. I would like to appreciate my kinds Yenziwe, Bohlokoa and Lwandle for being the push that I needed to succeed.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to my Mom. I want to thank her for always believing in me and supporting my biggest dream. Thank you for always working ten times harder to make sure I reach my goals. God bless you ma with more years to live so you can finally see me in the RED gown. This research is my promise to you and the entire generation that lived before us. I am changing the narrative for the future.

Love . Strength . Light

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List of Acronyms

ABCD	Asset Based Community Development
ANC	African National Congress
BDS	Business Development Services
CBD	Central Business District
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CBPR	Community-Based Participatory Research
CDSP	Co-operatives Development Support Programme
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DESTEA	Department of Economics, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs
DPME	Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation
EBB	Energy Bounce Back Loan Guarantee Scheme
HDI	Human Development Index
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LED	Local Economic Development
MAP-SEZ	Maluti-a-Phofung Special Economic Zone
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBIs	Municipal-Based Initiatives
NDP	National Development Plan
NDP	Nodal Development Plan
NDP-2030	National Development Plan 2030
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPC	National Planning Commission
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Program
SAHO	South African History Online

SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SMMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SONA	State of National address
UFS	University of the Free State
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Definitions of Key Concepts

Community Development: A process that involves people to take action on important decisions and initiatives that impact their lives, development is for the people by the people through empowerment, collective action and working and learning together (Master, 2022)

Pro-Poor Development: A development approach that targets and directly involve the poorest and most marginalised members of society, aiming to reduce poverty and inequality (de Renzio, 2023).

Sustainable Development: a permanent process of moving towards a mature nation. Emphasising economic growth, preserving ecosystems and needs for the future (Aher, 2022).

Participatory Development: an approach that involves stakeholders in important decisions making processes, planning, and implementing interventions that impact their lives (Makhetho, 2020).

Capacity Building: empowering individuals and communities to learn and use their strengths. It involves helping people achieve their objectives, develop skills, manage challenges and contribute to organisational growth effectively (York,2024).

Livelihoods: The capabilities, assets and activities required for living, coping and recovering from unexpected events (Manion, 2015)

Empowerment: The process of enabling low power individual and communities providing resources, tools and a good environment to develop increase effectiveness so that they can achieve their goals and maximum potential (Haddad & Toney-Butler, 2023)

Inclusive Development: The equal distribution of social and economic benefits across social factors including the marginalised and vulnerable groups, this may be related to gender, sex, age, race, ethnicity, political orientation and other related factors. (Van Westen & Zoomers, 2017)

Bottom-up Approach: An approach to development that starts at the local level, with the active involvement of communities in identifying their needs and priorities and gradually moves upward to inform higher-level policies and interventions (Medugorac & Schuitema, 2022).

Abstract

The community of Maluti-a-Phofung faces local economic underdevelopment. Research shows that the apartheid government invested in supporting industrialisation, with 293 operational factories under the municipality that employed close to 30,000 workers (Marais, 2023). However, the new democracy led Maluti-a-Phofung to its downfall economically as most of those industries shut down completely, leaving thousands of poor, unemployed, and marginalised and lacking access to basic services. This collapse was due to poor financial management, corruption allegations, and incompetence that prevented the area from economic progress (Payne, 2017). In Maluti-a-Phofung, approximately 82% of the population still lives on less than \$2 per day and being employed does not guarantee that they will be able to move out of poverty. Under-consumption, insufficient investments, and a persistent lack of decent job opportunities undermine the basic social compact, which mandates that all people must contribute to progress and is the cornerstone of democratic countries (ILO, n.d). It is predicted that by 2030, approximately 2 billion young people globally will be unprepared for the workforce if no immediate investment is made in education and skill development (UNICEF Data, 2023). Maluti-a-Phofung is not an exception, as youth unemployment (18- 35) stands at 53% (StatisticSA, 2011). The study explored the effectiveness of community development and pro-poor LED initiatives in reducing poverty, economic underdevelopment, and social inclusion. The study employed a comparative analysis to compare different community development and LED initiatives in South Africa relevant to Maluti-a-Phofung to understand how they operate and achieve their objectives. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 encourages full and productive employment, equitable, sustainable growth, and decent work for everyone and will also be used as a major to address issues stated in the study (Sorooshian, 2024). Findings revealed that: Community members lack knowledge about LED projects, they do not participate in LED decision-making processes and face unequal access to resource. Furthermore, they struggle with poor service delivery, hindering small business growth and development. The are power dynamics and stakeholder relations that influence and impact LED. However, the municipality involves the community through the Integrated Development Plan. Also, non-profit organisations initiate and advocate for communities to lead LED initiatives. Finally, these organisations facilitate collaboration among stakeholders to manage and implement LED opportunities for community members, Proposals: The proposes actionable recommendations to LED practitioners, policymakers, and funding institutions to conduct workshops and awareness campaigns to educate the community on the opportunities

and benefits of LED projects. It also proposes: provision of access to funding, mentorship, and capacity-building programs that will economically empower the community; establishing centres where community members can access information, guidance, and networking opportunities to support entrepreneurship and small businesses, empowering marginalised populations through skill development training, resource access, and education, through crafting poverty reduction strategies and promoting community ownership, social cohesion, and collective action with grass-roots organisations to foster community development and economic empowerment.

Key Concepts

Community Development; Pro-Poor Development; Sustainable Development; Participatory Development; Capacity Building; Social Capital; Livelihoods; Empowerment; Inclusive Development; Bottom-up Approach.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

Decent work and economic growth are not just a global goal that aims to promote inclusive and sustainable economic development. But also aim to create employment through increase in labour productivity, reduce formal employment and increase employment opportunities especially for young people between the ages of 18 to 35 (Martin, 2023). South Africa despite having abundant mineral resources, continues to face severe socio-economic challenges that hinder sustainable growth and development (Eliot et al., 2020). The challenges include high levels of unemployment among women and youth (Oduaran & Cheng, 2022), persisting poverty (Chaskalson et al., 2016), social inequalities that affect the quality of life for many South Africans, particularly the marginalised communities (United Nations South Africa Common Country Analysis, 2019). According to section 9 of the South African Constitution all citizens reserve the right equal employment opportunities eliminating unfair discrimination and access barriers to decent work opportunities (Leodolf, 2024). Therefore, many initiatives and efforts have been launched to address these issues including community development and pro poor LED, however their effectiveness in reducing poverty remains unclear as poverty remains a persistent problem in South Africa. This research seeks to explore the potential of community development in addressing economic under development and social exclusion.

Community development can create economically resilient communities (Demelin, 2023). The focus of this strategy is on how marginalised population can experience inclusion, empowerment, social justice, self-reliance, human rights, and collective action leading to increased community capital (Kenny & Connors, 2016). By fostering community resilience, empowerment, and collective action, community development can facilitate pro-poor LED initiatives in South Africa, leading to greater social justice and improved quality of life for marginalized populations (Chaskalson et al., 2016). Pro-poor LED focuses on poverty alleviation within local communities by creating economic opportunities that prioritize marginalised population through development policies and initiatives (Ndlovu, 2021). Community development can provide a supportive environment for pro poor LED strategies as it involves mobilization of local resources to address specific challenges (Chaskalson, 2016). The research investigates the challenges that hinder society from meeting its basic needs and how they can establish an environment that allows citizens to enhance and maintain a quality livelihood by reaching their full potential (Porter & Stern, 2015).

1.2 Research environment

Maluti-a-Phofung is a remote mountainous combination of rural and urban areas located in the south-western corner of the Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality in the Free State Province of South Africa. It is bordered by Lesotho, Golden Gate Highlands National Park and the KwaZulu-Natal Province (van Biljon, 2023). Because of the mountainous nature of the area, service delivery in Maluti-a-Phofung is sometimes compromised, the roads have potholes, the infrastructure is dilapidated, basic services like water, electricity and sewage affect economic progress Eisinger, 201. Even so, the area is gorgeous natural surroundings with a deep, touching cultural variety which includes: BaSotho, Zulus, EmaSwati, BaVenda, Indian and other tribes from Africa. Maluti-a-Phofung literally means bringing nations together, the people here are known for their welcoming friendliness and warm smiles (SAHO, 2023). This area was known for its educational excellence, attracting people from both across the country and internationally to pursue their studies. Additionally, the presence of numerous factories led many to migrate in search of employment opportunities (Mocwagae & Nel, 2023).

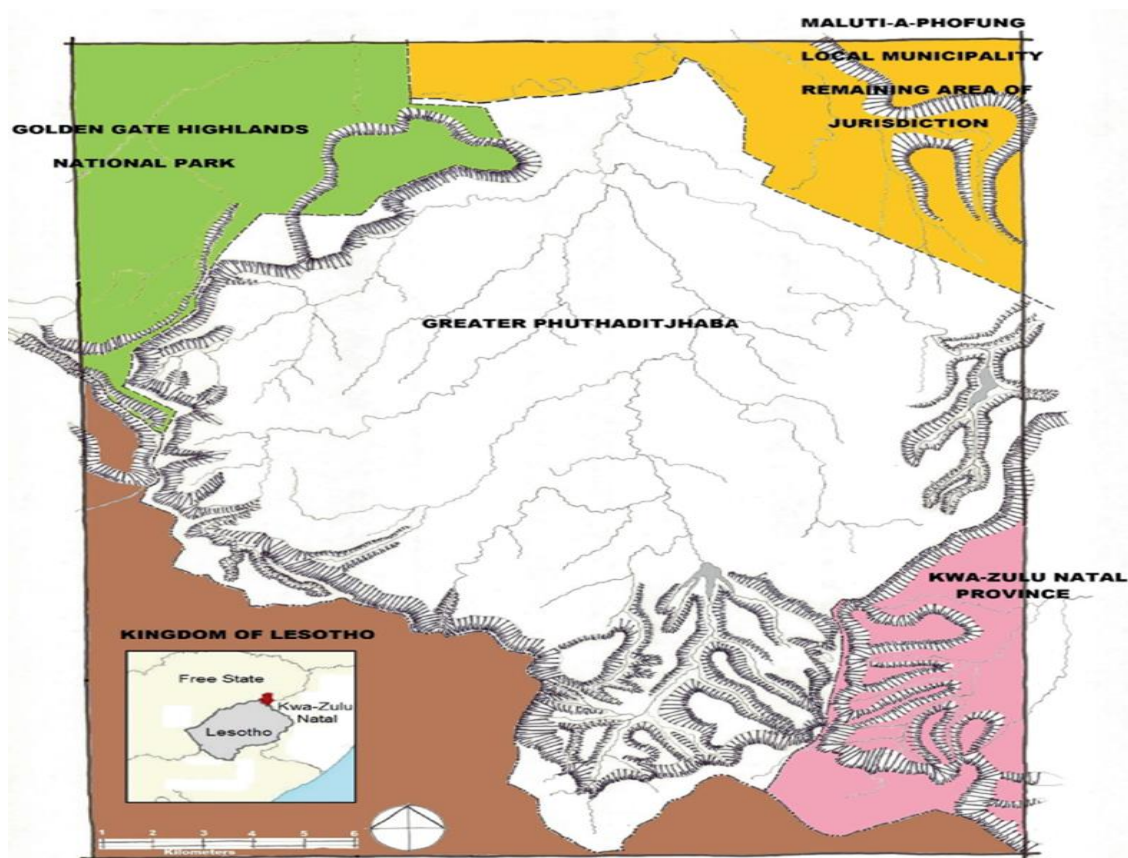


Figure 1: Map of Maluti-a-Phofung

Source: Van Biljon (2023)

My research interest was sparked by the observation of Maluti-a-Phofung's mix of challenges and potential. I stayed in the area for 7 years and experienced persistent issues that hinder economic progress including unreliable water and electricity, which severely impact small businesses that are unable to bear costs like rent and running a generator during power cuts. Therefore, are forced to close during outages, unlike larger firms, which manage to afford generators to run their daily business. Small business fails to incur the extra costs. Poor road conditions affect tourism and larger business investments. These factors cause high costs of food and other basic services. The community relies heavily on social grants: the social relief grant, child support grant, old age pension and disability grant. These grants are the key means of support due to high unemployment, poverty and socio-economic challenges. Most jobs are in public sectors like education, policing, and municipal work, and retail. Maluti-a-Phofung is the biggest town with most economic activities in the Eastern Free State. Housing consists mainly of RDP houses. Student accommodation is one of the few income sources. Migrants predominantly run local businesses, while residents mainly engage in informal street vending of food and agricultural produce. The area faces a lack of recreational spaces, resulting in high rates of drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and growing crime. Many schools and factories have shut down, creating neglected spaces that have become crime hotspots. Therefore, the research will focus on the efficacy and impact of pro-poor LED initiatives in addressing these challenges. (OpenAI. (2024).

1.2.1 Examining the current economic situation

In Maluti-a-Phofung, a community within the Maluti-a-Phofung municipality, the dominant economic conditions are characterised by elevated poverty and unemployment rates. Despite a reduction in the overall unemployment rate for Maluti a-Phofung from 50.8% in 1996 to 41.8% in 2011, The 2016 Community Survey reports an increase of 18% unemployment rate in Maluti-a-Phofung, highlighting a substantial portion of the population facing limited economic opportunities. Maluti-a-Phofung, has 13 sections, including Setsing, a central business district (CBD) established in the 1980s. It has a hospital, municipal offices, library, a university, shopping centers, 5 TVET colleges, 107 schools, government offices, transport ranks, and informal traders (Mocwagae & Nel, 2023). Yet, the municipality faces infrastructure backlogs, low skills development, and literacy challenges, collectively contributing to residents' economic difficulties and opportunities (South Africa: Statistics South Africa, 2022).

Recognising these issues requires a pressing call for intervention mechanisms, notably local economic development initiatives focused on job creation and enhancement. This research sheds light on the economic landscape of Maluti-a-Phofung, emphasising the urgent need for targeted strategies to alleviate poverty and unemployment, considering both immediate relief and sustainable, community-driven development.

1.2.2 Existing LED policies and strategies

Learning of current LED policies in Maluti-a-Phofung reveals a concerted effort to address the pressing issues of poverty and unemployment. The National government recognises the need for development in Maluti-a-Phofung which is why the Maluti-a-Phofung Special Economic Zone (MAP-SEZ) was initiated by the South African government Department of Trade and Industry created an international and regional trade environment to establish manufacturing opportunities, transfer skills and provide support to local businesses (*Corporate Info - Maluti-A-Phofung Special Economic Zone*,2018). The SEZ was launched in 2017 by former President Jacob Zuma to pay attention to the following sectors:

Sector	Specialization
Pharmaceutical Sector	Generics and cosmetics/ natural remedies and medical accessories/ latex material
ICT Sector	Software engineering and programming of computers and mobile phones/ call centers/ Data centres
Logistics Sector	Logistics service providers/ cross docking facilities and warehouse facilities distribution centres.
Agro-Processing Sector	Forestry and wood/ wool, hides, bio-fuels/ hives/ dairy products, meet and vegetable
Automotive Sector	Warehousing Vehicle distribution centre, 1 st and 2 nd tie supplier, yellow plant

Table 1.2.2 SEZ regional development initiatives

Through the SEZ the government of South Africa aimed to promote economic growth by making domestic investments and encouraging exports to attract foreign investment (Government of South Africa,2014). The Department of Trade (n.d.) Operating within a SEZ offers several benefits, including a 15% corporate tax reduction, building allowances,

employment incentives, customs-controlled areas, and a 12I tax allowance. These incentives aim to support growth, revenue generation, job creation, FDI attraction, and international competitiveness.

In addition to economic development initiatives there is SME support, there is a pro-poor LED strategy that prioritises skills development and literacy enhancement. Collaborating with educational institutions and vocational training centres like the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and Social Development and Department of Economics, Small Business Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA), this initiative offers specialised training programs tailored to the local workforce's needs.

The Maluti-a-Phofung local municipality identified tourism, agriculture and manufacturing as focus areas for possible growth and investment. The municipality will focus on the following spaces as growth areas: Basotho Cultural Village, located in Golden Gate National Park, offers tours and traditional village experiences. The village has a potential to expand and grow the restaurant and conferencing facilities, potentially attracting more tourists and the corporate sector. The Platberg Game Farm and Lodge, owned by the Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality, aims to provide high-end accommodation and attract passing trade. The Sterkfontein Dam Resort has a restaurant, store, and conference venue, and could potentially improve water sports activities. The Maluti Dairy project, which was initially jointly owned by local emerging farmers, could create employment opportunities for 10 people. The Maluti-a-Phofung area produces 4,000 tons of dry beans per year, but no facility exists. The Maluti Dairy could establish a dry bean depot to provide grading, weighing, cleaning, storage, and marketing services to local emerging farmers. The Black Commercial Farming scheme, which provided technical advice, training, planning, mentorship, and funding, could leverage existing land and limited farming expertise to develop viable commercial farms (Maluti-a-Phofung NDP,2012)

1.2.3 Community development in Maluti-a-Phofung

In South Africa, community development is recognized as an important tool for sustainable community development and poverty alleviation (Meyer,2014) In the Maluti-a-Phofung area, the government and local organizations have initiated various programs to support development through the Department of Local Economic Development and Department of Social development working together with Non-Governmental Organisations to support community development and economic development. However, economic development in the Maluti-a-Phofung community is not evenly distributed and is not sustainable. This has resulted

in various socioeconomic issues, including crime, substance abuse, gang activity, sexual violence, and other anti-social behaviors among the community's youth (Tsoetsi & Omodan,2022). Since, economic underdevelopment continues to persist, there is a need for further analysis of the effectiveness of community development initiatives in promoting local economic growth (Chaskalson et al., 2016)

1.3 Problem statement

Maluti-a-Phofung, a semi urban area in the with great development potential yet filled with economic challenges. The area once benefited from industrial programs that subsidized factories, but with the end of these programs, many industrial activities slowed down, resulting in significant job loss and an economic downturn and job loss (Marais, 2023). From apartheid to democracy the municipality has great governance problems including unstable administration, vandalised infrastructure, limited-service delivery, lack of planning and implementation (Mocwangae & Nel,2023)

The Free State's Special Economic Zone legislation has led to challenges in the operation of the Maluti-A-Phofung Special Economic Zone. The province's smallest budget has affected operations, and vandalism has worsened. The CEO of the SEZ plans to expand and attract investors by refurbishing existing factories and creating a multi-purpose center. However, the Botshabelo and Maluti-a-Phofung Industrial Parks, managed by the Free State Development Corporation, require R2.9 billion in infrastructure development. Challenges include environmental degradation, pollution, non-compliant building, and infrastructure deficiencies. The parks have the potential to employ around 45,000 people (Haddad & Toney-Butler,2023). Maluti-a-Maluti-a-Phofung has high poverty levels, with a high unemployment rate of 41.8% and youth unemployment of 53%.

Research show that tourism and eco-tourism hold potential for economic growth in Maluti-a-Phofung. Challenges in connecting small local industries with larger markets limit growth opportunities. The underdevelopment of resources and limited infrastructure contributes to the economic struggles faced by residents in Maluti-a-Phofung today (Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality,2012).

Against this background, the main research question is “What are the opportunities and challenges associated with implementing community development as a transformative tool for pro-poor LED in Maluti-a-Phofung, and what are the potential outcomes of such an approach concerning poverty reduction, economic growth, and social inclusion?”

1.4 Research aim

This research aims to investigate the potential of community development as a tool for pro-poor LED initiatives regarding poverty reduction, economic growth, and social inclusion.

1.5 Research objectives

To address this research aim, the study pursues the following objectives:

- To identify the community's economic challenges in Maluti-a-Phofung and how they impact poverty levels.
- To investigate the current pro-poor local economic development initiatives in Maluti-a-Phofung and their effectiveness.
- To assess the role of local government in promoting pro-poor local economic development in Maluti-a-Phofung.
- To explore the potential of partnerships between relevant stakeholders, the private sector, civil society, and local government, in promoting pro-poor local economic development in Maluti-a-Phofung.
- To recommend practical strategies for promoting pro-poor LED in Maluti-a-Phofung that can be applied to similar communities.

1.6 Research question

How does community development contribute to pro-poor LED in Maluti-a-Phofung and what are the potential outcomes of such an approach concerning poverty reduction, economic growth, and social inclusion?

1.7 Sub-questions

1.7.1 Objective 1: To identify the local community's economic challenges in Maluti-a-Phofung and how they impact poverty levels.

Sub-questions:

1. What are the primary economic challenges faced by the local community in Maluti-a-Phofung?
2. How do these economic challenges contribute to or intensify poverty levels within the community?
3. Are there specific demographic or geographic factors that intensify the economic challenges experienced by certain segments of the population?

1.7.2 Objective 2: To investigate the current pro-poor local economic development initiatives in Maluti-a-Phofung¹ and their effectiveness.

Sub-questions:

1. What pro-poor local economic development initiatives are currently in place in Maluti-a-Phofung?
2. How are these initiatives structured and implemented to address the economic challenges identified in the community?
3. What measurable outcomes or impacts have been observed because of these initiatives, particularly in terms of poverty reduction and community well-being?

1.7.3. Objective 3: To assess the role of local government in promoting pro-poor local economic development in Maluti-a-Phofung.

Sub-questions:

1. What specific roles and responsibilities does the local government undertake in the context of pro-poor local economic development in Maluti-a-Phofung?
2. How effective is the coordination and collaboration between local government departments and agencies involved in these initiatives?
3. Are there institutional or policy barriers that hinder the local government's ability to effectively promote pro-poor local economic development?

1.7.4. Objective 4: To explore the potential of partnerships between the private sector, civil society, and local government in promoting pro-poor local economic development in Maluti-a-Phofung.

Sub-questions:

1. To what extent are private sector entities currently engaged in pro-poor local economic development initiatives in Maluti-a-Phofung?
2. How do civil society (NGOs) organizations collaborate with the local government and the private sector to support these initiatives?

3. What are the perceived benefits and challenges of these partnerships, and how do they contribute to the overall success of pro-poor development efforts?

1.7.5. Objective 5: To recommend practical strategies for promoting pro-poor local economic development in Phuthaditjhaba, which can be applied to other similar communities.

Sub-questions:

1. Based on the findings, what are the key success factors for pro-poor local economic development in Maluti-a-Phofung?
2. How can the identified challenges and lessons learned in Maluti-a-Phofung inform the development of strategies applicable to similar communities?
3. What specific, actionable recommendations can be proposed to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of pro-poor development initiatives in Maluti-a-Phofung and other comparable contexts?

1.8 Research design and approach

This research used a qualitative design in debt interviews were conducted with 15 participants. Snowballing sampling was used employing a referral system to participants that were be a true representation of all groups within the community. The participants included NGOs, municipality LED officials from tourism, agriculture and SMMEs, skills, a fraction of community members and social development development. According to Naderifar, et al (2017) purposive snowballing is a chain referral system that allows the researcher to gather qualitative data and facilitate community-based data allowing clear expression of experience.

1.9 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured to systematically explore the connection between community development and pro-poor LED.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction, the community context and the problem statement of Maluti-a-Phofung.

In Chapter 2, the literature review investigates existing theories, models, and empirical studies related to community development and pro-poor LED, laying the foundation for the research.

Chapter 3 outlines the qualitative research design employed, focusing on snowball sampling to gather insights from participants connected through shared experiences or characteristics.

Chapter 4 presents the findings that emerged through thematic analysis, unravelling the complexities of the interplay between community dynamics and pro-poor LED initiatives. The findings are critically interpreted and discussed by drawing connections to theoretical frameworks, sustainable livelihood, and capabilities approach addressing implications for policy and practice.

Chapter 5 provides the conclusion, summarises vital findings, highlights the study's contributions to the field, and suggests avenues for future research. Overall, the structure of this thesis was designed to provide a comprehensive exploration of the chosen research topic, guiding the reader through a logical progression from introduction to conclusion.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section is a review of existing literature that focuses on different approaches and policies of community development and pro-poor LED. Economic equality, decent work and economic growth are the new world order. The Johannesburg Declaration of Sustainable Development and Implementation Plan adopted in the year 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development was a pact with the global community showing commitment to poverty eradication (United Nations: Department of Economics and Social Affairs, 2023). This commitment aligned with the National Development Plan 2030 that serves as a blueprint to achieve economic growth by promoting exports, creating 11 million jobs, achieving annual 5.4% economic growth rate and absorbing the labour market, eliminating poverty, improving education, building infrastructure and reducing inequality (NPC, 2012). However, these goals cannot be achieved in isolation; to eliminate poverty, the quality and access to education must improve, there must be proper healthcare and universal access, infrastructure development and access to water and energy to promote sustainable cities, reduction of inequality and economic development, which all link together to improve the lives of local communities (Mmoiemang,2024). However, this literature review focus on the reason why we have not achieved adequate economic development despite the global and local policies put in place to guide the country to sustainable development.

2.1.1 Theoretical framework

South Africa's deep-rooted inequalities necessitate a focus on inclusive development. The community development theory emphasis on ensuring equitable access to economic opportunities which resonates with South Africa's focus on addressing the imbalances caused by apartheid (Moser,1998). Community development theory focuses on empowering local communities by building their capacity to solve their own problems, improve their quality of life, and drive sustainable local economic growth. Key elements include: Empowerment that giving local people the tools, knowledge, and opportunities to take charge of their own development. Participation which involves encouraging active involvement of community members in the decision-making process (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). And lastly Capacity Building which aims to provide the skills, knowledge, and resources that communities need to thrive economically and socially. The idea is that sustainable development comes from the active participation of communities in identifying needs and creating solutions that are suited

to their local context (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2011). In addition the *Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)* policies and the *Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE)* programs are examples of how the South African government aims to include previously marginalized communities in the country's economic growth (Rogerson, 2010). These policies align with community development theory framework's goal of promoting social and economic inclusion (Robinson, 2007).

The historical segregation of people based on race and ethnicity has created vast inequalities in wealth, access to services, and opportunities. As a result, many rural and peri-urban areas still lag behind in terms of economic development, infrastructure, and employment (Nattrass & Seekings, 2015). To overcome these inequalities South Africa turned its focus to job creation and youth opportunities promoting equitable land access, particularly in rural areas, as well as the use of local resources for sustainable growth (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). By integrating infrastructure development with effective community participation and stakeholder engagement, South Africa can foster a more inclusive and sustainable development process, addressing both historical inequalities and future growth opportunities (Binns, 2024).

2.2 Community development and pro-poor local economic development

Scholars offer varied definitions and perspectives on pro-poor LED shaped by their research interests, disciplinary backgrounds, and ideological viewpoints. Economists focus on market-based interventions, entrepreneurship, and investment promotion as crucial drivers of pro-poor LED, emphasising job creation, income generation, and poverty reduction through avenues like small business development and skills training (Asiamah, 2021). Lukhele and Madzivhandila (2018) support the view by distinguishing pro-poor LED as income-focused, where the primary goal is to increase income and economic opportunities, emphasising job creation and skills training to uplift the poor. In contrast to this view, social scientists stress social justice, participation, and community empowerment as essential elements for promoting inclusivity and poverty reduction (Rogerson, 2003). Nel et al., (2006) defines pro-poor LED from a capabilities perspective where community members are empowered to realise their full potential and skills to escape poverty.

The participatory viewpoint is almost similar to the community development capabilities approach as empowerment requires full citizen participation (Ndlovu, 2021). The participatory approaches align with community development initiatives that prioritizes communities aiming

to achieve inclusive development mechanisms (United Nations: United Nations Development Programme, 2003). pro-poor LED is a long-term mechanism ensuring the well-being of low-income individuals by mitigating the impact of climate change and preserving natural resources, and promoting sustainable livelihoods less vulnerable to disruptions (de Renzio, 2023). To successfully promote pro-poor LED, it is crucial to recognise that economic growth alone is not enough to reduce poverty and foster sustainable development. Therefore, it is important to have an inclusive approach that encourage socially and environmentally sustainable economic activities that create decent jobs and reduce inequality (Nel et al., 2006).

2.2.1 Evidence of community development in LED

The concept of LED focuses on improving living conditions within a specific area that is either rural or urban. LED targets grassroots initiatives that are more focuses on local conditions, challenges and resources. It is a community driven process aimed at improving living conditions and addressing issues local issues such as unemployment poverty, infrastructure deficits and lack of basic services (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2011). This process involves the active participation of local stakeholders, and various facilitators play essential roles in ensuring its success (Toerien & Wessels,2019). Community development ensures that residents are not just passive recipients of development but are actively involved in identifying their needs, setting priorities, and implementing strategies. Which is why this research seeks to understand the level of community participation and stakeholder engagement. This participation enhances a sense of ownership and accountability, which is vital for the sustainability of development projects. In rural South Africa, community-driven development programs often start with community meetings/the IDP where residents discuss their needs, such as job creation, better education, or improved healthcare. Once the priorities are identified, local economic initiatives, such as agricultural projects or small-scale enterprises, are implemented to address these needs (Cohen & Uphoff, 2018). Also, In rural South Africa, community-driven development programs often start with community meetings where residents discuss their needs, such as job creation, better education, or improved healthcare. Once the priorities are identified, local economic initiatives, such as agricultural projects or small-scale enterprises, are implemented to address these needs. However, municipalities cannot achieve full community and economic development in isolation hence the collaboration with NGOs as they are crucial in bridging the gap between local communities and formal institutions like government bodies. They play an active role in raising awareness, advocating for

marginalized groups, and providing technical support in implementing community-driven initiatives (Sachs,2019).

South African NGOs like the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) work with communities to ensure that their voices are heard in the LED process. These organizations also offer training, capacity-building, and resources to help residents engage in economic activities (SALGA, 2021). The private sector also plays a key role in LED by providing investment, innovation, and job opportunities. Local businesses, entrepreneurs, and larger corporations contribute by establishing operations in local areas, creating employment, and supporting the growth of local supply chains. In many South African towns, large corporations or industries, such as the mining sector, partner with communities to develop skills training programs, offer employment, and invest in local infrastructure, such as housing or health clinics (Amusa,2020).

South Africa's history of apartheid created significant spatial economic imbalances, with wealth and economic activity concentrated in urban centers, leaving rural areas, townships, and informal settlements underdeveloped. LED aims to assist in bridging these gaps by empowering local communities to drive development and attract investment to less-developed areas. The development of the Saldanha Bay Industrial Development Zone (IDZ) in the Western Cape is an example of an LED strategy aimed at bringing investment and infrastructure to a previously underdeveloped area. This initiative has created jobs, boosted local businesses, and fostered skills development (Binns et al., 2014).

2.3 A global review

Around the world, local economic development initiatives are placing a greater emphasis on entrepreneurship as a means of utilising local and indigenous economic potential. Through an international network of trade, transportation, and communication, globalization unifies local economies, civilizations, and cultures. Democracies and entrepreneurial activities are facilitated by economic freedom and technologies. The removal of trade restrictions has encouraged privately-owned institutions to flourish (Lambin, 2014). Rising geoeconomic fragmentation and trade restrictive measures, pandemic-related disruptions, a food and energy crisis brought on by Russia's war on Ukraine, a significant spike in prices, and a worldwide coordinated tightening of monetary policy may harm medium-term growth prospects, potentially making the global economy less resilient. Reversing this course is necessary to maintain global cooperation. Low-income countries can lower borrowing costs and funding

needs by promoting domestic and foreign direct investment, strengthening domestic resource mobilisation, and improving human capital. Artificial intelligence can boost productivity, but disruptions in labour and financial markets are high. To harness AI, countries must improve digital infrastructure, invest in human capital, and coordinate globally (Gourinchas, 2024). Developing countries need to increase tax levels and reduce reliance on foreign trade taxes to achieve a government role similar to industrial countries. Policymakers must prioritise the most significant and implement reforms, as trade barriers decrease and capital mobility increases. Tax policy formulation and competition also face challenges as trade barriers decrease and capital mobility increases. Personal income taxes contribute little to total revenue (Tanzi & Zee, 2001). Global policies that discriminate the poor and exclude them from development (Khan, 2001) should be revised. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the world's poorest, with the bottom 40% of the global income distribution experiencing a 6.7% decrease in 2021, compared to pre-pandemic projections, while the top 40% has recovered over 45% of their initial income losses. This disparity is largely due to the lack of recovery efforts among the poorest (Sánchez-Páramo et al., 2021), especially the rural poor's economic status that influences their use of assets and participation in production, with limited access to physical and financial capital. They rely on household labour for family work and unskilled labour, making them vulnerable to economic crises and natural disasters (Khan, 2001).

2.4 Poverty and inequality

Development projects are valuable as they seek to address the root causes of poverty and inequality directly, with the goal of fully addressing critical concerns like employment, education, housing, infrastructure, health, and sanitation. Tackling issues at the grassroots level is a major challenge within communities. If left unresolved, these issues can escalate, posing even greater threats to the community (Master, 2022). Rural poverty is influenced by multiple factors, including political instability, social discrimination (based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or caste), unclear property rights, concentrated land ownership, corrupt governance, and economic policies that marginalise rural communities. Additional contributors include large, dependent families, market inefficiencies due to asset concentration, and external economic and environmental shocks (Khan, 2001). Since 1994, the South African government's approach to LED has blended pro-market and pro-poor strategies. In metropolitan areas, a dual economic system is in place, whereas smaller municipalities emphasise pro-poor initiatives, supporting small businesses, the informal sector, and tourism.

However, these smaller municipalities often struggle with limited capacity, low success rates, and conflicting approaches (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023).

To emphasise this view, Lukhele and Madzivhandila (2018) criticise South Africa for not creating inclusive local economies. The study further suggests that the country prioritises the pro-market approach over the pro-poor approach even though it is incapable of creating inclusive local economies and lacks the potential to address the needs of poor people. Khan (2001) emphasises that national policies can exacerbate rural poverty by sidelining rural populations from development benefits and reinforcing poverty-inducing structures. Policy biases often favour urban infrastructure, impose implicit taxes on agricultural products, subsidise capital-intensive technologies, and support export crops and large landowners over small-scale rural farmers. These biases leave rural communities with limited resources and opportunities for growth. To resolve this dilemma, community development uses grounded principles of community ownership and active participation, encouraging all members to engage equally and express their concerns. This approach raises awareness among community members about their rights and responsibilities, fostering empowerment, especially for vulnerable groups such as women, marginalised castes and tribes, the elderly, disabled individuals, and low-income migrants. Although socio-economically disadvantaged groups and migrants often struggle to voice their needs and participate fully, community development initiatives strive to promote equal involvement, creating a sense of belonging and inclusion. This inclusivity helps each member feel valued, fosters unity, and promotes mutual learning within the community (Master, 2022).

2.5 Basic infrastructure and services

Pro-poor LED also includes investing in important infrastructure and services like education, health, water supply and poverty reduction (United Nations: United Nations Development Programme, 2013). Backed up by national and local policies, this approach involves enhancing the availability and quality of essential services, uplifting impoverished human capital of communities, boosting their productivity, and improving their overall well-being (Plata & Perez, 2019). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) enshrines the right to access basic services, while the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 prioritises their provision as important for economic development, poverty reduction, and social cohesion. Reliable roads can stimulate economic growth by providing an attractive business environment (Moeketsi, 2017). The White Paper on Local Government (1998) outlines the role of local

government in providing basic services such as infrastructure, public health, and social services. However, implementation challenges remain in South Africa, as securing sufficient funding for basic infrastructure and services is difficult (Maree & Khanyile, 2024). Rural communities face discrimination against development policies that exclude the rural poor from development, as they are always characterised by large and rapidly growing families with high dependency ratios, market imperfections due to high concentration of land and assets, and external shocks from changes in the state of nature and international economy conditions (Khan, 2001). Community empowerment is a fundamental principle in local economic development as it involves local communities in planning and implementing infrastructure projects that empower active citizenship and ensure that initiatives align with the actual needs and priorities of the community (Stoeffler, 2018). Education, health care, social services and public safety and security are key basic services of community development. Access to education empowers individuals to improve their skills, income, and job prospects, driving economic growth. Healthcare services are essential for maintaining a healthy, productive community, especially in rural areas where facilities are limited. Social services such as housing, food security, and welfare are critical for supporting vulnerable populations and reducing inequality. Effective public safety, including police and emergency services, fosters a secure environment for business growth and social stability, all of which are vital for sustainable community development in South Africa

2.6 The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act of 2003

The BBEE is a South African legislation in the new democratic South Africa aimed at addressing economic inequalities from the apartheid government (Khumalo, 2008). The updated B-BBEE guide in South Africa outlines regulations for promoting economic transformation and meaningful black participation in the economy through increased ownership, management, community involvement, and skills training (B-BBEE Commission, 2020). BBEE policies by the African National Congress (ANC) are causing economic destruction and poverty among the poor by making black skins compulsory for job appointments and business contracts (Kenny, 2023). Both the Employment Equity and B-BBEE are legislative frameworks in South Africa that aim to eliminate unfair discrimination based on race, gender, disability, and sex. They focus on employment and are mandatory, while B-BBEE is voluntary and focuses on ownership, procurement, and management control. Both aim to create an equitable society where everyone could succeed (Attorneys, n.d.). Prior 1994 there was a lack of legislation protecting black, women, and disabled individuals from

discriminatory work practices, such as unequal salaries that limited their aspirations and opportunities. Therefore, the democratic election marked a shift in South Africa's corporate sector (Carrim et al., 2022)

The BBBEE policy is aimed at integrating black citizens, including Africans, Indians, and Coloureds, into the economy. However, the European Union has requested relaxation of Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) requirements to encourage foreign investment in South Africa. Critics argue that B-BBEE's design is not ideal and should be replaced with a more effective intervention. Despite its effectiveness, poverty among black people persists (Dreyer et al,2021). Erasmus (2024) argues that BBBEE has been manipulated to benefit a select few, hindering economic growth and limiting broader economic equality. This contradicts constitutional principles of substantive equality, as it often focuses on racial quotas. Alternative approaches, addressing socio-economic disadvantage and balancing social objectives with economic efficiency, could help South Africa achieve a more equitable future.

2.7 Supporting small and informal enterprise

Pro-poor LED strategies uplift impoverished communities by fostering economic growth and improving their overall quality of life (Ndlovu, 2021). The South African government is assisting small businesses by introducing the Energy Bounce Back Loan Guarantee Scheme (EBB) that will facilitate loans to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the manufacturing value chain. The Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Programme supports SMEs in townships and rural areas, offering various schemes for qualifying entrepreneurs. The Co-operatives Development Support Programme (CDSP) supports co-operative enterprises, focusing on women, youth, and persons living with disabilities. The government is also working on the Women's Empowerment Fund, which aims to accelerate financial inclusion for women, youth, and people with disabilities (SONA,2024). The Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 rules out that all municipalities must establish and dedicate departments or units to support small businesses and informal enterprises, providing them with access to financial assistance, skills development programmes, and regulatory support.

Van Vuuren (2022) highlight that business do not reach 3 years' operating because of the challenges they face. In South Africa entrepreneurs establish businesses for survival as an alternative to unemployment. Even so, they face challenges such as minimal innovation, infrastructure limitations, inadequate office space, human resource constraints, limited access to professional networks, and challenges with community engagement. Additionally, lack

research support and development as they venture into new spaces unaware of the gaps and challenges (Radebe.2019). By offering small loans and financial services, the community is empowered to invest in their business to expand operations and productivity, this approach positively impacts poverty reduction by facilitating economic activities at the grassroots level (Banerjee et al., 2015).

Historically the small and informal enterprises serve as the primary source of income for impoverished households (De Soto, 1989). Therefore, several municipalities in South Africa have incorporated initiatives to support small businesses and informal enterprises into their Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and LED strategies. These initiatives stimulate local economic growth by providing resources, training, and mentorship to entrepreneurs and small business owners (Ramasimu et al, 2023). IDPs may put into the pipeline allocated funds for business incubation programmes, while LED strategies may focus on developing infrastructure that supports entrepreneurship, such as business centres, marketplaces, and training facilities (Hewitt & van Rensburg, 2020). Business Development Service (BDS) is an initiative that offers training programmes to enhance entrepreneurial skills, including managerial expertise and technical knowledge (Gupta, 2023). BDS has various agencies including Small Business Development Agency, Department of Small Business Development and National Youth Development Agency. BDS has a positive impact of supporting small diverse initiatives that create local employment opportunities, thereby contributing to reduced poverty rates and increased social stability, which, in turn, strengthen community cohesion (Chen & Ravallion, 2008). Secondly, they empower household to generate higher incomes and improved access to necessary goods and services (Duflo, 2012).

2.8 Legislative framework

South Africa has lived in the shadow of its history for years, 30 years of democracy has not been able to solve inequality. The Country has the most unequal societies in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 0.63 in 2021. To rectify this the South African government has tried to implement various developmental and empowerment policies to address the issue of inequality. These policies reflect and emphasize the importance of community development as they directly reflect empowerment, participation and capacity building to foster sustainable development. These policies may involve direct interventions like cash transfers, subsidies for essential services, targeted health and education programmes, and structural reforms to create more equitable economic and social conditions. The policies significantly impact the lives of

different classes of people in the South African society, including the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized. The IMF Country Focus (2020) released a report that the country's Gini index has remained high since the early 2000s, with low growth and rising unemployment contributing to the persistence of inequality. The government has used fiscal redistribution, higher social spending, targeted government transfers, and affirmative action to reduce inequality. However, further reforms are needed to create a business environment conducive to private investment and job creation, as well as support for the marginalized population.

2.8.1 The social grant system

The country implemented the social grant system as one of the most significant pro-poor policies in South Africa. This means that vulnerable families, including the elderly, disabled, and children are provided for. By targeting these groups, the policy improves access to basic needs, including food, healthcare, and education, all of which are crucial for fostering community resilience and well-being (Daidone et al., 2015). The social grant system plays a significant role in community development by reducing poverty among vulnerable households particularly those headed by women. According to the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), over 18 million people in South Africa received social grants in 2019, significantly reducing poverty (SASSA, 2020). The SASSA recipients increased by approximately 1.4% from the previous year, (approximately 70%) of those beneficiaries received the child support grant (SASSA, 2020). A study by Daidone et al. (2015) found that social grants have improved food security and health outcomes for beneficiaries, particularly children. For example, it has helped improve children's health and well-being by ensuring access to basic needs like food, healthcare, and education. A study conducted by the University of Cape Town found that children who received social grants were more likely to attend school regularly and were less likely to suffer from malnutrition (Spaull et al., 2016). Furthermore, the policy has been proved effective as it has been credited with reducing the prevalence of child labour in South Africa, as households are less likely to rely on children to provide income when they receive social grants (Economic Commission for Africa, 2020).

2.8.2 Housing Subsidy

The government's housing subsidies for low-income households have also significantly impacted South Africans' lives. These subsidies provide funding to households to purchase or build a house, thereby improving access to housing. Since 1994, over 4 million housing opportunities have been provided through the government's housing subsidies program (National Department of Human Settlements, 2019). By providing affordable housing to low-

income households, the government not only promotes physical infrastructure but also fosters a sense of community and stability which significantly contributes to social cohesion and improved quality of life, key aspects of sustainable community development.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was a comprehensive policy framework introduced by the South African government in 1994, aimed at addressing the country's socio-economic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and inequality. One of the key components of the RDP was the housing policy, which aimed to provide affordable and adequate housing for all South Africans, especially those previously excluded by segregation policies from the formal housing market due to apartheid policies (Department of Housing, 1994).

The RDP's housing policy subsidised low-income households to purchase or build their own houses. This policy has successfully improved the lives of over 2.5 million house owners. This progress have been provided s`to low-income households through the RDP (National Department of Human Settlements, 2019). Overall, the RDP's housing policy and the government's ongoing housing subsidies programme have significantly impacted South Africans' lives by improving access to adequate housing and reducing homelessness and housing insecurity. According to the National Department of Human Settlements (2019), this programme has significantly impacted South Africans' lives by providing improved access to housing, a basic human need. Housing provision has also had wider socio-economic benefits, such as improved health outcomes, economic opportunities, and social cohesion. Access to housing has improved their quality of life, providing them with security and stability. Homeownership has also had wider economic benefits, such as increased access to credit, which can be used to start or expand businesses. Housing provision has also had positive social impacts, promoted social cohesion, and reduced community crime and violence. Overall, providing housing subsidies has been a critical pro-poor policy in South Africa, improving the lives of millions of people.

Free essential services like water and electricity have improved access to essential services for low-income households. According to a report by the Department of Water and Sanitation, over 94% of households in South Africa have access to basic water services, while over 85% have access to basic sanitation services (Department of Water and Sanitation, 2019). Similarly, access to improved sanitation services has increased from 62% in 2002 to 80% in 2020 (Statistics South Africa, 2020). Improved access to free essential services has significantly

improved the quality of life for low-income households, reducing health issues and enabling them to start businesses or work remotely.

2.8.3 Healthcare Program

The government included low income earners in their healthcare program development plans to improve their access. The Primary Healthcare (PHC) system is for providing basic healthcare services to all South Africans, while the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme aims to provide universal healthcare coverage for all South African to improved access to healthcare for the poor and vulnerable in South African communities (National Department of Health, 2015). According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2019) suggests that when people have access to healthcare services, they are healthier, more productive, and better able to contribute to the local economy. Therefore, the government's efforts to improve access to healthcare through the PHC system and the NHI scheme are important for local economic development in South Africa. When people do not have access to healthcare services, they are less likely to miss work due to illness or chronic conditions, which can result in a decrease in productivity and economic growth in local communities. In addition, improved health and well-being can lead to reduced healthcare costs and a lower burden on the healthcare system, freeing up resources that can be used for other economic development initiatives (UNDP, 2019).

2.8.4 The education program

The government has implemented policies and programs to improve access to education for low-income earners. There is a no-fee schooling policy that provides free education for children from poor households. At the same time, the School Nutrition Programme offers free meals to children in poor communities who cannot afford a nutritious meal. Access to basic education is a critical component of local economic development, because education is a key driver of economic growth and poverty reduction (World Bank, 2018). By implementing and improving access to free education and the School Nutrition, the South African government has helped reduce educational inequalities and increase the number of children who go to school and get quality education. As a result, more children have access to the same opportunities, improving skills and knowledge among the workforce, encourages higher levels of productivity, and increased economic growth in local communities (UNDP, 2019). Additionally, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and the National Research Fund (NRF) help to ensure that students from poor households can access tertiary education, which can lead to better job

prospects and higher earnings, with adequate skills and knowledge citizens can further contributing to local economic development in the long term (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016). Therefore, the government's efforts to improve access to education for low-income people are crucial for local economic development in South Africa. Education is a key driver of community development, as it increases human capital, productivity, and opportunities for economic participation, contributing to broader local economic growth (World Bank, 2018).

While these pro-poor policies have positively impacted the lives of low-income households in South Africa, there are still significant challenges in reducing poverty and inequality. Matidza et al, (2021) COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the extent of poverty and inequality in the country, as people were unable to go to school. Meaning they had no access to education and free nutritious meals, also they did not have the capacity or resources to catch up with online learning as many households struggled to make ends meet due to job losses and reduced incomes.

2.9. Corruption and mismanagement

Corruption and mismanagement of funds can result to misallocation of resources (Pillay,2014). In some cases, funds intended for social grants or other pro-poor programmes have been misused or stolen. As a result people with low income will lose resources that could have been used to benefit their livelihood (Jackson et al., 2009). Pro-poor policies can be vulnerable to corruption, as officials may divert resources intended for people with low incomes for their benefit.

2.9.1 Inadequate service delivery

Inadequate service delivery is another major challenge in implementing pro-poor policies in SA. Poor services make it difficult for the marginalized to be progressive as the would be a decline of resources and opportunities to create jobs and good living conditions

2.9.2 Lack of coordination

Lack of coordination between government departments and agencies can lead to inefficiencies when planning initiatives and collaborating on a project. Lack of organization can often result to duplication of effort. This can make it difficult for local governments to implement pro-poor development.

2.10 Conclusion

South Africa has tried to correct past inequalities but 2024 marked the 30th anniversary of these elections that has been a transformative journey, marked by both successes and challenges such as corruption, inequality, unemployment, and service delivery. Lessons learned from the 30 years of democracy include cooperation among races, respect for human rights, vigilance, addressing economic and social inequalities, combating corruption, and promoting social cohesion (Ofusori,2024). Even though these policies have had success, there are also criticisms that they could be better implemented, including short-term solutions that address the root causes of poverty and inequality. There is a need for development of sustainable policies that are more community driven that consider the diversity of experiences and needs of different groups within the poor population (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2011). Additionally, there is a need for greater transparency and accountability in implementing sustainable development approach using community development approach. The World Bank (2023) is leveraging CLD approaches and platforms to support prevention, mitigation, recovery, combating climate change impacts on vulnerable populations, supporting local economic development, and seizing opportunities for convergence with sector programs and formal decentralization reforms. CLD programs have evolved to adapt to different local contexts and needs, delivering tangible results on the ground in geographically remote and operationally hard-to-reach areas. By involving the community in the design and implementation of local economic development programmes, the initiatives are more likely to meet the needs of residents and be sustainable in the long term.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the research design, participants of the study and give a brief profile of participants and explain how data is collected.

3.2 Research approach and design

This research employed a qualitative approach that focuses on understand the complexities of human experience in the context of LED. The aim is to gain an understanding, views, feeling, challenges, experiences and practices of local communities and stakeholder as well as the institutional and political factors that shape their efforts to address poverty and promote economic development. In this study observations and interviews were used to collect data, allowing a holistic understanding participants having a one-on-one conversation to get personal views from participants about the subject matter (Bhandari, 2024). This method has been successfully used in previous studies on community development (Kumar et al., 2021) and can provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics of poverty and economic underdevelopment.

The findings from the observations and interviews will be analysed using a thematic analysis, a method that allows for the identification of key themes and patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The themes that emerge emerged were compared and contrasted with the existing literature on poverty and economic development, providing a basis for discussion and analysis of the findings.

3.3 Research population

The selection of participants was purposive, with a focus on diversity in demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and economic status. This diversity was intended to provide a broad perspective on the issues under study, and to mitigate potential biases in the research process (Naderifar et al., 2017). Criteria for selection included being a resident of Maluti-a-Phofung for at least five years to ensure a deep understanding of the community dynamics.

The participants included representatives from NGOs, small business owners, individuals who were employed and unemployed, young people, and those with a range of educational backgrounds. The goal was to capture the experiences and perspectives of different segments

of the community, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing local economic development. Below is a brief breakdown of participants

- **NGO representatives:** These participants were selected for their knowledge in working within communities from the grassroots level as community development practitioners, they have first-hand experience on the socio-economic issues faced by the community they are good for the study because they have expertise on community development and LED initiatives as they work with community members as their key stakeholder and other organisations and the state, they have an ability to provide insights into the challenges and successes of development initiatives.
- **Small business owners or entrepreneurs:** These participants were chosen to gain insights into the challenges and opportunities facing entrepreneurs and small businesses in Maluti-a-Phofung.
- **LED employees and unemployed individuals:** These participants were included to provide a range of perspectives on the economic conditions and opportunities in the community in the different spheres of LED agriculture, tourism and small medium and micro enterprises. The unemployed participants offered insights into the barriers to employment and the impact of poverty, while the employed participants could provide information on the labor market and employment opportunities.
- **Individuals with diverse educational backgrounds:** This group was chosen to provide a variety of perspectives on the educational system and employment opportunities in Maluti-a-Phofung. Participants with higher levels of education were expected to provide insights into the skills needed for economic development, while those with lower levels of education could offer insights into the barriers to educational and skills attainment and economic opportunities.
- **Young people:** This group was chosen to gain insights into the experiences and perspectives of the younger generation, who are often the most affected by poverty and unemployment. Their experiences can inform strategies for economic development that are responsive to the needs of youth.

3.4 Research sample

Snowball sampling is the chosen method of participant selection. Snowballing sampling is a non-probability sampling technique to reach and research people with specific traits or interest

(Nikolopoulou, 2022). In this research, snowball sampling was used to identify participants across sectors and community groups involved in LED initiatives in Maluti-a-Phofung. The snowballing sample recruited 15 diverse and representative participants whom included 3 LED officials, 2 LED managers 5 organisations that contribute to economic development (NGOs community development practitioners/Social development/LED Funders) and 5 citizens, youth degree and nondegree holders that face unemployment (entrepreneurs and social grant recipients). Snowballing is a network sampling methodology that starts with one participant who refers other participants. In this study, snowball sampling was used to identify 15 participants from Maluti-a-Phofung with diverse backgrounds and experiences related to LED and community development. Participants were encouraged to identify and recommend other individuals within the community who could offer different perspectives. The study will take the exponential non discriminative snowball sampling meaning that when one participant refers multiple references, they will all be contacted and included in the study based on their willingness to participate (Simkus, ,2023).

The selected participants varied in age, from young adults age(18-35) to more experienced individuals over age 50, with diverse education backgrounds, ranging from Matric certificates to Postgraduate Diplomas and Master's degrees. The range of employment status, from unemployed to high-ranking LED managers, reflects the local economic conditions and highlights challenges like high unemployment, even among skilled individuals.

Income levels were mostly within the R21,000 - R30,000 range, with a few higher earners in LED in management and government roles. The unemployed group, particularly young people, earned less than R5,000 monthly, indicating limited economic opportunities for those not actively employed or in government roles. This inequality emphasises the need for LED initiatives to support young, unemployed community members through training, skill development, and job creation.

Participants were engaged in LED efforts across sectors, including business ownership, NGOs, and LED-specific roles (agriculture, tourism, SMMEs). With experience ranging from 1 to over 20 years, they represent a wealth of knowledge in community-led development. Their roles across sectors of local economic conditions is a highlight of showcasing LED as a collaborative effort involving public and private stakeholders. Many unemployed and lower-income participants possessed qualifications but lack sustainable job opportunities, emphasising a gap that LED initiatives. This research looked into the primary economic challenges faced by the

local community in Maluti-a-Phofung, what pro-poor local economic development initiatives are currently in place in Maluti-a-Phofung, and how these initiatives were structured and implemented to address the economic challenges identified in the community, And, finally, how effective the coordination and collaboration was between local government departments and agencies involved in these initial.

Participant ID	Gender	Age Range	Employment Status	Role in Community	Monthly Income Range (ZAR)	Experience in Community-Driven LED Initiatives (Years)	Education Level
P1	Male	18-25	Unemployed	Local community	>R5000	0	Matric
P2	Female	18-25	Unemployed	Local community	>R5000	0	Diploma
P3	Female	41-50		LED funder	R21 - 30K	15 – 12	PGDiP
P4	Female	26-30	Self - employed	Business owner	R21- 30K	5 – 10	B-Tech
P5	Male	26-30	Unemployed	Local community	>R 5000	1 – 2	Degree
P6	Male	51-60	Unemployed	NGO	> R5000	16 – 19	B-Tech
P7	Female	41-50	Employed	NGO	R 11 – 20K	>20	Diploma
P8	Male	31-40	Employed Contracted	Social Development	R11- 20K	1 – 2	Honors Degree
P9	Female	31-40	Employed	LED Manager	>R41 – 50K	12 -15	Masters
P10	Male	41-50	Employed	LED Council	>R51 000	>20	PGDiP
P11	Female	31-40	Employed Contracted 1 year	Local community	R10 – 15K	1 – 2	Degree
P12	Female	31-40	Employed	LED employee Financing stakeholder	R21- 30K	9 – 11	PGDiP
P13	Female	31-40	Employed	LED employee Tourism	R21 - 30K	6 – 8	Diploma
P14	Female	31-40	Employed	LED employee SMMEs	R21 – 30K	6 – 8	Degree

Participant ID	Gender	Age Range	Employment Status	Role in Community	Monthly Income Range (ZAR)	Experience	Education Level
						in Community-Driven LED Initiatives (Years)	
P15	Female	31-40	Employed	LED employee Agriculture	R21-30K	6 - 8	Degree

Table 3.1: Participant profile

As the referral process unfolded, new participants were contacted and the study's purpose was explained to prospective participants. Simultaneously, these newly-recruited participants were asked to refer additional individuals, creating a flowing effect to a snowball (Handcock & Gile, 2011). This iterative cycle continued until a point of data saturation was reached, where subsequent interviews yielded minimal new information. The diversity within the participant pool was an important consideration throughout the process, ensuring a broad representation of roles, backgrounds, and levels of involvement in LED initiatives (Dragan & Isaac-Maniu, 2013).

3.5 Data collection instrument

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-interviews conducted by the researcher were the cornerstone of data collection for this study. I, as the interviewer, guided participants through a predetermined set of questions while allowing for a comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives on topics by creating a conducive, open, honest dialogue environment to establish a rapport with participants, ensuring clarity in questioning and employing active listening techniques to engage participants to share their insights freely (Taherdoost, 2021). Creating a comfortable environment enables open, clear and honest conversations to get desired information from participants, this could include their place of work, homes and school (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). Questions asked to participants were divided into 4 categories predetermined questions for community members, the municipal manager, municipal officials and NGOs. The interview guide is attached on ANNEXURE 1

3.6 Data collection and analysis

The semi-structured interviews were the primary method for data collection, allowing for open-ended conversations that investigated the lived experiences, perceptions, and insights of participants. (Bill et al., 2023). The interviews were recorded for transcription purposes. The data was transcribed word for word capturing the participants and interviewer's voices, movement and observed feelings. Jackson (2021) Transcripts are objective, accurate, and save time by capturing exact wording from conversations. They allow for accurate reflection on interviews, as different interpretations may occur. Additionally, transcripts add context, allowing teams to revisit the entire conversation or use a series of interviews to tell a story. Interviews last approximately 1 to 2 hours depending on understanding, length of responses and external factors as the environment and disturbances. Participants will be made aware that the interviews will be recorded and transcribed, coded and analysed. The collected data will be analysed using the thematic analysis. This method will help identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights within the qualitative data. The study involved several key steps:

3.6.1 Data familiarisation

Data familiarisation involves the transcribing process listening to audio recordings and writing and reading the interview transcripts, without taking notes to understand to absorb the information and summarize it (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

3.6.2 Initial coding

Data summary that helps identify frequent concepts, ideas, or expressions. This process involved breaking the data into meaningful code groups (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

3.6.3 Theme development

Codes are grouped into potential themes, capturing key data aspects related to research questions. This phase required constant reference to the raw data to ensure the dependability of emerging themes. The process involves generating or constructing themes rather than discovering them and identifying areas of similarity and overlap between codes (Naeem et al., 2023).

3.6.4 Review and refinement

The review process involves a repeated procedure of analysing potential themes, ensuring quality, boundaries, and data support, and re-reading the dataset to capture key elements and tone. (Braun & Clark,2012).

3.6.5 Data saturation

Data saturation is the point where all information has been included and analysed there are no new and emerging themes the analysis is now ready for reporting (Braun & Clark, 2019)

3.7 Ethical considerations

The Department of Economics and Management Sciences at the University of the Free State will request ethical clearance on my behalf for this study to ensure ethical integrity (Mirza et al,2023). I will write an email to the municipal manager requesting permission from the Maluti-a-Phofung local municipality to conduct interviews with residents, NGOs, Municipal officials and other organisations involved in LED. I will start conducting interviews as soon as permission is granted. I will set a date with the municipal staff members to set a date for the commencement of interviews. I will explain the purpose of the study, the concepts and that they will be no monetary reward or any benefit from participating. The participants had a right to withdraw from participating on the study at any point when they feel uncomfortable continuing (Cacciattolo,2015). The participants will be told that anonymity of the participants will be maintained, and participants will be protected and the information they provided will be kept safely at the university of the Free State only available to the supervisor and researcher. It will also be important for the researcher to acknowledge potential influence that based on background, observation, objectivity and pre-determined questions (Olivier, 2020)

3.8 Research limitations

While this study will provide valuable insight into community development and pro-poor LED initiatives in Maluti-a-Phofung, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations that impact the generalization and scope of findings. The study faced these limitations:

3.8.1 Contextual specification

The study focused on Maluti-a-Phofung in Maluti-a-Phofung. The unique characteristics, challenges, and opportunities of this setting influenced the findings and recommendations.

Generalising the results to different geographical locations or communities with distinct socio-economic contexts should be done cautiously (Lampert & Lampert, 2010).

3.8.2 Sampling bias

Using snowball sampling while effectively identifying critical stakeholders with diverse perspectives may introduce a degree of sampling bias. Participants may share similar views or experiences, potentially limiting the representation of diverse opinions within the community. The findings may need to capture the breadth of existing perspectives fully (Hughes et al., 2021).

3.8.3 Subjectivity in qualitative analysis

Thematic analysis, being a qualitative method, relies on researchers' interpretation. The interpretation of the study may be subject to the researcher's understanding, analysis and experiences (Braun, 2012).

3.8.4 Limited quantitative data

The research was limited to 15 participants opinions and views, this means I did not get the views of most of the population affected by LED underdevelopment. The experiences of individuals might differ based on environment, background, family dynamics, political interference and experience (Dixon-Woods et al., 2005).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present research findings from the lived experiences of the residents of Maluti-a-Phung who have lived within the area for a minimum of 5 years and can somehow contribute to the local economy. On community development as a tool for pro-poor LED. The research happened in Maluti-a-Phofung, a rural municipality facing socio-economic challenges, including high poverty levels, unemployment, and inequality (van Biljon, 2023). This study assesses how community development can improve pro-poor LED by focusing on community engagement and empowerment, improving quality of life and sustainability, promoting entrepreneurship, and expanding economic opportunities for community members. To address these objectives, the research focuses on enhancing community participation in LED initiatives and ensuring that development strategies reflect the needs and aspirations of the local population. Below are some key LED initiatives the Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality proposed for 2022-2027 (Table 4.1)

Table 4.1.1: List of LED projects in the Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality

1. **Bluegumbosch Mall**: R350 million budget (pending Environmental Impact Assessment).
2. **Smart/Mega City**: R17 billion project integrating Harrismith, Kestell, and Maluti-a-Phofung.
3. **Setsing Revamping**: R130 million to revamp the Central Business District.
4. **Neighbourhood Grant**: Development of municipal infrastructure projects within the municipal economic precinct with a budget of R10 million.
5. **Revitalisation of Old Shopping Centers**: Modernisation of eight old shopping centres to bring services like ATMs and supermarkets closer to the people, with a budget of R100 million, also in the concept stage.
6. **Incubation Centre**: Located in Maluti-a-Phofung (Industrial Area 2) with a budget of R1.5 million, completed and set to be launched soon.
7. **Innovation Hub**: Aim to enhance the use of ICT in education and support local innovators, with a budget of R1 million in the final/completion stage.
8. **Macro Informative Youth Agency (MIYA) Living Lab**: A community-based lab to enhance ICT in education and support local innovators, with a budget of R1 million, in the final/completion stage.

9. **Research on Available Mineral Resources in MAP: Conduct** research on the possible availability of mineral resources in MAP with a budget of R2 million, currently in the proposal stage.

These initiatives reflect the municipality's commitment to stimulate local economic development and support community upliftment.

However, data collected through semi-structured interviews with critical stakeholders, such as community members, municipal officials, and representatives from non-profit organisations, revealed challenges of achieving meaningful community engagement. The research focused on the perceptions and experiences of the Maluti-a-Phofung community regarding their participation in LED processes. A thematic analysis was performed to identify significant concerns and recurrent critical issues raised by participants.

The analysis discovered Three key themes that summarise the Maluti-a-Phofung community's and stakeholders' experiences regarding LED. These are: (1) Lack of Community Engagement and Participation, (2) Resource and Capacity Constraints, and (3) Stakeholder Collaboration and NGO Involvement. I discuss the themes by analysing participant interviews and discussing how they contribute to or hinder pro-poor LED. The chapter links these findings to existing literature on local economic development in South Africa, particularly the challenges of participatory governance, historical inequalities, and financial constraints facing rural municipalities. There is a need for more effective stakeholder collaboration and community involvement.

4.2 Lack of community engagement and participation

This theme reflects the challenges and obstacles communities face regarding involvement in decision-making processes that affect their lives. A lack of engagement can lead to feelings of marginalisation and distrust in institutions and policymakers (Trappet, 2019). Community engagement involves fostering a reciprocal relationship between community members and organisations (such as government, agencies, non-profits, or businesses) to ensure that the voices of community members are heard and valued (Hendricks, 2023). The theme will be grounded in Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation, which provides a model framework that examines the different levels of community involvement, ranging from non-participation to full citizen power. Each step on the ladder represents a degree of power and influence that communities hold in decision-making processes within their communities. Maluti-a-Phofung

citizens express frustration over their exclusion, with many feelings of being marginalised and powerless. This is highlighted when participants share their perceptions. A participant said:

“No, I am not involved in any decision-making regarding LED. We are not called, and we do not participate.”

This suggests a shallow level of engagement on the participation ladder. This could also point to a lack of structural mechanisms to involve community members in LED decision-making, corresponding to a failure at the bottom of the ladder where individuals are neither consulted nor informed. In this case, Maluti-a-Phofung citizens fall victim to manipulation, which refers to the decision-makers engaging the community primarily to control or mislead them (Arnstien, 1969). The community's views are often co-drafted to justify decisions already made rather than genuinely seeking input. A municipal official offered a contrasting view, asserting that:

“The community, the SMMEs and the Entrepreneurs. They inform our policies, so they are our backbone of LED initiatives. We plan programmes that look at our beneficiaries, the people in the community.”

This suggests a disconnect between the municipality's perception of community involvement and the reality on the ground. It is essential to differentiate between meaningful engagement and superficial involvement because community engagement should genuinely empower the community to shape their futures actively (Hurlbert & Gupta, 2024). The municipality merely seeks to calm community concerns without making room for their voices in decision-making, meaning they engage the community to pacify or reassure them rather than empower them. It often includes public relations strategies, showing sympathy for community issues without taking steps to address the underlying problems (Sabbott, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to be transparent in decision-making processes for building trust between authorities and communities. Decisions made behind closed doors without public input can lead to scepticism and a lack of legitimacy (Presidential Memorandum, 2009). In order to achieve meaningful community and economic development, local governments must move beyond mere consultation and create opportunities for the community to have a significant role in shaping the decisions that will impact their future.

In this analysis, sub-themes specify the barriers to community engagement, highlighting that participation is limited and often non-existent. Sub-theme 1 directly supports the central theme by identifying the fundamental obstacles to involvement, sub-theme 2 highlights the

importance of effective communication in fostering community engagement, and lastly, sub-theme three addresses aligning community engagement initiatives with policy frameworks. By recognising these interconnections, stakeholders can better understand the degrees of community participation and seek comprehensive strategies to improve engagement at all levels.

4.2.1 Lack of information and exclusion from decision-making

The community seems disengaged from decision-making processes related to LED initiatives, potentially leading to a lack of ownership or alignment with community needs and priorities. Participation becomes tokenistic when communities are only informed after decisions are made rather than being engaged in shaping those decisions. This practice portrays a false image of diversity and inclusion of marginalised groups in communities to give the appearance of equity and representation (Sherrer, 2018). This aligns with Gaventa's work (2005) on power dynamics in participatory processes, which shows that top-down approaches to consultation fail to build the trust necessary for meaningful community involvement.

The community needed more knowledge of LED projects. One barrier hindering participation is the need for more information and awareness among community members. A participant claimed:

“Only a few people in the community know what LED is. They do not participate. The people cannot participate in something they don't know.”

This perception came from mostly youth participants who aspire to be entrepreneurs and seek government assistance. Another young participant said,

“The community is just the third party in the LED initiatives. We are at the receiving end and usually receive less than we deserve, probably because of corruption. I am the youth of Maluti-a-Phofung. I was born and raised here but have never heard of a community meeting to implement LED initiatives. Here, I participate through suffering and collecting grants, then buying from the existing business. I guess that is how far I participate. Others try to open small markets and sell fruits and vegetables, clothes and bags. It doesn't last long because the people here are poor and do not have money to support developing businesses. I live a hand-to-mouth lifestyle.”

The participants hold the perception that the community needs to be more involved in the decision-making process regarding LED initiatives. This exclusion makes citizens feel like

recipients more than active participants when LED is implemented. This lack of participation suggests a lack of control over their economic future. The community also expresses negative emotions and hopelessness due to the lack of economic progress, which leads the community to face significant economic challenges, including limited financial resources that cause a struggle to meet ends meet, participate in economic activities, and sustain their businesses. Often, poor and marginalised communities need access to the necessary information that would enable them to engage effectively (Mendis *et al.*, 2023). This could be due to several factors, including low literacy levels, limited access to technology, the absence of platforms where relevant information is shared, mistrust, lack of interest, apathy or lack of resources (Flintoff, 2018). This lack of information perpetuates a cycle of exclusion, as community members are unaware of their rights to participate or do not know how to engage with complex economic development processes. Without access to adequate information, community members are limited to the lower rungs of Arnstein's ladder (1969). Another participant highlighted:

“I would say the community participates 10% in their decisions for the community LED. I participated only at the level where I became a program beneficiary.”

This perception views the community members' significant gap in information and a limited level of participation, stating that their involvement is minimal and primarily confined to being beneficiaries. The municipality should consider making considerable efforts to reach out to and engage the community as stakeholders. Models like the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) advocate for decision-making processes that include community members at every stage. This approach ensures that initiatives reflect community priorities and fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility (Chandra, 2010). Therefore, this lack of accessible information prevents residents from understanding or contributing to LED processes, creating a sense of disengagement. However, the municipality reports of 31 March 2022 show efforts of community engagement through:

1. IDP Representative Forum: A forum that allows representatives from various community sectors to engage in the IDP process.
2. Executive Mayor's Conversations: Engagement sessions with different stakeholders to gather input and feedback.
3. Public Participation Forum: A platform for community members to discuss issues and provide input on municipal matters.
4. Ward Community Meetings: Regularly convened by Councillors to engage with residents and gather their concerns and suggestions quarterly.

5. Published Annual Reports: Reports on municipal progress are publicly available for transparency.
6. Ward Committee Meetings: Meetings discuss local issues and gather feedback from community representatives.
7. Making IDP Documents Available: The IDP document is made accessible to all public members.
8. Outreach Programmes: The municipality conducts outreach initiatives to engage with communities and stakeholders directly.
9. Stakeholder Forums: Various forums, such as Farmers' Forums, Local Communicators Forums, Local AIDS Councils, Roads Forums, Sports Councils, Youth Councils, and structures for people with disabilities, facilitate engagement and participation.

These mechanisms are designed to ensure that community members have a voice in local governance and can contribute to decision-making processes. However, the community's views suggest that the municipality uses the top-down approach when implementing LED programs. This is when higher-level authorities initiate and control decisions and actions, and the community has no part in decision-making and program ownership (Asana, 2024). Furthermore, in a top-down approach, community members only receive directives and updates without having a role in shaping the content or direction of the communication. This can result in a one-way communication flow where community feedback is not actively obtained or incorporated (Yaping, 2018).

4.2.2 Communication and awareness barriers

The views expressed by participants about the need for more information on Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives seem to conflict with those of the municipality. This difference highlights a notable contrast between the community's perception of inadequate information and the municipality's assertion of proactive engagement. A participant revealed that:

“From my perspective, LED programmes are making a difference, but challenges persist. Young people can access the Internet and every other communication platform within the municipality. Still, the area is behind in economic development, no matter how hard we try. They prefer TikTok and Facebook instead. Stakeholder engagement is

important for overcoming these challenges and aligning programs with the community's aspirations.”

The respondent highlights a disconnect between the municipality’s perspective and community experiences. The city believes that its LED programmes are making a difference, suggesting they have made progress in improving local economic conditions.,and they have done enough as a municipality to engage the community and use all communication platforms. The mechanisms used for communication in the Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality include:

1. Newspaper Advertisements and Notices: Public notices inform the community about meetings and participation opportunities.
2. Use of Loud Hailers: Loud hailers invite communities to meetings and events.

The municipality’s belief that young people have access to the internet and various communication platforms reflects an expectation that information can reach the community through these channels. While the municipality assumes that young people can access information about LED initiatives online, the community claims they are unaware of community meetings and initiatives. This indicates a gap in effective communication. The municipality's methods may not reach the intended audience or may not resonate with their preferences. Here are a few observations on the communication channels used by the city: There is a lack of social media engagement on the MAP municipality's social media (Facebook and Twitter) pages. There is no content related to local economic development or even content that the community can relate to, like news and updates on the community’s context. The municipality’s claim that young people are not seeking information on LED contradicts their content updates on social media. Social media is a primary channel for youth engagement; if used as a communication platform, the youth would easily access information. The municipality relies on traditional media (radio, newspapers, and loud hailers), which may not engage younger demographics that predominantly utilise digital platforms for information. These are the challenges in communication identified by the municipality in the 2022 report:

1. Lack of Capacitation: There is a lack of training for ward committee members, hindering effective communication and community engagement.
2. Ineffective Utilisation of Platforms: The functionality of public participation platforms such as Ward Committees and village meetings has been poor, leading to ineffective communication of community issues and concerns.

3. Information Management: There is a lack of a proper system for managing information from the community to the municipality and sector departments, which affects the reporting back to the community.
4. Poor Recording of Information: There is inadequate information recording during public participation engagements, making it difficult to track and respond to community needs.
5. Minimal Commitment from Community Leaders: There is a lack of commitment from Community Participation Leaders (CPLWs), which affects the mobilisation and engagement of the community

The municipality needs improved communication strategies, particularly in reaching the youth and effectively publishing information about LED. The municipality has a poorly-maintained or updated website with irrelevant information, which can lead to frustration and decreased community engagement. Content is not updated or uploaded in a foreign language, alienating users who do not speak that language. The absence of relevant information regarding LED on the website suggests a need for better resource allocation and communication strategies within the municipality.

4.2.3 Policy alignment

Creating partnerships between government entities and local communities can enhance the flow of information and ensure that decision-making processes are more inclusive and equitable (Krishna, 2003). Municipality officials in the LED department pointed out that efforts are being made to involve the community in LED initiatives through mechanisms like the Integrated Development Plan, which is a strategic framework used by municipalities in South Africa to guide development and service delivery over five years (Knysna Municipality, 2024). It ensures that local development aligns with national and provincial priorities while addressing the community's needs. The IDP involves community participation to identify local concerns and set development priorities. It integrates various sectors, such as housing, transportation, and water services, into a coordinated plan to promote holistic development (Saldanha Bay Municipality, n/d). Additionally, the IDP outlines how resources will be allocated and includes mechanisms for monitoring progress. Its main objectives are to improve service delivery, promote socio-economic development, ensure sustainability, and enhance governance through active community involvement (Knysna Municipality, 2024). The municipality participant mentioned that:

“Remember, we do the IDP. We go to the people and hear their concerns and what they need. Poverty has given birth to crime; when we do the IDP, we want to hear what the community needs, then we say let’s come back and do 1 2 3, e.g. xxx said they spend too much to to to Setsing, so now we will make them a shopping centre and that will create jobs, crime will decrease, and the conjunction in town will decrease. We all revamp old buildings and lease them out to small businesses.”

The participant viewed community participation as an essential tool enhancing LED progress as the community can identify their needs and priorities. With this strategy, the municipality can identify LED initiatives that directly address the community’s accessibility and employment needs. This perception views the city as working with the community to develop economic plans. These plans are put in the LED office's development pipeline. By laying out concrete actions to respond to community feedback, the IDP fosters a sense of ownership and encourages collective responsibility among community members. Below is a table outlining the 5 phases of the IDP process.

MAP FINAL 2022 – 2027 IDP

be adopted in May/June 2022. The IDP Process as depicted in the figure below is a continuous cycle of planning, implementation and evaluation.

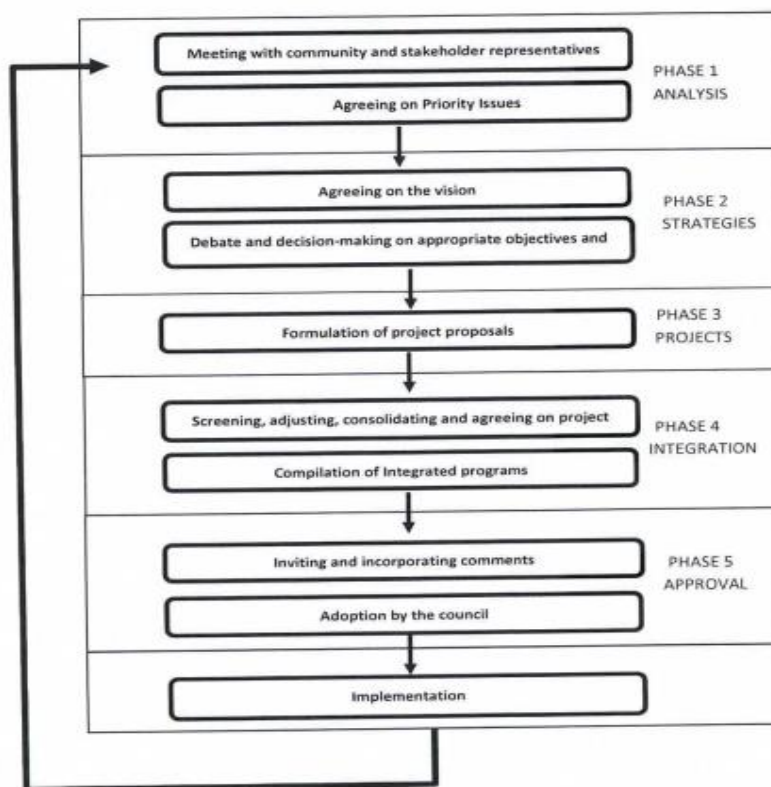


Figure 4.2: List IDP process in the Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality

However, the community gives a perception that the IDP does not serve its purpose because phases one and two do not happen. A resident highlighted:

“My sister, I will tell you the truth. I am not involved in any way. Suppose I do not try to educate myself more in higher education to improve my skills in finding a job. I told you my life will not be impacted in any way.”

This view highlights that the municipality's inclusion mechanism is either ineffective or inaccessible to much of the community. Formal participation methods, like the IDP, feel distant and disconnected from the community's realities. While the IDP process aims to be participatory, feedback suggests it lacks the depth needed to create a sense of ownership over

LED initiatives. Addressing one issue can lead to positive outcomes in others, emphasising the need for integrated strategies in community planning.

4.3 Service Delivery Constraints and resource limitations

4.3.1 Infrastructure deterioration and service daps

Poor leadership and mismanagement in local governance directly contribute to the neglect of infrastructure, mismanagement of resources, and the inefficient delivery of services, especially in low-income communities. When leadership prioritises its interest over public welfare development, efforts are undermined, deteriorating essential services and community vitality. According to Hyden, Court, and Mease (2004), weak governance structures and a lack of accountability mechanisms exacerbate the problem, allowing leaders to divert resources for personal gain. Similarly, Rose-Ackerman and Palifka (2016) emphasise that corruption within leadership depletes resources meant for development, leading to infrastructure decay and poor public service outcomes. The neglect of infrastructure further diminishes community vitality, as shown by Grindle (2007), who argues that failures in service delivery disproportionately affect low-income populations, leaving them vulnerable to cycles of poverty and underdevelopment. When asked about the significant challenges that hinder service delivery to low-income people within the district, a participant suggested that poor leadership could contribute to the neglect of public service delivery. She also showed the impact of neglect on the community's vitality. A participant from an NPO indicated that:

“Ignorance, I feel like the people in power want to only focus on their power and not on services to the people who put them in power. Everything in this town, including the lights, the buildings, the roads, and the service, is not there. I would say it's probably because of the funding that isn't available much.”

The participant highlighted how Maluti-a-Phofung is declining due to a lack of investment and economic activities. She further indicated that the deteriorating state of the community's infrastructure severely affects residents' quality of life and the town's overall attractiveness for potential businesses and investment. The community's social and economic fabric also fails when the basic services and infrastructure fail, revealing a sense of neglect. The participants feel that the leaders in power prioritise their interests before those of the community, resulting in a decline in trust they have in leadership and a decline in community resources. This aligns with Cammack's (2007) analysis of neopatrimonialism, where leaders prioritise personal gain

at the expense of public welfare, undermining governance and community development efforts. Another municipality official held the perception that the community decline negatively impacts small businesses as they struggle to access essential resources such as funding, infrastructure, and skills, making it hard to grow. He noted that:

“Because the municipality is broke, they can’t maintain any source of water, electricity, or infrastructure. It is a challenge to implement LEDs where there is inconsistency. If the municipality fails to meet its basic needs, it cannot support small businesses and LED projects without external funding. So now we have the issue of dependency. Is what we depend on sustainable and reliable until we get back on our feet? That’s a challenge.”

This response reveals the broad systematic issues within the municipality that hinder local economic development (LED) efforts and create a dependency on external funding sources. Such dependency can undermine long-term sustainability, as Cloete, Rabie and de Coning (2014) point out that sustainable LED requires internal capacity and resource management to reduce external reliance. Additionally, Louis and Macamo (2011) suggest that small businesses face significant barriers to growth without consistent municipal support, stifling broader economic revitalisation efforts. This case demonstrates the difficulties of fostering local development in the context of economic constraints and inconsistent service provision, reinforcing the need for municipalities to address basic infrastructural needs to enable economic growth. that there is a decline in services and quality of life. The unreliable supply of electricity, water and public space maintenance signifies increased frustration of community confidence. Infrastructure is the pride and backbone of every community (Phil Myrick LLC, 2024). When it deteriorates, it shows neglect and undermines the resident's quality of living (De Swardt, 2024). When communities lack the basic services that support health, safety, and well-being, residents struggle with convenience and may encounter potential hazards. The interplay between neglect and economic decline can lead to businesses struggling and closing, job loss, further economic hardship, and a sense of despair among residents. This cycle affects the present state of the community and diminishes its potential for future growth and development (Cammack, 2007).

4.3.2 Service delivery and small business impact

Inadequate service delivery is a barrier to the economic progress of small businesses within the community. The lack of consistent access to basic services such as electricity and water was

frequently cited as a significant barrier to entrepreneurial success. One rural resident participant expressed frustration with prolonged periods of infrastructural neglect. Many participants said there needed to be more service delivery. This aligns with Rogerson (2014), who argues that local economic development (LED) in South Africa is closely linked to effective service provision, and without these foundational elements, small businesses struggle to thrive. One participant voiced his sense of neglect and isolation felt by rural residents.

“As you can see, we are in the rural areas where we are forgotten. Nobody cares about us. You know electricity can go down for more than a month, and no one will come to fix it. We have a water crisis. I don’t know if the whole district suffers from the same calamities. We have a problem of poor service delivery.”

This participant suggested that the government has forgotten to pay attention to the community as it does not respond to its call for help. This also speaks to the issues of unequal development, as rural areas get less attention and have fewer resources. According to Turok (2014), urban centres benefit more from development policies, leaving rural areas disadvantaged. This uneven development fosters economic inequality and limits the capacity of small businesses in under-served regions to grow and contribute to local economies. Long periods of blackouts lasting for over a month make this an urgent call for infrastructure development. Such shortages signal a sense of neglect, resulting in doubt as to whether all the communities in the district have the same experiences, which suggests a situation of inequality in access to essential services. Gumede (2008) has reflected on the impact of apartheid in South Africa, leaving a trail of poverty and inequality limiting entrepreneurial success, therefore, South Africa is resolving social imbalances difficult to undo. The democratic government faces challenges in rebuilding institutional mechanisms and implementing legislation, with the Policy Unit providing crucial support. (Enaifoghe & Vezi-Magigaba 2022) reveal that The South African government has implemented various economic development programs since 1994 to address socioeconomic injustices. These include the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR), Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative (AsgiSA), New Development Plan (NDP), Industrial Policy Action Plan, National Infrastructure Plan, and National Industrial Policy Framework (NIPF).

4.3.3 Limited access to community resources

Entrepreneurs in Maluti-a-Phofung face a challenge in accessing working spaces. Even though the community has office and business spaces it is difficult to obtain a space because of administration and policies that marginalize SMMEs Mhlongo and Daya (2023) highlight that administrative problems and difficult application processes can discourage entrepreneurs from securing necessary facilities. This is supported by Hillbom and Green (2019), who emphasises that historical and structural barriers continue to affect access to business resources. The legacy of exclusionary practices in South Africa mirrors the difficulties faced by current entrepreneurs in accessing necessary facilities. Non-profit organisations viewed the perception that inadequate access to resources significantly affects economic development in Maluti-a-Phofung. NPOs support small businesses by providing essential skill development, resource access, mentorship, networking opportunities, and advocacy, collectively fostering entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, particularly among women (Nandan & Kushwaha, 2017). A director of an NPO reported challenges related to access. She stated:

“There are people who apply for office spaces and business spaces, but before you get one, you must run from pillar to post until you give up or run out of funds. There is no easy access to these facilities”.

This sentiment emphasises the history of exclusion where there were restrictions on black people owning businesses. During apartheid, black entrepreneurs were deliberately excluded from economic participation, particularly in owning and operating businesses. Laws such as the Group Areas Act and the Bantu Education Act restricted black people’s access to resources, education, and business opportunities, which led to widespread poverty and systemic underdevelopment of black communities (Southall, 2016). Maluti-a-Phofung has unoccupied business premises with limited access. This means that even post-apartheid, spatial (limited in terms of physical space) and economic inequalities persist. The statement points out that while business spaces may be physically available in places like Maluti-a-Phofung, the lengthy and complicated approval processes create additional barriers for black entrepreneurs trying to break into the market. This phenomenon aligns with the work of Rogerson (2004), who argues that systemic barriers continue to limit black entrepreneurs' access to business infrastructure in South Africa despite governmental efforts to support small businesses through policies like the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act. Participants revealed that the processes and bureaucratic inefficiencies frustrate business owners, often leading to a drain of

financial and emotional resources, contributing to a high rate of business failure or relocation to other areas with fewer restrictions. Another participant highlighted that:

“The xxx is responsible for giving people premises, but they are unoccupied premises, and they are many people I know that need space to start their businesses, but they will end up giving up or moving to other locations to start the business because of all the inconvenience.”

This limitation hinders entrepreneurship activities, limits job creation, and delays economic progress, as unoccupied premises can provide opportunities to aspiring entrepreneurs to help reduce unemployment. The identified problem suggests a lack of strategic planning and responsiveness from the responsible authority as they fail to match available resources to the needs of local businesses. Small businesses struggle to establish themselves without these resources, leading to missed job creation opportunities and local economic development. In Maluti-a-Phofung, where unemployment is already a significant issue, Maluti-a-Phofung is responsible for 66% of the unemployment in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District (Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality, 2022). Therefore, this exclusion and modern inefficiencies further exacerbate poverty and underdevelopment.

4.3.4 Financial challenges

The Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality IDP (2022) revealed that it faces numerous financial challenges that hinder its capacity to deliver services effectively. Poor service delivery has historically led to community unrest and resistance to paying for services, further exacerbating the municipality’s revenue issues. Ageing infrastructure compounds these problems, particularly in delivering essential services like water and electricity, while illegal electricity connections contribute to frequent system overloads and transformer damage. Additionally, the municipality struggles with low billing and collection rates, which severely limits revenue generation. The financial burden is further strained by an increased salary bill and delayed billing practices, which disrupt cash flow and prevent the charging of interest. The lack of cost-reflective tariffs undermines financial sustainability, while outstanding debts, including a significant amount owed to Eskom, add further pressure. External factors, such as the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and high unemployment rates, have also diminished residents' ability to pay for services, making it even more difficult for the municipality to maintain financial stability. The municipality LED employees shared that there is a lack of

financial resources. As a result, the municipality does not make enough money to deliver service to the community. A participant opined:

“I think my colleagues also mentioned financial resources; people from the rural part of the municipality do not buy electricity or pay for water, taxes, and levies; therefore, there is not enough income. The little we get from parking tickets and the few buying electricity is not enough for service delivery.”

The perception shows that the municipality does not cut off electricity and water supply from those who do not pay their utilities. Even though it financially strains the municipality. Cutting supply might be a repetition of historical marginalisation. According to the National Treasury (2021), political pressure can play a role, as municipalities may avoid disconnections to maintain public support or prevent backlash from residents. Social responsibility is another factor, especially in low-income areas where cutting off essential services would disproportionately affect those struggling financially. Legal and regulatory constraints often govern when and how municipalities can disconnect services, with specific procedures that can be difficult to enforce (Masango, 2003). Administrative challenges, such as internal capacity constraints, inadequate staffing, poor billing systems, and ineffective credit control measures, further complicate debt collection efforts. Municipalities may also fear public unrest, protests, or social discontent from cutting off services. Additionally, many municipalities lack robust debt collection practices, leading to ineffective enforcement of payment obligations. These factors contribute to a reluctance to disconnect services for non-payment, even when financial sustainability is at risk (Ngxongo, 2003).

4.3.5 Reliance on external funding

To compensate for past imbalances, people are given access to basic community resources even though it negatively strains the municipality's budget. It is difficult for the municipality to cut off utility supply because they know people in rural Maluti-a-Phofung rely on social grants, without any economic progress or development. Since the municipality needs more revenue, it depends on external funding, raising concerns about LED projects' long-term viability. If these funding sources diminish or conditions change, communities may find themselves in an uncertain position with fewer options for support. Phutahditjhaba is named the poorest in the eastern free state under the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, with a 40% unemployment rate (SAHO, 2020). The municipality must strategically identify sustainable income streams to boost local revenue. A municipal official stated:

“We go 50/50 with stakeholders, last term they assisted 80 to 100% as the municipality was broke. We didn’t even get salaries we were on the payroll of those stakeholders. They play a huge role they help us fund and perform service delivery at their cost.”

The municipal official's perception that external stakeholders often pay salaries highlights a significant reliance on external funding to support the municipality's financial needs. The reliance on external funding means that the municipality can not generate revenue to cover all its expenses resulting to financial distress (Glasser & Wright, 2020). Municipalities face financial challenges due to poor debt collection practices and billing practices, which have resulted in only 34% of their revenue being collected. The economic downturn has worsened these issues, leaving them reliant on an equitable share from the national government, amounting to R77,84 billion. Poor debt-collection practices and billing contribute to these financial losses (Auditor general South Africa, 2022). Additionally, external funders may want to gain publicity and dictate how finances can be spent (Education Training Unit,n.d.) A participant shared the realities of over-dependence. She highlighted that:

“Mostly funding and giving us a purpose and direction on which projects to consider when it comes to funding.”

According to the Maluti-a-Phofung IDP (2022) clarified that dependency on external funding is caused by significant infrastructure backlogs, including challenges in providing essential services like water, sanitation, and electricity, necessitating additional financial support for upgrades and development. Municipal participants shared the perception that low collection of revenue and tax rates from residents, make the issue of poor service delivery worse, compelling it to seek external funds to maintain service delivery. However, these funds come with specification on what to spend them on. Budget cuts from provincial and national governments can make it difficult for local municipalities to deliver basic services especially in poor communities (Municipality Data and Intelligence, n.d.). Rising costs of bulk services due to annual tariff increases also contribute to the municipality's financial challenges, reinforcing the need for external support, to meet the needs of the community external funding is an important supplement to limited (Manuel & Erasmus, 2024).

4.4 Stakeholder collaboration and NGO involvement

4.4.1 Building trust and mutual accountability among stakeholders

The state and all its levels of government are a crucial stakeholder in LED. Also, the government must collaborate with external stakeholders like businesses, communities, and NGOs. In municipalities lacking the necessary skills and capacity, these stakeholders should be co-owned and involved in the planning, design, delivery, and evaluation of LED projects (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023). Stakeholder collaboration also helps the municipality align with community values and improve their services delivery (Sedmak, 2021). Furthermore, engaging stakeholders ensures diversity and different community perspective which greatly informs decision making, enhances transparency and accountability (Zwane & Matsiliza, 2022) Building trust and transparency by improving communication and demonstrate accountability to avoid power imbalances between stakeholders. Multi-stakeholder partnerships should focus on achieving shared outcomes that benefit the local population rather than the interests of a few powerful actors.

4.4.2 Limited involvement of Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs)

NPOs play a crucial role in engaging rural communities in participatory development processes, addressing the needs of rural communities and addressing the complex relationship between environment, economy, culture, and politics in rural societies (Utuk, 2014). However, the broader challenge of stakeholder collaboration often contributes to the limited involvement of NPOs, as ineffective coordination, resource constraints, and governance issues hinder their ability to contribute to LED initiatives actively (Nwauche & Flanigan, 2022). Even though NPOs contribute to capacity building and implement initiatives consider the needs of the vulnerable they are left out from development initiatives (Pillay, 2024). One respondent held the perception that they work in isolation with the municipality. The participant said:

“To be honest I do not know of any program in my area, but I have only heard of those offices providing such services because back in the days I used to have XXX and XXX they used to empower local economic development. But now since it’s gone to be honest I am not Well informed about their activities I just know that they exist and yes I do not know of any recent activities or what I would be lying when I can say I do.”

The participant expressed uncertainty about the current state of stakeholder collaboration and local economic development initiatives in the area indicating a disconnect or lack of

communication between NPOs and the municipality. Bryson, Crosby and Brisolaro (2015) state that effective stakeholder collaboration requires clear communication and information sharing among all parties involved. NGOs are increasingly preferred by international development agencies for their efficient, effective, people-centered, community-based, socially sensitive, gender responsive, and sustainable approach to addressing national development priorities and rural community needs (Otuk,2014),

A lack of awareness may hinder the potential for collaboration and successful community initiatives. The concept of "institutional isomorphism" by Powell (1983) suggests that organisations may conform to the structures of existing institutions (like local economic development offices), but this does not guarantee meaningful interactions or collaboration. Effective stakeholder collaboration involves proactive engagement rather than passive recognition. Furthermore, the participant wanted more information regarding the municipality's initiatives, suggesting increased transparency and communication could enhance collaboration. The importance of transparency in stakeholder engagement is emphasised by Agranoff and McGuire (2003), who argue that sharing information supports trust-building and collaborative networks. Improved communication channels can facilitate better partnerships between NPOs and municipal offices. A member of a funding organisation suggested transparency to avoid duplication. She highlighted that:

"To ensure this space is inclusive and sustainable, we need to focus on collaboration. Based on my understanding, NGOs and NPOs participate actively in government initiatives. However, the challenge we face is that many organisations may be targeting similar goals without being aware of each other's efforts. By fostering more collaboration among these groups, we can better serve the communities we aim to help and enhance the overall impact of our work."

The MAP IDP (2022) points out that municipalities need to implement a differentiated approach to financing, planning, and support, which can help avoid duplication of efforts across different government levels. Specifically, it mentions the need for partnerships that allow for effective resource allocation and service delivery, thereby reducing the repetition of tasks and enhancing overall efficiency in achieving developmental outcomes. Another participant also held the same perception of making community engagement a standard practice where municipalities institutionalise processes that require community consultation in all development initiatives, allowing for ongoing feedback and adjustments based on resident

input. When planning new initiatives, municipal authorities should prioritise co-creation with the community. The participant highlighted the following:

“That is what I am saying when I say they must work with us because we have the people we have the numbers of people that can attend, but they want to work alone and not involve us. We are working for the people who attend our events and programmes.”

This perception means that NPOs can ensure successful event attendance and participation during initiatives. This grassroots connection is helpful as it fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among community members, which is crucial for the sustainability of any initiative. When those in power operate in silos, they risk designing and executing programmes that lack community relevance or support. However, collaboration will enhance programme outreach and impact from the onset of development as programs will reflect the true needs and desires of the community. Agranoff and McGuire (2003) assert that transparency and information-sharing are vital for building trust among stakeholders, enhancing collaborative networks and improving initiatives' effectiveness. Organisations highlighted their extensive collaboration with various stakeholders, including NGOs, local municipalities, and specific departments focused on the community's special needs, like disability and cooperatives. This collaboration is important for sharing resources and information, especially related to funding and entrepreneurship. A participant shared the following:

“I work with xxxx all the faculties, community engagement, I have xxx and agencies I do I work with them, NGOs a series of them, the department of xxx, xxxx I have several relationships. I might need people who need business information, So I rely on them to help us with entrepreneurial information. I forgot to include xxx they have a program called xxx and I work with them as I can have similar projects. When there is funding information or any knowledge I work together. I have also an online platform I share information and do workshops with them. Xxx I connect with them to connect to the people. When you want information I bring it together with the people. xxxx assist us with funding and programmings, services and information.”

And another participant shared the similar view of building strong networks for better access to resources and achieving a common goal when he said:

“OK, I work with various stakeholders. The one that I work with, especially for people with disability, is an NGO that is called xxx. Also, work with the xxx, that one

specifically works with cooperatives and NGOs, and NPOs, and then I work with all the local municipalities of Thabo Mofutsanyana. I work together with the xxx office and xxx office and then I also work with my sister department or entity, the xxx. And then I also work with xxx as Well. Unfortunately, xxx, I don't have an office. But I also work closely together with them and then the other one that I work with is the Free State xxx. Yeah, they are. So anyone that comes, I, I have a formal structure that I call xxx, that LED for us. This is where all the municipalities, the LED and the xxx unit are part off. Yeah, the district municipality. All the other stakeholders that have mentioned where I know the with everything that is lacking social development.”

The participant highlighted the importance of connecting with community members, particularly those with disabilities and entrepreneurs, indicating a commitment to addressing specific community needs through targeted programmes. The concept of "full citizen participation" (Cornwall, 2008) aligns with this theme, emphasising that communities should actively engage in decision-making processes that affect their lives. Adopting the bottom-up community development approach helps prioritize the needs and perspective of the community by engaging them from grassroots level to inform the decision-making process and provide evidence to support goals and project outcomes (Wayodi, 2023).

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the chapter uses thematic analysis to analyse collected data against literature. Participants shared their views on challenges they face within the municipality regarding LED. The participants mentioned poor communication, underdevelopment, lack of service delivery and resources. Additionally, the study highlights the impact of poor leadership on community decline, inadequate service delivery, barriers to policy implementation and limited access to resources for entrepreneurs. Recommendations to overcome these challenges included improving community participation, skills development and access.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the study results. I will give a brief summary of the chapter and discuss the main finding against existing literature. I identify gaps in practice and literature regarding the experiences of Maluti-a-Phofung residents regarding LED. The chapter ends by offering recommendations for further research and exploring implications to theory, practice, policy, or future study.

5.2 Overview of study

LED aims to maximise economic potential in municipal localities, enhance macroeconomic resilience and create employment (Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs, 2024). Therefore, everyone should be involved in LED, including the government, local business owners, and local citizens. LED must improve quality of life, unemployment, poverty, and inequality (Meyer, 2014). The 1996 Constitution of South Africa has strongly encouraged local governments to step in and take the lead in LED. However, achieving success in pro-poor implementation remains a challenge due to limited capacity, inadequate funding, unsustainable community programs, and insufficient local economy analysis (Nel & Rogerson, 2005). The study investigates the challenges residents, municipal officials, and NGOs face in achieving LED as a community-driven effort.

Chapter 1 provided an overview and background of community and pro-poor local economic development. It highlighted the economic and locational of Maluti-a-Phofung, a semi-urban area with township and village characteristics. The chapter discussed the research problem and potential solutions. In this case, there is poor or low economic development in Maluti-a-Phofung. A possible solution is using community development to enhance LED using a bottom-up approach: community engagement. The chapter outlined the aim.

Aim: “To explore and demonstrate the potential of community development as a tool for pro-poor LED initiatives regarding poverty reduction, economic growth, and social inclusion. This

is to understand the existing policy landscape, assess the alignment of policies with community needs, and identify potential gaps and shortcomings in the policy framework.”

The following objectives applied:

- To identify and discuss the community's economic challenges in Maluti-a-Phofung and how they impact poverty levels.
- To investigate the current pro-poor local economic development initiatives in Maluti-a-Phofung and their effectiveness.
- To assess the role of local government in promoting pro-poor local economic development in Maluti-a-Phofung.
- To explore the potential of partnerships between relevant stakeholders, the private sector, civil society, and local government, in promoting pro-poor local economic development in Maluti-a-Phofung.
- To recommend practical strategies for promoting pro-poor LED in Maluti-a-Phofung that can be applied to similar communities.

The second chapter discussed the history of economic development, key concepts, and principles influencing community development. It analysed the theoretical framework and its application to economic, social, and environmental studies. The third chapter discussed the research methodology, focusing on an interpretivist perspective within the constructivist framework. The explorative research design, employing a qualitative approach to investigate community development and pro-poor LED initiatives in Maluti-a-Phofung. Snowball sampling is used for participant selection, with ethical considerations emphasised. Interviews were conducted in English and transcribed in English.

The fourth chapter analysed the LED projects of Maluti-a-Phofung, revealing five key themes: Lack of Community Engagement, Resource and Capacity Constraints, Mismanagement of Funds, Inadequate Service Delivery, and Stakeholder Collaboration. It compared these findings to literature and policy, highlighting the municipality's challenges and the need for improved policy alignment.

5.3 Summary of key findings

I identified 5 main findings which will be discussed below followed by solutions and recommendations.

5.3.1 Main finding 1: Poor community engagement and communication

The transition from apartheid to democratic governance in South Africa has been marked by a lack of community engagement, leading to a loss of trust in the country's democratic governance (Ofusuri, 2024). The transition has promoted human rights and civil liberties, but it has also led to poverty traps such as homelessness, unemployment, and lack of access to essential services (Triegaardt, 2007). The 2007 National Policy Framework for Public Participation aims to integrate societal sectors and ensure equitable access to essential services, addressing marginalised communities' historical exclusion. However, concerns arise about government infringement, hindering economic development and poverty. The 2007 National Policy Framework for Public Participation outlines various tools for community involvement in municipal affairs. However, poor governance and leadership contribute to poor policy implementation. Municipal officials use the IDP to inform LED decisions, including Blugumbosch shopping centre, Miya Labs youth development program, and building revamping.

Poor policy implementation in South Africa is attributed to factors such as inadequate capacity, political interference, weak policy formulation, community engagement, governance challenges, implementation complexity, and lack of consensus (Govender, 2012). The study revealed that people in Maluti-a-Phofung lack access to information about LED initiatives, with many expressing unawareness of any LED initiatives or community meetings, which contradicts the municipality IDP informing LED decision. The IDP requires active citizen participation. This direct contrast to policy requirements and public access to information and communication about development efforts affect the community. As a result, community members face ongoing poverty without viable pathways for improvement, creating a huge dependence on social grants and for relief (Hudson, 2019). It was also revealed that the poverty trap leads to high teenage pregnancy because having a child is a guarantee to being a recipient of social grants for childcare. These factors are a result of poor policy implementation, corruption, opportunistic decision-making, and a disconnect between community needs and implemented policies (Development Bank Southern Africa, 2024).

5.3.2 Main finding 2: Capacity constraints and mismanagement of funds hinder development

The lack of efficient public services not only hinders growth but also weakens community cohesion and resilience. Gauteng News reported in March 2024 that South Africa is in a service

delivery crisis because of the South Africa's apartheid history which has impacted marginalised groups, leading to poor service delivery. Limited resources, infrastructure, and marginalisation hinder service provision. Municipalities face capacity restrictions, corruption, and mismanagement, resulting in ineffective project planning and maintenance. The participants expressed a shared view that there is poor service delivery within the municipality. According to officials, this is due to a lack of revenue, with the municipality struggling to cover its debts, pay staff, and provide essential services. As a result, the community's trust in the government has significantly depleted. Residents sounded like they have lost hope that they will ever be positive change, due to fear of corrupt systems and officials in the municipality. The residents showed concern about corruption being the leading factor to community decline as they revealed that money is allocated by the national government to fix the firms, the parks and the roads but because of corruption none of those things were done and the community is declining drastically to the point that it lost its homeland status. In a study by Asha and Makalela (2019), they noted that service delivery challenges persist. Many communities across the country have voiced dissatisfaction with the government and municipalities for failing to provide sufficient basic services.

The situation has led to worsening conditions in the area. Roads are poorly maintained, while electricity and water supplies are inconsistent. Although the country is facing loadshedding, Maluti-a-Phofung experiences power cuts even beyond scheduled periods. A key challenge emphasised by Maluti-a-Phofung municipality officials is that many residents do not pay for water and electricity. This non-payment adds further strain on the municipality's already limited financial resources. Residents, on the other hand, cited high unemployment and reliance on RDP houses (government-provided housing) as reasons they cannot afford to pay for these services. Although they are aware of the community's deteriorating condition, they feel they are not in a financial position to pay for services and escape poverty.

Despite these challenges, the municipality has made efforts to develop the area, including building a new mall and upgrading the local plaza. However, these initiatives have not significantly improved the overall conditions, as the town remains littered with garbage, and the roads are plagued by large potholes. Participants indicated that they have lost hope on the system because of effectively delivering services they push personal and political agendas. The municipality is the level of government most engaged with local citizens, they have direct insight into the daily lives and concerns of the population (Kanyane, 2013). They ensure basic

services are provided to communities, However, many municipalities in South Africa struggle with their inability and reputational issues of corruption and are often seen as ineffective in improving service delivery (RSA, 2009; Shongwe and Mayer, 2023). Participants expressed concerns that corruption and neglect have contributed to rising health issues, high crime rates, and increased drug abuse. Many young people have turned to substance use to cope with economic hardships. Additionally, some have resorted to transactional relationships to support their families financially. Citizens conveyed a deep sense of concern and sadness over the difficult choices young people are making to manage these challenges.

5.3.3 Main finding 3: Stakeholder collaboration and community development are important for growth

Stakeholder collaboration is a complex process that requires a centralised communication hub, alignment on goals and expectations, and active engagement from all parties involved (Bojer,2021). Without a designated hub, stakeholders may struggle to stay informed and engaged, leading to inefficiencies and dissatisfaction. To address these challenges, organisations should invest in robust communication tools and ensure all stakeholders are on the same page (Kamara, 2022). Primary stakeholders in LED initiatives include local government, community members, SMEs, NGOs, and entrepreneurs. They directly plan, fund, and implement projects. Secondary stakeholders indirectly impact the process, including regional and national government agencies, financial institutions, educational institutions, chambers of commerce, media outlets, and external investors. They provide policies, funding, and support for local economic development, workforce development, innovation, and networking (fundsforNGOs, 2024).

Stakeholders recognise the tourism potential of Maluti-a-Phofung, as the place is located among the attractive Maluti Mountains. Participants believe that investing in this sector could significantly stimulate the local economy. The LED department is divided into three focus areas: agriculture, tourism, and small business. However, in recent years, especially since COVID-19, the department has prioritised agriculture, distributing food parcels and seeds to support small farmers and hawkers. In collaboration with tourism stakeholders, guesthouse and hotel owners have also worked to rate local accommodation to enhance service standards. Despite these efforts, an innovative strategy to revitalise declining tourism is yet to emerge.

The participants expressed a perception that stakeholder engagement with the municipality is limited. NGO representatives highlighted issues such as the duplication of events and services,

which they attributed to a lack of collaboration and partnership with the municipality. Organisations also suggested that the municipality struggles to effectively reach its target audience without the support of NGOs. Since NGOs are embedded in the community and trusted by its members, partnerships would likely increase impact and participation. However, the NGOs feel their role is often overlooked and that they are not adequately informed about economic development efforts, which diminishes their potential contributions. Firstly, NGOs are increasingly integrated into new public management frameworks and contribute to a mixed welfare economy. Secondly, they are considered essential to 'civil society-social capital' approaches, particularly within the Neo-Tocquevillian framework, which emphasises the relationship between social capital and engagement in voluntary associations. Lastly, they play a key role in a broader social accountability perspective that views them as tools for enhancing transparency, increasing accountability, and improving the governance of public institutions (Anheier, 2009:1082). Opposition stakeholders can negatively impact outcomes, but open dialogue is crucial. Marginalised stakeholders, like women and indigenous peoples, may lack recognition or capacity for equal participation. Strategic foresight is needed to determine the necessary time and support for their participation (FundsforNGOs, 2024).

The municipality's communication with its stakeholders is weak, as both citizens and NGOs report a lack of effective outreach. They believe that political agendas may be influencing poor efforts of communication, with politicians presenting municipal projects as personal initiatives. This approach reduces both the reach and impact of developmental projects, as residents often perceive them as political events and may avoid participation if associated with an unfavourable party. This perception further damages public trust, making the municipality appear inattentive and unresponsive to citizen needs. The municipality further disclosed that it receives funding from stakeholders to support small businesses, however small businesses expressed frustration, feeling that high taxes and rental fees, combined with poor service delivery, are stifling their operations.

5.4 Recommendations

This section of the chapter summarises the key findings discussed in detail above and offers recommendations for future research, aimed at guiding readers and students interested in this area of study.

Main findings	Recommendation
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<p>1. Poor community engagement and communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local government (LED) should find ways to communicate effectively with citizens and implement the principles of Batho Pele (Information/Knowledge) • Invest in AI and digital skills • The local government must have an accessible and informative website
<p>2. Capacity constraints and mismanagement of funds hinder development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage social entrepreneurship • Fight corruption by exposing it through independent community bodies. • Evaluate the effectiveness of entrepreneurial support programmes in reducing poverty.
<p>3. Stakeholder collaboration and community development is important for growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen community-led initiatives • Public and private sector partnership in community and economic development. • Partnership with educational institutions

Table 5.1: Recommendations

Recommendations A

1. Effective communication and implementation of Batho Pele principles

The Maluti-a-Phofung local municipality should have clear communication with the public, utilise community newspapers, community forums, public announcements and create accessible resources for understanding LED initiatives. The local government should put an emphasis on the Batho Pele principles and really work with the community and attend socio-economic challenges through allowing the community to lead their own development. The community is always rich in indigenous knowledge and solutions that will solve the challenges they face they lack resources and empowerment to reach their full potential. Putting the people as leaders of development will not only emphasise transparency and accessibility but also make residents feel valued, heard and show respect for public services.

2. Invest in AI and digital skill

The world is moving forward with technology and industrial revolution, investing in skilling the youth with technology and digital space skills will help the youth leverage on online and remote opportunities worldwide. It will open doors to the whole world online and add access to the global economy. This would boost the confidence of young people addressing unemployment and fostering inclusive growth.

3. Develop a functional, accessible government website

The world has moved into a digital space it would be ideal for the Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality to catch-up on technology. The municipality should maintain their website updating and uploading their financial reports, progress on projects, vacancy applications, tendering system, and any communication to be sent to the community. By transitioning into the digital space, the municipality can ensure transparency, ease of access to resources, and increased community engagement. This would streamline communication and make it easier for residents to interact with local government services.

Recommendations B

1. Encourage social entrepreneurship

Maluti-a-Phofung's local government should encourage young people to come up with innovative social impact entrepreneurial ideas that will not only give jobs and benefit the community economically but also socio-economically. If there are more developed social enterprises the community will be released out of poverty because one business not only focuses on profit but also on the community wellbeing and sustainable livelihood.

2. Combat corruption through independent community oversight bodies

The municipality should consider having independent agencies working closely with the municipality to monitor and evaluate their activities. This could combat crime and corruption and increase transparency in the use of community resources and implementation of LED initiatives.

3. Evaluate entrepreneurial support programmes in reducing poverty

After supporting SMME and informal enterprises they must have regular checkups and monitoring for progress and growth. If they are employing other community members, breaking even or reducing poverty. NYDA, DESTEA and SEDA should have a evaluation criteria for growth and small business development. After providing skills development funders should also make sure other resources are obtainable that will enhance growth and progress of the SMMEs.

Recommendations C

1. Strengthen community-led initiatives

Empowering the community of Maluti-a-Phofung in taking leverage of community-led projects including cooperatives, neighbourhood clean-up, local markets and recycling efforts. These

initiatives allow residents to take ownership of community development and build social cohesion and directly addressing local needs and concerns.

2. Public-private partnerships in community and economic development

The private and public sector partnership to support infrastructure development and entrepreneurial programs. The private sector can help the government raise capital as it increases investment opportunities and enable large-scale government projects like roads, bridges, and hospitals to be completed with private funding. These partnerships balance private sector technology and innovation with public sector incentives getting community development projects done on time.

3. Partnership with educational institutions

Encourage partnership with the University to produce scarce skills that the community needs to develop. The university curriculum should be one that will allow students to benefit from the community's employment opportunities. Development skills should not be outsourced but scarce skills should be prioritized for efficiency. Also, partner to give out internships and practical's or students enrolled at institutions of higher education so that the Theory taught is backed up by experience. By leveraging private investment, the government can address large-scale infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, and hospitals. Public-private partnerships also facilitate the transfer of technology and innovation from the private sector, while maintaining public incentives to ensure that projects are completed on time and within budget.

5.5 Further research

I would encourage further researchers to look at how climate change impacts economic development and what are the majors put in place by the municipality and the community to achieve LED despite the influence of climate. I would also encourage future research to look at the challenges of local entrepreneurs and what affects their family growth and development. Finally, I would like to propose further research looks at the impact of education on LED, looking the education system and curriculum if it responds to economic needs.

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INTERVIEW GRID

Part A: Biographical Information

This part of the interview deals with the participant's demographical information concerning gender, age, population group, educational qualification, employment status, tenure, monthly income, and organisation belong to.

Please tick (✓) in the most appropriate box which relates to your biographical information.

A.1 Gender

Male	
Female	
Other	

A.2 Age

18-25 years	
26-30 years	
31-40 years	
41-50 years	
51-60 years	
61 year and above	

A.3 Race

African	
Indian	
White	
Coloured	
Other	

A4. Level of education

Less than matric	
Matric	
Higher certificate	
Diploma	
Postgraduate diploma	
Bachelor's degree	
BTech/Honours	
Master's	
PhD	
Other	

A5. Are you employed?

Yes	
No	

A.6 What is your employment status?

Full-time	
Part-time	
Contract	
Other	

A.7 How long have you been working

1-2 years	
3-5 years	
6-8 years	
9-11 years	
12-15 years	

16-19 years	
> 20 years	

A.8 What is your income level per month?

<R5000	
R5000-10000	
R11000-20000	
R21000-30000	
R31000-40000	
R41000-50000	
> R51000	

A.9 Which of these categories do you belong to?

LED Employee	
LED Council	
LED Beneficiaries	
Dialogue Groups and Local Communities	
Other	

SECTION C: QUESTIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT AND MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

C.1. Role of LED in addressing youth unemployment

C.1.1 What is your understanding of Pro-poor LED

.....

.....

Are you aware of the factors that affect job creation in the District Municipality? Yes/ No

C.1.2 If yes, describe those factors that affect job creation in District Municipality.

.....
.....
C.1.3 Based on your LED understanding can LED help to mitigate rising youth unemployment in District Municipality? Yes/No

C.1.4 If yes, describe the manner in which LED planning and implementation can help to mitigate unemployment in District Municipality.

.....
.....
C.1.5 What are the LED initiatives introduced by the municipality/department to help address youth unemployment in the local community?

.....
.....
C.1.6. What is considered as the main source of income and jobs within the district?

C.2. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS

C.2.1. Are there any other stakeholder involved in planning, implementation and promotion of pro-poor LED? Yes/no

C.2.2. If yes, what is their role and how is their participation?
.....
.....

C.3. Role of LED in reducing poverty

C.3.1 Are you aware of the poverty level in District Municipality? Yes/No

C.3.2 If yes, what is identified as the causes of poverty among the youth District Municipality?
.....
.....

C.3.3. What are major challenges that hinder service delivery to the poor within the district?

.....
.....
C.3.4. How have you used lessons learnt from these challenges to improve on LED implementation?
.....
.....

C.3.5. What pro-poor LED initiatives implemented within the district in respect of poverty alleviation.
.....
.....

C.3.6. What is main achievement of pro- poor LED in respect of poverty alleviation within the district.
.....
.....

C.3.7. How can LED planning and implementation help to address poverty among the youth in the District Municipality?
.....
.....

SECTION G: Further recommendations and suggestions (for all participants)

1.1 Are there any recommendations and suggestions that you would like to add to this study?
.....
.....

1.1. Yiziphi izincomo nemibono ongathanda ukuyibeka mayelana nalolucwaningo?

INTERVIEW GRID

Part A: Biographical Information

This part of the interview deals with the participant's demographical information concerning gender, age, population group, educational qualification, employment status, tenure, monthly income, and organisation belong to.

Please tick (✓) in the most appropriate box which relates to your biographical information.

A.1 Gender

Male	
Female	
Other	

A.2 Age

18-25 years	
26-30 years	
31-40 years	
41-50 years	
51-60 years	
61 year and above	

A.3 Race

African	
Indian	
White	
Coloured	
Other	

A4. Level of education

Less than matric	
Matric	
Higher certificate	
Diploma	
Postgraduate diploma	
Bachelor's degree	
BTech/Honours	
Master's	
PhD	
Other	

A5. Are you employed?

Yes	
No	

A.6 What is your employment status?

Full-time	
Part-time	
Contract	
Other	

A.7 How long have you been working

1-2 years	
3-5 years	
6-8 years	
9-11 years	
12-15 years	

16-19 years	
> 20 years	

A.8 What is your income level per month?

<R5000	
R5000-10000	
R11000-20000	
R21000-30000	
R31000-40000	
R41000-50000	
> R51000	

A.9 Which of these categories do you belong to?

LED Employee	
LED Council	
LED Beneficiaries	
Dialogue Groups and Local Communities	
Other	

SECTION D: QUESTIONS TO COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATIONS AND NGOS

D.1 What is your understanding of LED and pro poor LED in particular?

.....

.....

D.2 Which other stakeholders are involved in implementing and promotion of Pro-poor LED that you work with? What is their role?

.....

.....

D.3 Which types of LED interventions are implemented for poverty alleviation?

.....
.....

D.4 Can you list 3 main achievements of LED and poverty alleviation?

.....
.....

D.5 To what extent is you as an NGO involved to participate as the civil society organisation in Pro-poor LED implemented by the district?

.....
.....

D.6. What are major challenges if any that exist in LED implementation within the district?

.....
.....

D.7. What sort of recommendation do you have as the NGO or CBO for the District LED strategy?

.....
.....

D.8. In your view who should be the drivers/leaders in LED implementation within the district.

.....
.....

D.9. In your view who are the main beneficiaries of LED interventions?

.....
.....

D.10. What is the participation of other NGOs, Municipality and government department in LED implementation within the district?

.....
.....

D.11. What are LED programme/projects are you aware of in the district in the area?

.....
.....

D.11. To what extent is the community participating and benefitting from the LED initiatives and who are the main beneficiaries in your view?

.....
.....

D.13. In you view what are main challenges affecting LED implementation within the district?

.....
.....

D.14. How are the vulnerable and marginalised groups in this community involved in the LED interventions?

.....
.....

D.15. What is the main source of that income and jobs in the district?

.....
.....

D.16. To what extent are you involved as community members in LED decision making processes within the municipality?

.....
.....

SECTION G: Further recommendations and suggestions (for all participants)

1.1 Are there any recommendations and suggestions that you would like to add to this study?

.....
.....

1.1. Yiziphi izincomo nemibono ongathanda ukuyibeka mayelana nalolucwaningo?

INTERVIEW GRID

Part A: Biographical Information

This part of the interview deals with the participant's demographical information concerning gender, age, population group, educational qualification, employment status, tenure, monthly income, and organisation belong to.

Please tick (✓) in the most appropriate box which relates to your biographical information.

A.1 Gender

Male	
Female	
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A.3 Race

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Indian	
White	
Coloured	
Other	

A4. Level of education

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Matric	
Higher certificate	
Diploma	
Postgraduate diploma	
Bachelor's degree	
BTech/Honours	
Master's	
PhD	
Other	

A5. Are you employed?

Yes	
No	

A.6 What is your employment status?

Full-time	
Part-time	
Contract	
Other	

A.7 How long have you been working

1-2 years	
3-5 years	
6-8 years	
9-11 years	
12-15 years	

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A.8 What is your income level per month?

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R31000-40000	
R41000-50000	
> R51000	

A.9 Which of these categories do you belong to?

LED Employee	
LED Council	
LED Beneficiaries	
Dialogue Groups and Local Communities	
Other	

SECTION B: QUESTION TO THE MUNICIPAL LED MANAGEMENT AND THE COUNCIL

B1. LED Implementation in different contexts

- B1.1 Do you have an idea about how LED is being planned and implemented in different countries? Yes/No
- B1.2 If yes, describe the manner in which the LED is planned and implemented in those countries.

.....

-
- B1.3 Are you aware of how the LED is being planned and implemented in South Africa? Yes/No.
 - B1.4 If yes, describe how the LED is being planned and implemented in South Africa?

.....

- B1.5 Describe how unique is the South African LED from different countries you identified above?

.....

- B1.6 Are there any lessons that South Africa can learn from other countries as far as the planning and implementation of LED is concern?

.....

B.1.7. What are main objectives of LED intervention in the District?

.....

B.1.8. Who are target beneficiaries of LED within the district and criterion is used to ensure that the target group is reached?

.....

B.1.9. Are there any of the LED impact assessment studies that have been conducted within the district that you are aware of? If yes, what were the main findings and recommendations?

.....

B2. Legislative frameworks that promote LED

B2.1 Are you aware of any legislative framework that promote LED in the Municipality? Yes/No

B2.2 If yes, describe those legislative framework that promote LED planning and implementation in the Municipality.

.....
.....
B2.3 How do the legislative frameworks you identified above influenced the planning and implementation of the LED in the District?
.....
.....

.....
.....
B2.4 What are some of the legislative challenges that affect the planning and implementation of the LED in the District?
.....
.....

.....
.....
B2.5 How can the legislative challenges that affect the LED planning and implementation in District be addressed?
.....
.....

B3. Critical factors that influence planning and implementation of LED

B3.1 Are you aware of any critical factors that influences the planning and implementation of LED in District Municipality? Yes/No

B3.2 If yes, describe the critical factors that affect the planning and implementation of LED in District Municipality.
.....
.....

B3.3 How can the critical factors that affect the planning and implementation of LED in District Municipality be mitigated?
.....
.....

B5.4 Identify the LED initiatives that are initiated by the municipality to help alleviate poverty in the community.
.....
.....

B3.4. What plans and strategies are being used to support pro-poor LED in the district?

.....
.....

SECTION G: Further recommendations and suggestions (for all participants)

1.1 Are there any recommendations and suggestions that you would like to add to this study?

.....
.....

1.1. Yiziphi izincomo nemibono ongathanda ukuyibeka mayelana nalolucwaningo?

INTERVIEW GRID

Part A: Biographical Information

This part of the interview deals with the participant's demographical information concerning gender, age, population group, educational qualification, employment status, tenure, monthly income, and organisation belong to.

Please tick (✓) in the most appropriate box which relates to your biographical information.

A.1 Gender

Male	
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Other	

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A5. Are you employed?

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A.6 What is your employment status?

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A.7 How long have you been working

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R5000-10000	
R11000-20000	
R21000-30000	
R31000-40000	
R41000-50000	
> R51000	

A.9 Which of these categories do you belong to?

LED Employee	
LED Council	
LED Beneficiaries	
Dialogue Groups and Local Communities	
Other	

SECTION E: QUESTIONS TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS

E.1. What is your general understanding of LED?

.....

.....

E.2. Which organisations/ government department is facilitating and implementing LED in the community?

.....

.....

E.3. Are you aware of any LED programme/projects in the area? Please describe if any?

.....
.....

E.4. To what extent is the community participating and benefitting from the LED initiatives and who are the main beneficiaries in your view?

.....
.....

E.5. What are main challenges in your view affecting LED if any?

.....
.....

E.6. How are the vulnerable and marginalised groups in this community involved in the LED interventions?

.....
.....

E.7. What difference have been made by LED implementation in your community?

.....
.....

E.8. What is the main source of income and jobs in the District?

.....
.....

E.9. To what extent are you involved as community members in LED decision making processes within the municipality?

.....
.....

E.10. In your view, how should LED be implemented in order to good result in the local livelihood?

SECTION G: Further recommendations and suggestions (for all participants)

1.1 Are there any recommendations and suggestions that you would like to add to this study?

.....
.....

1.1. Yiziphi izincomo nemibono ongathanda ukuyibeka mayelana nalolucwaningo?