



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

A PRACTICAL WORKBOOK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRACTITIONERS



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Making progress possible. Together.

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A) INTRODUCTION

Informal settlements are a permanent feature in African cities, and it is crucial to understand them in relation to urban local government and how it works. Informal settlements are a multi-complex settlement type with various government organisations and universities involved and interacting and engaging within the settlements. This workbook aims to increase understanding of implementing constructive community engagement in informal settlements. It also aims to improve the understanding of informal settlements, not just as physical structures but as a microcosm of informal activities, social relationships and networks to sustain livelihoods and community leadership.

This workbook has been designed as a practical guide for all local government officials. It is intended to provide local government officials with insight and assistance concerning work in informal settlements. The workbook aims to assist local government officials with an understanding of the main factors related to community engagement. It is intended to be a practical guide for local government officials in their community engagement practices. The workbook will help local government officials from various departments to have constructive community engagements with informal settlements to deliver on projects and programmes. The workbook will provide a step-by-step outline of the community engagement process in informal settlements.

B) HOW TO USE THE WORKBOOK

This step-by-step workbook guides you through three sections. Each section starts with an introduction, followed by examples and an activities sheet to be completed by you.



HOW TO



ACTIVITY SHEET



EXAMPLES



PART 1

C) UNDERSTANDING OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

What is an informal settlement? Mpe and Ogra (2014: 52) state that informal settlements are defined as “an unplanned settlement on land which has not been surveyed or proclaimed as residential, consisting mainly of informal dwellings (shacks). The structures are normally densely populated and close to each other. These informal settlement dwellings are not in line with any building regulations but use different innovative building materials”.

TIP Remember, informal settlements have no street names or addresses. Check numbers of houses on the doors.

The City normally marks an informal structure with a number on the door or a structure to keep count, as no address exists. This normally applies to settlements that have undergone an enumeration process.

DAG (2007:13) states that the enumeration process is necessary: “In order to understand how the settlement has grown over time, and to understand how land has been regulated for livelihood and other socio/political activities such as informal housing, spaza shops, creches or informal churches. While the general perception may be that informal settlements are haphazard (disorganised or unplanned) and developed independently of the state’s regularisations and zoning laws, they are in fact reflective of very complex and sometimes informal process of negotiation around the use of space.”



EXAMPLE 1:

In Klipheuwel Informal Settlement, a small ECD centre was run by Lwalikazi for 22 children between the ages of 0 and 5 years.

Fisantekraal Informal Settlement had a disability centre called Bahula Disability Centre, which provided services to the disability sector in Fisantekraal and Klipheuwel for years.

Drivdal (2014: 53) explains further: “As specific neighbourhoods, informal settlements are one scale below townships, often located within townships. Townships cover large areas and consist mostly of small government houses (referred to as matchbox houses), and informal settlements are pockets of occupied land between these housing areas. In South African cities, informal settlements are formed in smaller pockets of urban land adjacent to core formal areas”.

D) LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Reddy (1999: 9) defines local government as the level of government created to bring government to the local populace and give citizens a sense of participation in the political processes that influence their lives. Participation is the way in which people can participate in government affairs (within the boundaries of the city). Informal settlements are part of the jurisdiction of the local government.

Local government consists of various departments. These departments are mandated and tasked to deliver services in informal settlements.

- a. Solid Waste
- b. Electricity Services
- c. Disaster Risk Management
- d. Social Development and Early Childhood Development
- e. Recreation and Parks
- f. Stormwater and Roads
- g. Fire Services



- h.** Environmental Health
- i.** Health
- j.** Water and Sanitation
- k.** Informal Settlements

In informal settlements, the service delivery challenges are complex, and various departments are interlinked and need to work together to solve/implement effective service delivery. It is therefore important that all the abovementioned departments work together in informal settlements. Community engagement is a vital part of service delivery in informal settlements.

“Informal settlements are all departments’ business.” Therefore, all departments must be part of the community engagement process. The departments should use community engagement before implementing projects in informal settlements.

The benefits are:

- A more accurate understanding of the context within the settlement.
- An understanding of the community leadership in the settlement and their associated community dynamics.
- A clearer understanding of the needs of the residents of the informal settlement.
- An understanding of social relationships and dynamics within the settlement.
- Preventing misunderstandings and potential conflict in the settlements.

The officials need to understand that all settlements are different. Therefore, a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate. This workbook provides standard and useful tools to assist and equip local government officials in community participation processes.

THE ROLE OF MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Pimlott (1951: 243) believes public officials should help bridge the ‘gulf’, which, despite advances in education and communication, exists between ‘us’ – the millions of ordinary citizens – and ‘them’ – the government.



The local government official is requested to complete the questionnaire by answering the following questions.

a) For which department do you work in local government?

b) What kind of services do you deliver in informal settlements?

c) What issues/challenges have you encountered when delivering these services in informal settlements?

d) Do you have any general comments about your role in informal settlements?



EXAMPLE 1:

An example from Malawi Camp shows how one department project is interlinked with other departments. The Environmental Health Department was doing a diarrhoea prevention campaign, but the Water and Sanitation Department needed to be on board to repair broken toilets, as this could be a contributing facto.

EXAMPLE 2:

During the re-blocking of an informal settlement, various departments are involved in the project plan implementation phase with the informal settlement communities. The City of Cape Town (2013: 4) defines re-blocking as “a community-led process of reconfiguring the current layout of informal settlements by grouping shacks into clusters and reorganising the ground plane in such a manner as to optimally utilise space to promote the health, safety and well-being of households, with a particular focus on promoting accelerated service delivery to informal settlements”.

Brown-Luthango et al (2015) discuss various approaches to upgrading of informal settlements, for example through reblocking and the Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrade (VPUU) Programme. Freedom Park, one of the upgrading case studies, was established in 1998 and is located in Mitchells Plain.

These case studies illustrate the impact of the provision of basic services such a piped water, sanitation, drainage and roads or paths on communities’ perceptions of their quality of life, dignity and safety (ibid). They also show the importance of a holistic approach to upgrading and involving communities in upgrading projects right from the onset.

E) LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 (section 16) focuses on the importance of community participation. Van der Walt (2007: 59) explains further that “the municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance. Participation of the local community in the affairs of local government must be encouraged and conditions and spaces of engagement need to be created”.

F) CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The role of the local government officials in promoting community engagement in informal settlements is crucial.



a) How do you define community engagement?

b) Do you think community engagement is not part of your work?

c) Do you think informal settlement communities will understand what your department is trying to achieve in the settlement?

d) Do you think community engagement is a time-wasting exercise? (Yes/No - if yes, give some reasons.)



e) Have you previously worked in informal settlements? Write down experiences/stories of your experiences working in these settlements.

f) How might community engagement enhance service delivery for your department?

As a local government department, you need to know with whom to interact in the informal settlement in an ongoing process to move away from being an adversary to collaboration, and working together to enhance service delivery.

THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Purpose is defined as the reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists. According to Cavaye (1999: 10), service delivery forms part of a new dual role for government that also includes facilitating community capacity.

Community engagement processes can be considered part of the service provided by local government. Community engagement helps create a virtuous cycle between local government and informal settlement dwellers.

Community engagement depends on the purpose, timeframe and resources allocated. It is important to understand and implement the techniques discussed later to prepare for community engagement in informal settlements.



Do a short brainstorming session using the following questions:

a) What are the aims and goals of community engagement for the informal settlement?

b) Why do you want to have a community engagement process in the informal settlement?

The next section will focus on key actors in the community engagement process between local government and the informal settlements.

G) UNDERSTANDING INFORMAL SETTLEMENT LEADERSHIP

UNDERSTANDING INFORMAL SETTLEMENT LEADERSHIP

The Local Government Association (2017: 9) defines the role of community leadership as:

- Helping communities to identify and deal with problems in the most effective way.
- Bringing in help from officers and partners.
- Acting as the voice for the community to the Council, partners and others.
- Communicating the work of the Council and partners to the community.

HOW TO GET A COMPLETE INFORMAL SETTLEMENT LEADERSHIP PICTURE

Develop a stakeholder database/comprehensive community leadership database:

- a. Talk to your ward councillor and propositional councillor of the ward where the informal settlement is situated to find out who his or her point persons are in the settlement.
- b. Talk to other City departments that they are working with in the settlement.
- c. Talk to NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) that they are working with in the informal settlement.
- d. Talk to church leaders in the informal settlement.
- e. Start by talking to settlement dwellers and ask who represents them and who their leaders are.

TIP The clearer the leadership picture is, the better the community engagement process will be.

The output after this activity is a comprehensive community leadership list with contact details. After you have spoken to all the above, draft a list with names, contact numbers and represented organisations (on an A4 sheet). This list can be used to invite leaders to meetings, walkabouts and workshops, and build relationships with them to partner and work with them in the community engagement process.



EXAMPLE 1:

The community developer working in Malawi Camp started a process to identify the community leaders within the settlement. He spoke to various leaders outside and inside the settlement to draft a leadership list. It took six months to complete the list. (See an example of the list – to be added.)

We need to explore further. DAG (2007: 11) explains: “Understanding the institutional arrangements is imperative, especially in the context of informal settlements, where there may be conflict or competition between representatives of certain representative groups. It is considering the extent to which different representatives’ groups are politically or economically aligned (UDM vs ANC or local committee vs shack lords). There are also gangsters and shack lords.”

This is important information to capture and complete your leadership picture. You will be able to find out this information during conversations with dwellers. Understanding the complexities of the leadership of informal settlements is important, and local government officials must be aware of this while performing the community engagement process. Informal leadership committees, development forums, etc. are present in settlements and are often the representative bodies of settlements. (Check if they have committees in place.)

It is important to understand the dynamics within a settlement and what gets discovered from the activities above, as this will improve community engagement and prevent future conflict and misunderstandings. Understanding dynamics will make the leadership picture clearer. Leadership dynamics refer to a pattern or process of change, and the interaction between diversity, interest, political orientations, religion, etc. (See book chart.) These dynamics, and how they will play out in the community engagement process, are important to understand. Secondly, you need to be aware that there can be leadership battles, but it is important to involve all the different representatives. This is an important part of community engagement, and we need a complete picture of the leadership/leaders in the settlements. This will be helpful before you start any engagement. It is, therefore, crucial to get everybody on board from the start, before any project or engagement takes place. As we work in the community and the leadership space, we need to understand the dynamics that might exist.



EXAMPLE 2: THE HEIGHTS

The Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa (HSRC) did an action research project in Ward 67 of the City of Cape Town. The Heights Camps consist of five settlements, named Hillview 1, Hillview 2, Village Heights, Overcome Heights and Military Heights. They invited all the community leaders of the five settlements to be part of the action research process from beginning to end.



PART 2

H) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLS IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Civil society organisations also work in informal settlements and do important relief work in the settlement. These organisations are well known in the settlement and exert an influence as they work with informal settlement leadership. They work side by side as they offer various philanthropic services. Some university departments also work within these settlements.



EXAMPLE:

In the Goliath Estate Settlement, the NG (Nederduits Gereformeerde) church works in the settlement as the social worker assists with Monday Bible studies and the ECD centre.

These organisations can also be part of the leadership and assist the community engagement process.

Note: It will take time, but it is important not to miss any leaders or organisations working or delivering a service in the informal settlement.

This section will focus on the various community engagement tools to be used:

1. Mapping
2. Walkabouts
3. Joint meetings

H.1. MAPPING: MAPPING IS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL WITHIN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

According to Patel, Baptist and D’Cruz (2012: 15), settlement profiles are usually the first information collected. They focus on the residents as a community, on the land they occupy, their migration and eviction history, the number of structures, the services they have or do not have access to, and people’s employment status. This is normally done with a short questionnaire and door-to-door visits to the dwellings or structures.

The mapping exercise is a process after which settlement dwellers draw rough community maps of how they see their settlement (visually). The community maps bring useful information to the foreground (qualitative) about how residents see and experience their dwellings and their neighborhoods.

Mapping gives residents a sense of the area they occupy and assists in planning for future developments. All information allows a settlement to look at itself as a collective rather than a set of individual households. Living together in a densely packed space does not necessarily confer a sense of shared community.



VALUE

One of the positives of doing mapping to start the community engagement process is that community dwellers can feel part of the process from the beginning, and the officials/facilitators can learn more about the people and the value they attach to various objects in the settlement. This can help to build trust between dwellers and the officials. It is also a visual representation of the settlement that can be presented to the community and can enable the identification of certain challenges in the settlement.



HOW TO ...

It is important to plan your mapping exercise when preparing for it. The first step is to arrange a suitable venue and invite the informal settlement community leaders and ordinary dwellers to a session. This can take the format of a meeting of one to two hours.

Then, arrange the following resources:

- Crayons/koki pens of various colours/Prestik/large sheets of paper.
- Venue (can be an issue).
- Snacks and fruit (keep it healthy).

At the start of the start of the session, ask the participants to be creative and to draw a simple map of the settlement. This exercise can be done via group work (all input is asked and welcomed).

You can use the following probing questions:

- a. Draw a simple map of your settlement from top to bottom.
- b. Where do you see challenges in the settlement?
- c. Identify any services on the map. (Can you indicate where the churches, shebeens, ECD centres, spaza shops/tuck shops, and other informal activities are?) This is a more detailed map than in (a) above.
- d. Where are the municipal services, for example, toilets, standpipes, etc.?

The first part of the map will be a skeleton with names and blocks.

In Malawi Camp and Klipheuwel, it was important for the community members and leadership to map their informal settlement. The first striking image at the seminar was as the participants and community leaders walked in. There were huge maps, demonstrating the importance of them being part of the mapping process. This mapping exercise brings about a certain ownership and is important for understanding the design of the settlement. This provides rich knowledge and understanding of the dynamics within the settlement. Patel, Baptist and D’Cruz (2012: 15) summarises the importance of mapping informal settlements: “Mapping the settlement gives residents a sense of the area they occupy and its value, and also helps them plan future redevelopment options. All this information allows a settlement to look at itself as a collective rather than a set of individual households.”

THE VALUE OF MAPPING (Through the eyes of the informal settlement residents)



EXAMPLES:

The research team studying an upgrading project in Freedom Park in 2014 used two maps based on satellite images of the settlement before and after upgrading to map the different types and levels of crime and violence experienced before and after the upgrading intervention. In the old settlement, before upgrading, there were very few shebeens and very few crimes were reported by participants within a 50-metre radius of each shebeen, compared to after upgrading of the settlement (Brown-Luthango, 2015).

The HSRC research team and community leadership were also doing mapping exercises in the Heights informal settlements. This assisted with understanding the context and the needs of the residents of the Heights informal settlements (Sanchez-Betancourt & Vivier, 2016: 5). This mapping exercise provided a picture of the changing nature and extent of crime and violence before and after upgrading (Brown-Luthango et al: 2015)

The Klipheuwel and Fisantekraal informal settlement leadership with RAPCAN had a mapping exercise to identify potential dangers for children in both informal settlements.

After the completion of the mapping session, the map can be laminated or copied for all officials and the informal settlement leadership. The next step will be focused on after completing the mapping exercise.

H.2. WALKABOUTS: VISITING AND WALKING THROUGH THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

The map is a visual exercise. The walkabout in the settlement follows this, which is a first-hand, more physical experience of the informal settlement by the local government officials.



EXAMPLE:

In her research, Patricia Zweig uses *Transect Walks* as a tool to identify potential disaster risks in informal settlements. Participants were, for example, taken to Wallacadene Informal Settlement, where community members led participants on a transect walk through the settlement to see first-hand the risks they face daily (Zweig, 2017).

These walkabouts can be done with community leadership. This can also be an opportunity to speak to dwellers, take pictures and make field notes. These walkabouts can be done regularly with the leadership of the settlement.

Walkabouts help with future planning and detect possible future challenges and issues. Betancourt and Vivier (2019: 385) explain the importance of walkabouts: "Officials were not counting taps or street lights but rather 'getting a sense' of the overall service provision to the areas, and the chance to discuss with leaders and residents why certain things were working - and not - in particular ways."



HOW TO SET UP A WALKABOUT

Organise to meet at a suitable time at the entrance of the settlement. It is useful to include all departments involved in service delivery as part of this walkabout. Secondly, it is important to liaise and arrange a time with the community leadership to do the walkabout. The duration of the walkabout can be between one and two hours. Note: The dwellers will ask questions, and the local government officials can answer.

The value of a walkabout for community engagement:

- It gives officials a sense of the settlement (practical).
- It provides local government officials with an opportunity to give advice and follow up on issues or potential problems.
- It helps to build trust through the visibility of the officials on the ground, and important grassroots engagement.
- It enables officials to see and better understand the needs and important issues in the settlement.
- Officials can hear possible solutions from the dwellers first-hand.



EXAMPLE 1:

The Malawi Camp residents/leadership committee highlighted the existence of illegal dumpsites surrounding the settlement, which become mountains of rubbish/building rubble. The community developer and the superintendent of the Solid Waste Department arranged with two leaders to do a walkabout to all the dumpsites, and took photos of the extent of the problem. During the walkabout, they discovered that people pay residents to dump in the settlement. The superintendent could then assess that they need heavy-duty equipment loaders to remove the rubbish. The leaders could communicate with dwellers that the City would do a clean-up operation for two days in the camp. The community developer saw the need to contact the City's Waste Public Awareness Department to conduct awareness about the dangers of illegal dumping.





EXAMPLE 2:

The walkabout in Klipheuwel started from the advice office to the top section of the settlement. A play park with equipment was discovered in the settlement. In the mapping session, the leadership requested the play equipment to be upgraded and painted. During this walkabout, the official took photos of it, and the official could then follow up with the relevant official from the Department of Parks and Recreation.



EXAMPLE 3:

The HSRC team in the Heights Action Research Project was visiting informal settlements. The officials, community leadership, and the researchers went on a walk to physically inspect infrastructure. According to the researchers, these walkabouts help share knowledge and understanding of daily lived experiences.

The walkabouts are a critical community engagement tool because it helps to deepen the understanding of the informal settlement. It also helps local government officials to connect with informal settlement dwellers. These walkabouts should be used frequently (see photos) and should include City officials and community leadership.



H.3. JOINT MEETINGS

Joint meetings happen between various local government departments and informal settlement leadership to discuss issues affecting the particular informal settlement. The joint meetings are divided into smaller meetings where informal settlement leaders and officials meet, and bigger community meetings where the officials meet with the broader informal settlement communities. The reason is that officials are best placed to explain complex jargon to community members and avoid misunderstandings.

Cielens and Aquino (1999: 195) explain: "Meetings offer many benefits to an organization and its members. A well-run meeting encourages co-ordination - people can keep up to date with developments and changes, which means better planning and co-operation between sections. Meetings can give people an opportunity to share ideas and help develop team spirit."



HOW TO ...

The first thing to do is talk to all relevant parties about a suitable date for the joint meeting.

Book and secure a venue and send out invitations, along with an agenda.

It is important to understand that informal settlements do not have infrastructure/venues, for example, halls, to have these meetings or workshops in the settlement. For example, where a church or makeshift hall is available, other practical issues like lighting need to be considered. In winter, it gets darker earlier, so evening meetings need to be planned with this in mind. This might not be such a big concern in summer.

What to do: If you plan to have a community meeting, you can have it outside.

THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY MEETINGS

How to do it: The **community meeting** is used to share information or a plan.

The first thing is to get a location. Be specific regarding the location and make sure that all community members know where it is. The invitation to the community meeting can be given via printed invitations or by word of mouth through the leaders.

It is important to make all logistical arrangements with the committee and the leadership beforehand. Keep the agenda of the community meeting short and reserve about two to three hours for it. Also, arrange beforehand with a community leader to be a translator if needed. It may be good to make use of a loudhailer that can help project your voice and ensure that all participants can hear.

Another important consideration if a meeting place is not available within the settlement, is to decide on an alternative venue and make transport available to it.



EXAMPLES:

Klipheuwel Community Development Forum agreed with the City of Cape Town Social Development and ECD Department to have a community meeting in the afternoon at 14:00 in front of the settlement to discuss the way forward and report on projects to the broader community. The afternoon meeting was prompted because the settlement had no electricity to have an evening meeting.

The Malawi Camp community meeting was held in the evening but had a one-hour limit from 18:00 to 19:00 because of a lack of electricity.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Community engagement should be an ongoing process using various methods.

Having regular feedback meetings when you are doing projects is key to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunication, and prevent conflict situations.

TIP During the first joint meeting, predetermine new dates and times for future joint meetings.

How do we increase participation in the joint meetings?

It is key to have a prepared agenda.

A well-run meeting encourages coordination and allows people to stay up to date with developments and changes, which means better planning and cooperation between sectors. Meetings can allow people to share ideas and help develop team spirit. Other benefits of well-managed meetings include greater organisational consensus resulting from the collaboration and more effective problem solving (Cielens & Aquino, 1999: 195). It is important to understand that joint meetings in community engagement seldom happen in isolation from other community engagement techniques and tools.

Optimal participation is key in all joint meetings. Group discussions assist in recognising the concerns and needs of individual members. Participants are to respect each other; one person talking at a time. All are equal, and each person's input is important.



You are requested to draft an agenda for a joint meeting between the informal settlement leadership and the local government departments.

Joint meetings can be used to report back on projects and implementation of projects/service delivery. Use a circle method of seating to promote the equality principle at the joint meetings.

PART 3

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

Community engagement techniques through communication, trust building, relationship building and listening.

I.1. COMMUNICATION

Some community members also express scepticism about the presence of local government officials working in informal settlements. For example, in Malawi Camp, local government officials were suspected of underhanded dealings. To start any community engagement process, the communication lines need to be opened between the informal settlement dwellers and other stakeholders. This includes listening and speaking with everyone. It is important to provide a safe space where these perceptions and misconceptions can be aired and openly discussed.

THE USE OF WHATSAPP TECHNOLOGY

The new WhatsApp technology is a game-changer in improving communication between people worldwide, and can be used to improve the interaction between informal settlement committees and local government officials. This is a cheap method of communication because it works on the principle of instant messaging.

ITS VALUE:

- The stakeholders on the WhatsApp group can share information, and notifications of meetings can be shared and followed up.
- The advice and information can be shared fast.



EXAMPLE: FISANTEKRAAL SOCIAL SERVICES GROUP

This WhatsApp group hosts a variety of organisations, officials and community leaders working in Fisantekraal (including some of the Fisantekraal Informal Settlement leaders). The group is used to share information and assist each other's projects where possible. During the covid-19 pandemic, this group has been used to identify needs and coordinate soup kitchens in the community. The focus is also on assistance where fires took place in the informal settlement. They can play a role in activating assistance.

THE LANGUAGE ISSUE

The technical jargon issue: Local government officials and departments must communicate information and technical issues related to projects with informal settlement committees in plain and understandable language.

The various local government departments have language they use which is specific to their profession, for example, the departments of Water and Sanitation, Engineering, and Electricity.

TIP This language (jargon) is understandable to officials but not to ordinary informal settlement dwellers and leadership.



HOW TO ...

- Local government officials must make easy presentations to the informal settlement leaders.
- Local government officials can make use of pictures and visuals to explain projects.
- Be open and allow for questions by the dwellers and continuously answer questions.



EXAMPLE:

At the second joint meeting between local government officials and leaders in Malawi Camp, Mr Donavon Williams, a water conservation officer from the Water and Sanitation Department, did a presentation to explain complex water and sanitation projects. The presentation explained repairs and maintenance, the engineering aspect and the community's responsibility towards infrastructure after repairs. The presentation was full of visuals with photos and with practical explanations. The leadership also asked questions during the presentation.

The ability to communicate easily and understandably is key to strengthening community engagement.



I.2. LISTENING

"Informal settlements feel that local government never listens to them." This is a common perception that the community engagement process can help to change. The technique of active listening is crucial in mapping exercises, walkabouts and joint meetings. According to Cielens and Aquino (1999: 22): "one of the most powerful tools for effective two-way communication is active listening. Hearing what the other is saying rather than working on your reply and asking questions for clarification."

The value of active listening according to Cielens and Aquino (1999: 23):

- When people notice how well you listen to them, they usually reciprocate and try to understand better.
- Relationships improve.
- Participants develop a more positive attitude towards each other, and engagement deepens and is strengthened.
- The participants share more facts and feel free to explain the whole story.
- Participants are encouraged by active listening and often discover solutions to their own problems.
- Active listening combined with empathy makes it easier to solve problems or at least reach a compromise.
- You acquire vital information and discover more about what is really going on.

TIP

It is important for local government officials to, after listening, move to concrete implementation. This will neutralise the notion that local government only pretends to listen.

I.3. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Relationships are explained by Cavage (1999: 12): "Good personal relationships encourage constructive communication; building the government's contribution to community networks and organizations." Building relationships is building 'higher level' interaction with communities by local government. Therefore, to make a community engagement process successful, you need to build relationships between local government officials and informal settlement community leaders.

How does one build relationships with local government departments?



HOW TO ...

STEP 1: Firstly, ask all departments to identify the officials working within the settlements. Tip: Make a list of their names and surnames, compile an email list and use this to invite the relevant officials to joint meetings and community engagements.

STEP 2: You can also call them and talk to them about working in the informal settlements, and invite them to be part of the community engagement process.

The transversal approach – the culture of a silo approach within local government departments needs to be broken. There is a need to engage with officials from different local government departments.

STEP 3: The next step is to call an introductory meeting with all the departments to discuss the community engagement for the informal settlement.

Examples of departments to invite: Risk Management, Human Settlements, Library Services, Water and Sanitation, Electricity Services, Solid Waste, Social Development and ECD.

STEP 4: The meeting can be used as a think tank and sharing of ideas. Departments can share information about the projects they are currently working on in different informal settlements.



EXAMPLE:

Agenda of an introductory meeting:

- a. Opening and welcome
- b. Introduction of all officials
- c. Discussion of the informal settlement(s)
- d. Overview of the community engagement process for the informal settlement
- e. Questions and closure

TIP Some departments will disappoint you and not attend meetings but keep inviting them to get them on board with community engagement processes.

It is important to build relationships with other officials from other departments working in the same informal settlements and inform them upfront that it will be a long-term process.



EXAMPLE:

The Tygerberg Informal Settlements task team was established in 2013, consisting of the departments of Environmental Health, Social Development and ECD, Water and Sanitation, and Solid Waste to work with informal settlements under their jurisdiction. The task team had monthly meetings and implemented joint projects in the informal settlements.

Building relationships with all other departments is key. The previous section focused on explaining and understanding 'trust'. Relationships must be built and sustained at various levels in informal settlements.

THE EARLY STAGES OF RELATIONSHIP BUILDING IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

The next step is to build relationships with the informal settlement leaders and communities. An important aspect of working with the informal settlement leadership and doing community engagement is building relationships. It can also be that relationships between local government and informal settlement leaders are broken because of past experiences and unresolved issues. Therefore, these relationships need to be rebuilt and restarted.



EXAMPLE:

A relationship-building process firstly needed to be established with the Malawi Camp Committee. The difficulty was that previous violent service delivery protests in Malawi Camp made it a 'no-go' area for City of Cape Town officials, and the relationship was broken. Relationship-building processes consisted of regular one-on-one meetings, walkabouts, community meetings and sharing of information regularly. To keep both parties accountable, it was decided to have a memorandum of understanding. This was signed by everyone involved and would guide further progress in the community engagement process.

Smith (2012: 248) states: "Relationships are sustained by contractual conditions, e.g. If you do this for me, I will do that for you or give you something in exchange. These kinds of relationships exist only in so far as both parties keep up their part of the formal agreement."

'The relationship 'bank account' is used by Smith (2012: 265) as a metaphor: "A Relationship Bank Account is a metaphor used to describe the amount of goodwill that's been built up in a relationship; If I make deposits into your relationship account through courtesy, kindness, honesty, and keeping my commitments to you, I build up a reserve. Your trust towards me becomes higher. When the relationships account is high, communication is easy, instant and effective."

HOW DO YOU REACH AN AGREEMENT?

Putter (2016: 41) argues that "a relationship can only work if the two (or more) parties involved stand in agreement as to where this relationship is going and what the role of each party is in this relationship". It is important to prepare for agreement and start with a conversation about agreement. This can be done in a workshop/meeting. The agreement needs input from all parties involved in the settlement process. It must be formalised in writing (concrete output). The signing of the agreement is key and symbolic; each party must receive a copy of the agreement. An agreement is more than a handshake and provides a guideline for responsibilities and the relationship. Accountability is a key ingredient for the success of the agreement.



HOW TO ...

A neutral person should act as the facilitator. This could be a religious figure/pastor who can be asked to facilitate a two-hour session with the local government officials and informal settlement leadership. The person facilitating the session must allow each participant to give input to this agreement. This agreement can also be referred to as terms of agreement or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

If possible, a department can procure the services of an independent facilitator to drive and assist with this process of reaching an agreement. The agreement allows local government officials and informal settlement leaders to grow and build trust.

TIP All parties need to sign off on the agreement. It must be more than symbolic but a living document that keeps all parties in place. Each participant must receive a copy of the agreement.

I.4. TRUST BUILDING

Görgens and Van Donk (2011: 12) observe: "In a South African context, where local government, civil society and communities often have a long history of antagonistic relationships, the pursuit of trust is a difficult goal. One possible solution is to generate a set of institutional relationships and 'rules of engagement' that have broad 'buy in'. Rather than trusting one another, the different stakeholders can trust 'the process'."

FINDING COMMON GROUND

- Trust doesn't come easy. In any situation, trust does not just happen.
- What causes distrust according to Dianna Booher (2015: 6)?
 - Lies, dishonesty, half-truths, cover-ups, deception in all its forms.
 - Blaming others for failures, not accepting personal responsibility for mistakes and weaknesses.
 - Inconsistency in actions, decisions, directions, and rewards (people seem to have different standards in different circumstances).
 - Incompetence (people have no worthy goals or mission except self-interest).

Build trust and they will respond.

Tell the truth - nothing earns trust like straight talk. Tell what you know and take them along. To have the trust of others means trusting them with the reasoning behind your decisions, with details and data.

Openness - communicate if there are any problems.

Informal settlement committees are not homogeneous and can consist of various interests. They will require training to strengthen their working together. This, for example, can be facilitated by an outside facilitator or person (for example, Fisantekraal).

TRUST

Informal settlement dwellers and poor communities may have numerous reasons to resist community engagement efforts. They may have memories of inadequate engagement efforts that undermined their trust, and, therefore, lack confidence in local government or people seen as officials or outsiders. Perceptions created by the

media can also negatively affect relationships of trust between informal settlement communities and local government officials. It could, for example, create fear on the part of local government officials to work with informal settlement communities.

TIPS FOR OFFICIALS:

- When interacting with informal settlement leaders, it is important to, from the onset, put forward any concerns around safety (the start of the community engagement process).
- Realise that building trust is a long-term project. Therefore, there is a need for consistent participation in all activities and techniques from start to finish, where possible.



HOW TO ...

ACTIVITY:

Draw up a few activities of how you will improve trust building between local government and the informal settlements.



The activities could include workshops/team building events/newsletters to share information.



J) REFLECTIONS

It is important to use the workbook and implement it practically. The reflection page can be completed after using the community engagement tools.



How did you experience the process? Write down any comments and observations you made.

1. MAPPING:

Blank space for writing reflections on the Mapping activity.

2. WALKABOUTS:

Blank space for writing reflections on the Walkabouts activity.



3. JOINT MEETINGS:

Blank space for notes on joint meetings.

4. ACTION - SERVICE DELIVERY - IMPLEMENTATION::

Blank space for notes on action, service delivery, and implementation.



The next reflection will be on the following:

How much time was spent on the community engagement process?

Blank space for reflection on time spent.

What resources did you use for the community engagement in the informal settlement?

Blank space for reflection on resources used.

How was the involvement of the departmental officials in the community engagement process in the informal settlement?

Blank space for reflection on involvement of officials.

Describe the community leadership in the informal settlement?

Blank space for reflection on community leadership.



What challenges did you have with community leadership in relation to:

Trust

Relationships

Communication

What positives came out of the community engagement process for you?

Any general comments:

Using the community engagement tools in informal settlements will become easier with time.

K) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A LEARNING PROCESS

The community engagement process provides learning for informal settlement leadership and local government officials. This is highlighted by Cavaye (1999: 14), who argues that local government's roles in all communities require learning by doing continuously. It is important to capture these learnings and to celebrate the successes of the community engagement processes.



EXAMPLE:

The Tygerberg Interdepartmental Task Team worked for the first time with an informal settlement community and its leadership in the Tygerberg region. This was a pilot project with the Malawi Camp Informal Settlement. After the successful community engagement process, the community developer compiled a document entitled *Best Practice: Unlocking service delivery challenges in Malawi Camp through social facilitation - Explaining the process*.

ACTION

White (1996) states that community engagement is about solving community problems. The outputs of a community engagement process should be followed up with action or implementation. The community engagement process would be futile if there is no implementation after using community engagement tools such as joint meetings, walkabouts and mapping exercises. Implementation after community engagement can help build momentum and is an important fuel for the success of the process.



EXAMPLE:

After the community engagement process in the Malawi Camp Informal Settlement started, the officials worked through the list of demands and started thinking of a short-term project that could be implemented immediately. They started with scraping the roads and repairing leaks in the pipes as short-term solutions.

DISCUSSION

Local government officials and informal settlement leadership and residents must have joint solutions and take collective responsibility. It is important to consider and decide on a plan of action to manage the infrastructure provided as part of implementation after the community engagement process. In the case study of Malawi Camp, the community members raised the issue of vandalism and theft. The need was further raised for the Department of Water and Sanitation to conduct an education drive in Malawi Camp. The informal settlement leadership requested the residents to talk to their children about not playing with water at the water taps and not wasting water.



SUMMARY

**UNDERSTANDING
INFORMAL
SETTLEMENTS**

**INFORMAL
SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS**

**COMMUNICATION
RELATIONSHIP
BUILDING
TRUST
LISTENING**

**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT TOOLS:
MAPPING
WALKABOUTS
JOINT MEETINGS**



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The practical workbook is a step-by-step guide for local government officials working in informal settlements. Community engagement is a crucial part of service delivery in informal settlements.

More about:

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