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**REPORT ON THE COMMUNITY BASED PLANNING (CBP) REGIONAL LEARNING EVENT,  
HOSTED BY PLANACT**

**Date : 22 August 2009**

**Venue : Braamfontein Recreational Centre, Johannesburg**

**Key Facilitator: Mike Makwela**

**Local Governance Programme Coordinator, Planact**

## **1. Introduction**

This report serves to share key aspects of the recent community based planning learning event hosted by Planact on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2009 with financial support from the Good Governance Learning Network (GGLN).

## **2. Background and motivation**

Despite the progress that has been made in developing new planning systems post apartheid era, there has been very little advancement in practice around physical, economic and social integration. Poor communities continue to live on the periphery of the cities. In some instances, the provision of adequate services as envisaged in the South African Constitution has ground to a halt; hence there have been some sporadic protests against local councils by communities citing poor service delivery as a reason.

Since 2000, a new process of planning has been initiated by government known as the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process. This process is different in a number of ways: it is based on participation, where all stakeholders in the municipality are invited to participate (government, communities, business, labour and other sectors) in the planning process. It is a process where communities are provided with an opportunity of identifying and giving local government their priority needs; however, it appears that the process of needs prioritizing is still a sticky point, the practice seems to be that it is the Council that has the final decision on what goes into the final integrated development plan document, this necessitates a revision of the concept of public participation in the IDP process. This has led to a stronger focus on community based planning (CBP) being introduced in various municipalities in South Africa with the objectives focused on improving the quality of IDP; improving the quality of services; improving the community's control over development; and increasing community action and reducing dependency.

Planact has engaged with an evolving understanding of community based planning in South Africa in part through its involvement in an evaluation of the CBP model piloted in eight municipalities in South Africa which came to an end in 2005.<sup>1</sup> The Community Based Planning (CBP) model arose out of a four-country action research project involving South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Ghana. The aim of the project was to understand more about how community participation in planning and management can be linked to decentralized delivery systems.<sup>2</sup> The CBP model was then further developed through more extensive piloting in South Africa. Internationally, the CBP model arose as a result of the wave of reforms towards decentralization of power motivated by the perceived opportunities to realize the right of citizens to participate in local governance decision-making and planning processes and to advance pro-poor service delivery.

In the South African context, CBP has been introduced within the municipal planning context of Integrated Development Planning as an attempt to address persistent apartheid-style patterns of spatial planning and resource allocation. The CBP model attempts to provide a practical means of deepening community participation in IDP processes and its main outcome is “a ward action plan that provides inputs to the municipal IDP that are intended to be based on community priorities, and are realistic and realizable in the context of the municipalities’ available resources and capacity”.

### **3. Objectives of the learning event**

The key objective of the event was to share experiences of community based planning as implemented by municipalities and various communities to also consider ways of enhancing implementation.

### **4. Participants**

Participants included community members from informal settlements and township areas in Gauteng including Orlando, Thembelihle, Zandspruit, Protea South, Diepsloot, Vosloorus and Sol Plaatjies. Municipal officials were also in attendance as presenters including representatives from the City of Johannesburg metropolitan municipality and Ekurhuleni metropolitan municipality. The GGLN was represented by the coordinator, Bonginkosi Masiva, and a representative of Community Connections. In addition, civil society representatives from the Japan Volunteer Centre (JVC), World Vision and CORC (Community Organisation Resource Centre) also participated. A total of 44 participants attended the event including (29 men and 15 women).

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<sup>1</sup> Planact, Afesis-Corplan, Foundation for Contemporary Research. 2005. Report on the Evaluation of the Impacts of Community-Based Planning (CBP) in Selected Pilot Municipalities, commissioned by and submitted to GTZ. The evaluation study was commissioned by the Strengthening Local Governance Programme (SLGP) which operates as a partnership between the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the national Department of Provincial and Local Government (dplg), the national Department of Housing and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

<sup>2</sup> Goldman, I, Carnegie, J and Abbot, J. 2004. “Linking the community to local government: action research in four African countries,” *PLA notes 49*, IIED cited in Planact, Afesis-Corplan, Foundation for Contemporary Research. 2005. Report on the Evaluation of the Impacts of Community-Based Planning (CBP) in Selected Pilot Municipalities, commissioned by and submitted to GTZ.

## 5. Methodology

The learning event took the form of a participatory workshop drawing on participants' experiences. It included presentations by three municipal officials and one community member followed by a discussion session. The second part of the workshop included a practical simulation exercise based on the CBP process with valuable reflections arising as a result.

## 6. Presentations

The first presentation was done by Pat Nhlapo, Deputy Director: Community Participation & Ward Committees, Office of the Speaker, City of Johannesburg. The presentation emphasized that community based planning should be seen as a social contract between the community, ward committee and the municipality to facilitate community planning that will contribute to the IDP; to enable the community, ward committee and councilor to take ownership of development in their ward and to realize the notion of developmental local governance. Experiences from the City of Johannesburg indicate that the IDP process has been more consultative than participatory, hence the need for bottom-up CBP. The report of the first phase of CBP implementation in the City of Johannesburg highlighted the following aspects:

- Communities were clear in many cases about what they need the City to do in their wards
- The City was able to identify key areas of intervention (infrastructure maintenance; electrification; eradicating informal settlements; job creation; communication with communities)
- The City could communicate its big ideas for the medium term and outline how local issues will be addressed
- Qualitative community inputs were ensured (moving away from wish lists)
- The importance of timing of the process to allow for ward issues to find expression in departmental sector plans and budgets was noted
- The communication gap between the City and communities prevented the City from fully exploiting local resources to increase community action and reduce dependency
- Limited human resource capacity to manage the CBP process to ensure greater community involvement requires attention

The City's plans for the upcoming CBP consolidation phase were also outlined pointing to the development of a Basic Service Delivery Hotspot Masterplan and the importance of proactively dealing with communities at the ward level to deepen democracy (also noting the context of the upcoming local government elections in 2011).

The second presentation was provided by Bheki Sithebe, Regional Coordinator (East Region) IDP Officer from Ekurhuleni Metro Municipality. This presentation focused on the CBP process in Ekurhuleni and largely emphasized the training component of councilors, officials and community development workers (CDWs) in 2008. Community members were engaged in a planning process to identify priorities. The achievements indicated that the large majority of wards went through the process (82 of 88 wards), maximum participation, and identification of projects by participants (including economic development, clean environment, health issues, infrastructure, and skills development). The major challenge indicated was the late approval of the budget per ward (discretionary funds) and hence the plans were not implemented. The next phase will include the

refinement of plans, role allocations and specific departmental responsibilities, implementation of plans and review of the process.

Dan Motshabi, a community member from Orlando, provided a presentation from the perspective of community members who participated in community based planning processes in Orlando East. The presentation highlighted the role of community members in the 2010 Soccer World Cup related developments to ensure that the standard of living of residents in the area is improved as a result of investments. The public participation process around the development of the BRT stations was critiqued in terms of limited communication and consultation; and the Orlando Ekhaya development plans were regarded as a vision of integrated development. Furthermore, the presentation also expanded on the positive role of education / training and general support provided by civil society groups such as Planact and World Vision as well as the ways in which community members positively address the challenges in Orlando without receiving material rewards, and the positive leadership of councilors in the area was also acknowledged.

The last presentation was done by Bejile Ntlanjane, an official responsible for ward governance in Region D, City of Johannesburg. This presentation highlighted the view that the CBP process is one of the best things government initiated since it promotes “planning *with* people and not planning *for* people” – hence it is seen as democratizing planning, giving community members opportunities to practically design their area and voice their needs. The challenges noted included the role of officials in CBP meetings which is important in providing upfront advice and reliable information to community members and supporting councilors; slow progress in terms of implementation which he linked to the limited powers of regions (centralization); poor coordination of events; inaccurate capturing of information; departmental commitment to ward priorities; and the *quality* of community input (as opposed to the *number* of participants). Furthermore, the presentation emphasised that municipal departments must be informed by the CBP and IDP processes and should not just rely on consultants. In summary, he stressed that “the CBP process should be strengthened as it has the potential of democratizing the planning processes of government”.

## 7. Discussion:

The following were some of the key issues raised in the discussion.

- ***Limited information about the CBP process in municipalities:*** Many participants indicated that this was the first time they were made aware of CBP; community members are generally not informed and so are not involved in planning. Participants also questioned the 1 million rand per ward allocation in the City of Johannesburg since they were not aware of this and have not seen anything happening in this regard. Councilors were pointed to in not informing communities about these processes and other information required. Presenters responded that participation also entails the responsibility of community members to take the initiative and find information from a range of sources (eg. Council offices, website), and should be aware of the Access to Information Act in this regard. The tendency of attending meetings that speak directly to our needs, was also pointed to as a reason for some people not being part of the consultation process. Yet participants felt that councilors should have workshops like this where officials and community members are present to understand CBP.
- ***Corruption:*** In general, participants felt that those close to councilors are provided with more beneficial opportunities. When such instances are reported, the councilor has a negative

attitude to community members. There were also reports that councilors were not hands on in dealing with community problems and were generally not available for community members. Participants suggested that there needs to be clarity in terms of how councilors should be working and that critique is important so that councilors can see things in different ways. Presenters acknowledged the leadership weakness of councilors who work with people they are comfortable with and who tend to avoid those who are critical of them. Yet presenters also felt that the issue of corruption needs to be unpacked for a clearer understanding of what it entails since most of the allegations of corruption cannot be substantiated.

- ***The role of ward committees:*** Many ward committee members take on the role with expectations of job opportunities in projects and future positions in the municipality. It was emphasized that they need to understand their roles and responsibilities as facilitators.
- ***Service delivery / developments in specific areas:*** Dolomitic conditions in Tembelihle have been continuously cited by the City as the reason services cannot be provided since the area has been illegally occupied, and cannot be proclaimed due to the land situation, and hence has not been budgeted for. Yet community members feel that it also has to do with race discrimination, although denied by the City. In Diepsloot, the recent protests were also cited as related to limited consultation and incorrect information about developments in the area, pointing to councilors as well as other community leaders. It was generally agreed that the issue of informal settlements requires more attention by municipalities and in future workshops of this kind.
- ***Clarity regarding the link between CBP and IDP processes:*** Presenters indicated that the CBP is a public participation strategy to feed into the IDP. The IDP comes first as the bigger five year plan and the CBP speaks to the specifics of the local community. Participants also noted that while the focus is on community participation, we need to look at more than the community level to ensure that this process is effective pointing to the structural and policy adjustments required for more effective CBP.
- ***Coordination between departments and between spheres of government:*** Presenters indicated that planning occurs at a range of government levels and has to be aligned with each other through effective inter-governmental relations.

## 8. CBP Simulation Exercise

The discussion was followed by a simulation exercise where participants engaged in a specific community based planning process for an imaginary area displaying typical features of the apartheid style city including limited integration, poor revenue collection, set against the backdrop of poor coordination amongst different spheres of government and worldwide recession. Participants were divided into small groups taking on different roles within the community and planning process and set about prioritizing three development issues taking into account the implications of these priorities. Reflections on the exercise highlighted the following issues:

- Effective communication is very important in the planning process. Group dynamics reveal that you have more power if you talk too much and if you are quiet you will not get anything. Skilled facilitators are essential for the CBP process.
- The councilor as facilitator of the planning process (as was common in this exercise) has a difficult job to acknowledge different views and manage the process also taking into account the broader city picture within the context of specific community needs. Yet some councilors try

to think on behalf of the community rather than consulting effectively with community members. Effective consultation should also be seen as minimizing pressure on the councilor.

- As community members we always focus on what we want, and not on how to achieve these things
- In terms of class and race dynamics, the gap between the rich and the poor (particularly also still along race lines) is so vast that the planning process itself is quite telling – for the poor it is largely about defending rights and survival and for the rich its all about money (wealth creation). Poor people are seen as criminals. Lack of integration as a legacy of apartheid is still a major problem even though there are attempts at mixed income developments. Issues of land ownership and land value need to be balanced in this regard.
- Inter-governmental relations are important in terms of knowing who is responsible for what aspects
- Prioritization is difficult and is also reflective of what happens at council – so it is important for communities to understand these dynamics.
- Constitutional rights have to be fought for and defended.

## 9. Conclusion

In closing, participants and presenters emphasized the importance of having a structure in place that will effectively represent community interests by engaging all parties through proper consultation and participation. The workshop was very positively evaluated in terms of gaining new information and sharing grievances with officials also being available throughout the workshop to respond to issues raised by participants. Key recommendations was that councilors should be called to future workshops and learning events so that they can address problems more effectively; and participants should transfer knowledge gained by informing other community members about participatory processes such as community based planning.

*Compiled by Planact staff,  
21 September 2009*