



Assessment of the Implementation of Back-to-Basics Programme in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality in the Eastern Cape

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ABSTRACT The study seeks to assess the implementation of the Back-to-Basics (B2B) programme in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality. The objective of the study was to assess how Raymond Mhlaba Municipality Manager implemented Back-To-Basics programme. The study used qualitative research design and data was collected using in-depth interviews. The findings of the study revealed that there is existence of the implementation of B2B programme in the community areas. Despite this, the findings indicated that disobedient to the important manifesto of the municipality management and poor communities' attendance at several municipality's meetings were some of the challenges faced by Raymond Mhlaba Municipality Manager in implementing the Back-To-Basics programmes. Hence, for the implementation of B2B programme to be effective, it is very important that the municipality delegates powers to the ward councillors. The paper recommended that the municipality management should desist from making empty promises to the communities, be honest and deliver qualitative services to communities.

INTRODUCTION

In the financial year 2014/15, the Cooperative Governance Department in the National sphere as well as the Traditional Affairs and Cooperative Governance (CoGTA) within Provincial Department, introduced the Back-To-Basics Programme (B2B) as an advancement that operate within municipalities to serve the communities better by receiving their basic rights (Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) 2017). The Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Department, indicated that the Back-To-Basics (B2B) introduction pursues sort out all dysfunctional municipalities out of their state as well as to make it a point that there are no below the middle path municipalities. The aim of the programme is to give maintenance to middle path municipalities so as to improve to the top path plus remain there, as well as encourage plus support municipalities to remain there on the top path. According to the Republic of South Africa (2019), the programme of Back-To-Basics is aimed at putting people first, secondly its aim is to provide efficient service delivery as well as being approachable to urgency complaints. Moreover; the programme aim is to also open communication channels with communities so as to have information regular about ser-

vices, budgeting plus planning participatory and as well as administration transparent. Furthermore, the Back-To-Basics programme encourages financial sound management, accounting as well as vacancies of filling by skilled personnel. The Back-To-Basics programme are the main facilities that the local government uses to provide hygienic drinking water, sanitation, electricity, shelter, waste removal as well as infrastructures which remains a human basic rights (James 2015).

However, the Back-To-Basics programme states that in order to stimulate good supremacy, the needs of the programme are to see transparency, engagement of the community as well as accountability (Republic of South Africa 2019). It continued to state that there must be no oversight interference, also delegation of proper system advocates so as to guarantee an administration that functions, a delineation of clear roles as well as duties, serious corruption consequences, fraud and maladministration by pushing for lifestyle audit (CoGTA 2009). The programmes main aim is encouraging a suitable keeping of records as well as annual production of financial statements. Furthermore, supports credit control, a revenue base increase as well as internal controls (Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) 2014). The programme promotes for a

strong as well as a responsive administration that seeks to cut wasteful expenditures within which include monitoring overtime as well as implementing of functional supply chain management structures within which appropriate oversight are seen (PMG 2014). A regular interaction between management and organised labour is encouraged by this programme. It also continues to support realistic organograms formation of aligned by the development of the municipal strategy. Furthermore, encourages ward regular report backs by councillors as well as engagement of clear platforms with civil society.

Problem Statement

Despite that the implementation of the Back-To-Basics (B2B) programme play a major role in improving the standard of living of people in South Africa since 1994, still most municipalities are faced with some challenges (Du Plessiss 2016). These challenges include: unclear implementation of the appropriate B2B programme (Umashev and Willet 2008), and weak capacity relating to the extent of worsening the implementation (Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) 2017). Similarly, Fung (2015) also emphasised that the municipality management has failed to follow proper implementation process in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the back to basic programme and this has resulted to huge corruption. These and many more problems have resulting to poor quality of service delivery. It is on this note that this study made an extensive efforts to assess deeply into the root causes of all these problems hindering the successful implementation of the Back-to-Basics programme in Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality.

Research Objective

To assess how Raymond Mhlaba Municipality Manager implement Back-To-Basics programme.

Research Questions

- ♦ How is Raymond Mhlaba Municipality Manager implementing the Back-To-Basics programme?

Literature Review

The Back-To-Basics Programme

This refers to some kinds of government or municipalities programmes initiated by the government in order to empower the people in the communities (Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) 2016: 5). Sets such as those of municipal toolkits are included and programmes similar to project such as those that are consolidate as well as most recently to the Local Government Turnaround Strategy.

Municipality

Bekink (2006: 16) defined municipality as the lowest as well as governments third sphere which is also the closest function to local communities, governments municipal have been often referred to as sphere's that are comprising government mainly tasked with the growth as well as the establishment of facilities to societies.

Legislative Framework

Constitutional Mandates

The Department of Local Government's Annual Performance Plan (2016-2017: 6) states that the Republic of South Africa's Constitution (1996) provides for the work of all government departments as well as the national overarching framework in South Africa. Objectives plus mandates are outlines in chapter 7 in respect of local government. Local Government Department can be given mandates from extracting the following from this: (Department of Local Government Annual Performance Plan 2016-2017: 6):

- ♦ To consistent municipalities establishment with national legislation;
- ♦ To strengthen as well as support the municipalities capacity;
- ♦ To regulate municipalities performance in terms of their listed functions in constitution as schedules 4 and 5;
- ♦ To involve non-fulfilment of legislative when necessary, plus financial or executive obligations; as well as,

- ♦ To promote local government development.

Legislative Mandates

According to the Local Government Department's Annual Performance Plan (2016-2017: 6) the Local Government White Paper (1998) as well as the related legislation subsequent package (outlined below) be responsible for the national framework for local authority across the republic:

Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act, 1998 (Act 27 of 1998)

This Act criteria aims to provide as well as determine procedures for boundaries of municipal by self-governing expert. However, the Board's mandate pertaining to the determination of municipal boundaries is provided for in detail in the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act, 1998, to mention few which include the mandate pertaining to ward delimitation, capacity assessments, and district management areas in the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998.

Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 and Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000)

These Acts pronounce the administrative decision-making arrangements which apply to different categories of municipalities. It also defines the authorities as well as duties of different role players, regulate the delegation of powers and provide a code of conduct to govern both councillors and officials. In doing so, a benchmark is provided against which Provincial Government requests to regulate, observer, sustenance as well as coordinate municipalities under its jurisdiction.

Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act 56 of 2003) (MFMA)

The aim of this Act is to ensure maintainable as well as sound management of the monetary matters of municipalities as well as to create standards and ethics against which the economic matters can be observed and measured.

Theoretical Perspective

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory is about the stability and change of institutions, it can also be called the neoinstitutional theory of organisations (Mason et al. 2007). Idziak et al. (2015) and Wellman (2017) recognize that participant model is included in the communal organization model of the establishment. The broader context in determining the purpose of adopting the role of the institutions in understanding a structure for governance that is aligned with the concepts of participation, citizenship as well as legitimacy (Yang 2016). Moreover, analysis are linked to governance processes within which social values are achieved which are also shared by social initiatives as well as key groups of stakeholders. These values comprised of democracy, social benefit as well as accountability (Alber and Flora 2017).

The theory is important to this study because there are a lot of attributes that are associated with the study. The theory emphasised that there could be proper service delivery of the essential social needs to the people at the grass root, if resources are sufficiently utilised in the state. It must be noted that for resources to be effectively utilised in the municipalities in South Africa, the machineries of governments and structures of governance as well as managerial control of activities must be determined in order to ensure smooth implementation of Back-to-basics. It also revealed that for effective running of any organisation either public or private, there is a need for institutional development that would allocate resources which must be properly utilise to cater for social needs of the citizens and that all citizens should be given opportunities to be involved or participate in the government issues that are related to them such as B2B etc. before implementation.

Implementation of the Back-To-Basics Programme

A review for the implementation of the Back-To-Basics Local Government plan; Annual Report on COGTA 2013/14 which a desk top assessment was conducted by COGTA ýExecu-

tive Manager, Mr Seabelo Molefi: Governance Corporate Planning and his team on all nine provinces municipalities required to recognize municipalities three categories: those which are performing; those of which are having a potential to performing well as well as those that are failing (CoGTA 2014). The functional areas the assessments were based on the following (CoGTA 2014):

- ♦ authority;
- ♦ civil solidity;
- ♦ management of financials;
- ♦ delivery of service;
- ♦ institutional management; and
- ♦ public contentment.

This led to the outline of action called Back-To-Basics. According to CoGTA (2014), Municipalities that operated well remained recognized as the ones that perform, which showed powerful governmental as well as organizational control, characterized by governmental stability, that had efficient association as well as an inaccuracy constructions, which report back to communities regularly, vacancy rates are low, 80 percent average rate of collection, capital budgets spending is above 80 percent, also the administration has stability as well as consistently achieving outcomes of unqualified audit.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used qualitative research approach in order to assess and identify the effect of implementation on infrastructure service delivery. The reason for using qualitative research approach was to obtain in-depth information from the participants about the investigated problem. In addition, these participants were very few in number, as a result, the face-to-face interviews was employed because all the participants were available in their various offices. This study used in-depth interviews that involve face-to-face interviews to collect information from 1 (one) Municipal Manager from the Raymond Mhlaba, and 3 (three) communities from the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality. One (1) Municipal Manager was chosen in this study because of his knowledge and experiences on the implementation of Back-To Basics programme while three (3) participants selected were used for the purpose of obtaining information about their knowl-

edge or perception on the implementation of Back-To Basics programme in Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape. The data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires. This semi-structured questionnaire enables the participants to express their views on a question in their own way. Open-ended questions were also used by the researchers to obtain information from the participants in this study as the possible answers were unknown. The study employed purposive sampling technique in selecting the participants used in the study. The data collected were analysed using thematic analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings were presented according to themes. Findings and discussions were presented as follows.

The study was conducted with a total of four (4) participants comprised of one (1) Municipal Manager from the Raymond Mhlaba, while the remaining three (3) were residence in local area of Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The findings from the study show that ages of the participants that participated in the study ranged between 20 and 55 years old. As regards the marital status, the findings from the interviews conducted show that, one (1) participant was married while three (3) were single. With regards to the level of education, the findings show that, one (1) participant had a Master degree, and three (3) had Bachelor Degrees. It must be noted that Alice is the Satellite Cash office of the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality.

The analysis and findings obtained from the interviews conducted with the Municipal Manager and community members of the Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa are presented as follows:

The Need for Implementing Back-to-Basic (B2B) Programme by the Management of Raymond Mhlaba Municipality

The study conducted by Sithole (2018) revealed that the implementation of Back-to-Basics (B2B) programme by the management of

most of local municipalities in South Africa has shown that, there have been several places with evidences of huge improvement to both citizens and entire environment, except in some few areas within the municipalities where the municipalities management are still failing in providing qualitative service delivery to. Although it must be mentioned at this point that despite all efforts made by the government to improve service delivery to some of these few communities, failure is the outcome basically because of some poor logistic problems confronting the municipalities in South Africa (Mdlongwa 2014). The researchers asked the participants if there is a need for implementing Back-to-Basics (B2B) programme. However, the findings from this study has revealed that the need for implementing Back-to-Basic (B2B) programme by the management of Raymond Mhlaba Municipality was very necessary in this study and was first analysed and discussed as follows:

Improving the Functioning of the Communities

The implementation of Back-To-Basics programme as discussed and evidenced from the previous chapters of this study has shown that the implementation of B2B programme is very necessary and should be encouraged among local municipalities and the community members in South Africa (Republic of South Africa 2019). Evidently, CoGTA (2017) stated that the introduction of B2B programme if implemented, would improve communities performance or operations. This means that everyone in the community would be duly engaged in one activities or the other. The participant that was interviewed admitted that there is need for the implementation of Back-to-Basics (B2B) Programme by the management of Raymond Mhlaba Municipality because, this implementation would bring about socioeconomic development to the municipality communities. This participant further mentioned that there is a need for the implementation because it would provide the basic infrastructure such as: water, electricity and sanitation as well as refuse removal at local level to the community areas of the municipality. The participant was further asked on how the implementation of B2B

programme is been implemented. The participant revealed that in order to implement Back-To-Basic programme, the municipality usually entrust the power to each councillor of various wards to oversee and administer the B2B programme created by the municipality to the communities. Below were some of the participant responses:

“Yes, there is a need. Because it brings social and economic functioning in the environment.”

“We as the municipality implement the B2B programme through our ward councillors by improving the functioning of our communities by giving or providing the basic rights. For example – by delivering services such as water, electricity, sanitation and refuse removal at local level.”

Corroborating this finding, the study conducted by James (2015) revealed that the Back-To-Basics programme are the main facilities that the local government uses to provide hygienic drinking H₂O (water), sanitation, electricity, shelter, waste removal as well as infrastructures which remains a human basic rights. In addition, the Republic of South Africa (2019) also indicated that the programme of B2B is aimed at putting people first; secondly, its aim is to provide efficient service delivery as well as being approachable to urgency complaints. Moreover; the programme aim is to also open communication channels with communities so as to have information regular about services, budgeting plus planning participatory and as well as administration transparent. Similarly, the findings of this study concurred with the study conducted by Republic of South Africa (2019) who indicated that a municipality that is getting the basics right, according to the B2B campaign, is one where, amongst other things officials and councillors are adhering to their roles and responsibilities; as well as ward committees and other public participation structures are functioning. The researchers believe that for the implementation of B2B programme to be effective, it is very important that the municipality delegates powers to the ward councillors. This is because the community members cannot walk straight to the municipality to lodge their complaints but through their ward councillors, their voice would be quickly heard and urgent response would be given for their attention.

Sufficient Implementation of the Appropriate B2B Programme

The findings from the respondent shows that the municipality has been able to sufficiently implement the appropriate B2B programme in the community of Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality areas. The participant further mentioned that this implementation was made possible through the support of the intergovernmental grants given to the municipality for the purpose of delivering services their communities. Below were some of the participant responses:

"Yes, I fully believe that my municipality has been able to sufficiently implement the appropriate B2B programme with the help of intergovernmental grants that enables the municipality to perform its role. We try by all means to stick to the municipalities (Local) vision as stated in the White Paper."

In confirming these findings, Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) (2017), indicated that the programmes main aim is encouraging a suitable keeping of records as well as annual production of financial statements. Its furthermore, stated that it supports credit control, a revenue base increase as well as internal controls. The programme promotes for a strong as well as a responsive administration that seeks to cut wasteful expenditures within which include monitoring overtime as well as implementing of functional supply chain management structures within which appropriate oversight are seen (PMG 2017).

Notable B2B Programme that Municipality has Been Able to Implement

Although the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality was initially called Nkonkobe Local Municipality which has been long well known nationwide. As one of the recognised municipalities in the Eastern Cape, there are several notable B2B programmes that its implementation in this municipality environs is ongoing. More importantly, this implementation has brought little rapid growth and development to the communities. The researchers asked the participants about the notable B2B programme that municipality has been able to implement. The findings from the respondents show that fixing of potholes,

collection of waste materials or refuse, public transportation, water and sanitation etc were identified as some of the notable areas of focus where the implementation of B2B programme covers in attempting to provide qualitative service delivery to the communities. Below were some of the participant responses:

"Frankly speaking, there are many Notable B2B programmes that municipality has been able to implement, but some of them include the following:

- i) Fixing of potholes (Roads)*
- ii) Collecting refuse (Waste Management)*
- iii Maintaining public places (Community Halls) Human Settlement*
- iv) Fixing of street lights (Electricity)*
- v) Public transpiration,*
- vi) Water and Sanitation"*

With regards to the notable B2B programme that municipality has been able to implement, the finding of this study as confirmed by Tshetedi (2000: 43) indicated that ever since 1994 municipalities have been main established sites for service delivery in South Africa. CoGTA (2017) continued to state that the main responsibilities for municipalities are the delivery of services to societies within their jurisdiction such as roads infrastructure, electricity and water plus sanitation. It further states that Local government obligation is to be situated well-organized, operative as well as accessible to meet the essentials of their societies.

Effective B2B Programme Contribution in Improving the Community Area of the Municipality

The researchers asked the participants about how effective are these B2B Programme, such as: fixing of potholes (roads), refuse collection (waste management), maintaining public places (for instance, community halls) Human Settlement, fixing of street lights (electricity), public transpiration etc contribute in improving the community area of the municipality. The findings from the participant revealed that the implementation of B2B Programme has tremendously contributed in improving the community area of the municipality. The participant further mentioned that, provision of job opportunities thereby empowering the community members in

order to have income for sustaining themselves, provision of essential social amenities such as water, electricity etc were some of the B2B programmes which has brought improvement to the community areas of the municipality. Below were some of the participant responses:

“Some of the services rendered by the municipality have brought progress in improving the community area of the municipality. These service delivering include the refuse collection (Waste Management); public place maintenance etc have created employment opportunities to community members.”

The findings above are relevant to the South Africa's Constitution Act 108 of 1996 which states that local government among other things need to make sure that maintainable service delivery, improve the development of socio-economic, encourage a safe plus well atmosphere and inspire civic involvement in problems of indigenous authority. It further continues to indicate that a number of successive projects and programmes have been implemented by the government with an aim to improve functioning of local government sphere. In 2004, Project Consolidate which was launched (CoGTA 2017).

The Ward Councillors Work Together with Communities in Order to Implement the B2B Programme in the Municipality

The role ward councillors cannot be over-emphasised. They have been seen as those people elected by their community members to represent them in the municipality. They have also been looking unto as those who look into their communities by bringing quality service delivery to their people, such as: clean water, stable electricity, maintenance of communication and road networks etc. The researchers asked the participants if the ward councillors are working together with the communities in order to implement the B2B Programme in the municipality. The findings from the participant revealed that the ward councillors are working closely together with the communities in order to implement the B2B Programme in the municipality. This is noticeable by the researchers from this participant as further mentioned in one of the interviews that effective monitoring of the municipality in exercising their roles is very important. As re-

vealed by the participant, the ward councillors ensure that all the activities of the municipality in providing services to the communities are effectively and efficiently monitored by them. These include the execution of the municipality's plan towards achieving the organisation goals and objectives. They also ensure that capital projects such as provision of housing, construction of road etc which the communities could not afford are executed by the municipality. Hence, they ensure that service delivery is equally and fairly provided to the communities without any delay. Below were some of the participant responses:

- “i) Their roles are to help monitor the performance of the municipality as to whether the municipality's plans and programmes are achieving the intended effect.*
- ii) As well as to see if the services are being provided in a way that is effective, efficient and fair.*
- iii) Whether capital projects as committed to in the IDP are actually taking place according to plan within a reasonable timeframe.”*

The findings are supported by the (PMG 2014) which stresses out that the programme promotes for a strong as well as a responsive administration that seeks to cut wasteful expenditures within which include monitoring overtime as well as implementing of functional supply chain management structures within which appropriate oversight are seen (PMG 2014). It continued to emphasize that to support realistic organograms formation of aligned by the development of the municipal strategy encouraging ward regular report backs by councillors as well as engagement of clear platforms with civil society.

Challenges Faced by Raymond Mhlaba Municipality Manager in Implementing the Back-To-Basics Programme

The responses from the participant has shown that communities disobedient to the important manifesto of the municipality management; poor communities attendance at several municipality's meetings were identified as some of the challenges faced by the municipal manager in implementing B2B programme in the municipality successfully.

Community Members

Perception of the Community Members with Regards to the Implementation of B2B Programme in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality

Having present and discuss findings obtained from the interviews conducted with the Municipal Manager, it is very important to present and discuss the findings of in-depth data collected from the interviews conducted with the community members of the Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality. Findings from three participants revealed that their view concerning the implementation of the B2B programme in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality were as follows: the implementation is quite good though there are some challenges; the implementation is a better way in ensuring that the municipality performs its basic responsibilities and functions without compromise; the programme aims to bring changes and lessens corruption; the implementation has brought a great initiative by the government to the communities but an open doors for corruptions: Responses below were obtained from the participants:

Participant One

"In my own view I can see that the municipality since the implementation of the back to basics is trying to perform well by keeping us as community members happy even though there are still quite a lot of challenges that still arise like the roads which are still in bad conditions as well as the crisis that is still arising in RMLM."

Participant Two

"It is a great and a better way in ensuring that the Municipality performs its responsibilities, basics and functions without compromise."

Participant Three

"My view concerning the implementation of the B2B programme in RMLM is that the programme aims to bring change and lessens corruption that way the municipality will be more

effective in providing better delivery for its people."

CONCLUSION

The implementation of B2B programme has been seen as a tool for improving the Local Economic Development (LED) of the Municipalities in South Africa. The findings of the study have shown that this programme has brought about empowerment to the community members. Through this programme, a small number of employment opportunities were created for the citizens thereby reducing a huge rate of joblessness in the Eastern Cape. Hence for the implementation of B2B programme to be effective, it is very important that the municipality delegates powers to the ward councillors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper recommended that the municipality management should desist from making empty promises to the communities, be honest and deliver qualitative services to communities. The provincial sphere of government should develop a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating how local government is executing its responsibilities of basic service delivery. The Local Municipality (Raymond Mhlaba) should involve the district municipality on issues of misunderstanding that impact to accountability. Importantly, the district municipality should be more involved in the local municipality's affairs in order to advise on effective implementation procedures or process to follow in providing quality service delivery to the communities. More importantly, all the local government ward councillors should be well-informed regarding the necessity of monitoring and evaluation in good governance, effective infrastructure and service delivery as these will enhance successful implementation of B2B programme in the community.

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