CHAPTER 9: Local Governance and Human Settlements

Abstract

This chapter unpacks practices, scope and experiences in local governance systems and the impact of these issues on the attainment of sustainable human settlements. It appears there is reluctance to fully exploit the ability within the local government to shift in the institutional, policy and legislative frameworks that will open up avenues for investment in urban councils. Sustainable human settlements should ideally be pursued through good local governance that emphasises citizen participation, accountability, transparency, enterprise development, investment promotion and small business development. It has been observed that good governance plays a key/leading role in enhancing the development of sustainable human settlements.

INTRODUCTION

Local governance seeks to plan and promote integrated and sustainable human settlements and ensure quality service delivery through cooperation and good governance with local authorities (Madumo, 2015). It is the role of government to ensure that development does not promote the urbanisation of poverty and the continued proliferation of informal settlements. Development should be industrialisation, coupled with other forms of economic development that enhance the quality of life of all citizens.

Jonga and Munzwa (2009) argue that the role of local government is to look at all the interests of the population, plan and coordinate activities of the city, supply services such as water and transportation, deal with municipal finances and regulate the behaviour of the major actors and urban markets and focus on the major issues identified by the population, paying attention to the further development of the urban economy (Munzwa and Wellington, 2010; Jonga and Munzwa, 2009). Local government and other local stakeholders, play a key role in ensuring access to goods and basic services, including the most marginalised communities. Globally, the role of local government in ensuring access to goods and services is increasingly recognised. Many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

have targets that are directly or indirectly related to the work of local actors. SDG16 emphasises the importance of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. SDG11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) highlights the importance of local solutions and a bottom-up approach to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit further emphasised the importance of respecting, supporting and strengthening local leadership and capacity in crises.

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Human settlements are created to be places where people can stay, play, pray and work. They should be green, landscaped communities-pleasant places where people live, learn and have leisure. It is the role of local government to be aware that communities require a specific paradigm shift if they are to go beyond housing (Tokyo-Sexwale, 2010). It is not about a change of name from housing to human settlements; it is about a change of mindset, taking us from a new concept to concrete reality. This shift in understanding is not applicable only to conceptualising and planning at the national or provincial level, it is also required in the way they rollout policies, programmes and plans;– in preparation, provision and maintenance of new integrated human settlements.

Local governments are mandated to undertake the enabler and facilitator role in the achievement of inward investment within their local governments. Local authorities have been failing to attract investors due to outdated by-laws, side-lining by the central government in engagements with potential investors, the demise of the manufacturing sector and the after-effects of the 1990s Economic Structural Adjustment Programme {ESAP} in most African countries (Makunde *et al.,* 2018; Wilson, 2016).

In this regard, the inconsistent enunciation of some socio-economic policies by the incumbent government appears to be one of the key drivers of de-investment within most urban councils. Another reason for the continued lack of investment in urban councils is a minimal effort by the central government to open up platforms for local governments to meaningfully engage international investors within their local government due to stringent and unfavourable investment laws existing within the country's legal framework. This has a direct bearing

on the discharge of public service provision to the local communities. In the same context, while these trajectories of economic development are increasingly embedded into systems of local and central governance in other low-income countries, the extent to that such systems have been established to maximise economic development processes in Zimbabwe is yet to be fully explored.

It appears there is reluctance by the centre to fully exploit bilateral investment arrangements or there is a minimal commitment for a paradigm shift in the institutional, policy and legislative frameworks that will open up avenues for investment in urban councils. Local Economic Development (LED) should ideally be pursued through market-oriented strategies that emphasise enterprise development, investment promotion and small business development. It has been observed that infrastructure plays a key/leading role in investment attraction and its maintenance. Local areas are as important as regional areas in contributing to economic development, hence the need for local government to invest in road infrastructure to enhance local investment.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Local governance refers to the way local decisions are made and implemented, including the delivery of services. A local governance approach recognises that local needs and priorities may differ across communities and neighbourhoods, particularly in context with high disparities (Bovaird and Löffler, 2002). Challenges and bottlenecks to local service delivery and provision of public goods can be technical but also financial or political in nature. Multiple actors including local government, service points, ministry departments, the private sector and civil society play a role in the production and delivery of local goods and services (Geddes, 2006). The delivery of local goods and services is shaped by formal national, regional and local government policies and procedures and also by informal interactions and (power) relationships between various levels of government and other local actors (e.g., local elites, private sector). Participation by children, adolescents and their families and bottom-up accountability is critical for equitable delivery of goods and services at the local level. This includes a strong focus on the equal participation of girls and boys, women and men.

Local governance refers to the way local decisions are made and implemented. This includes decisions regarding the prioritisation, availability and delivery of local goods and services and ultimately, whether explicit or implicit, the beneficiaries (Gaventa, 2004, Stoker, 2011). Local governance is shaped by formal national, regional and local government policies and by informal interactions and relationships among various levels of government and local actors (e.g., local government, private sector, civil society, communities, traditional or religious leaders).

Local governance ensures that urban planning offers a unique opportunity to rethink past development practices, improve the sustainability of human settlements and effectively prepare communities against risks (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999). Human settlements ought to respond to social, economic or political issues, which however, was not seen as the task of planning to intervene (Williams, *et al.*, 2018). Human Settlements, places inhabited more or less permanently, include buildings where people live or use and the paths and streets over which they travel. Settlements may consist of a few dwelling units called hamlets or clusters of buildings called urban cities. Vibrant human settlements are defined by meeting demand from a variety of users, cultures. Sustainability can be applied to human settlements through extending the metabolism approach to human settlements (Hamann, *et al.*, 2005) so that settlements can be defined as sustainable if it is reducing its resource inputs which are: land, energy, water and materials and waste outputs, i.e. air, liquid and solid waste while simultaneously improving its liveability i.e. health, employment, income, housing, leisure activities, accessibility, public spaces and community.

THEORIES UNDERPINNING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY

Subsidiarity is one of the most important principles applicable in the analysis of the functional division between central and local governments. As observed by the principle of subsidiarity, government functions should be performed at a lower level unless local government fails to cope with them and the performance of said functions at a higher level would be more efficient (Drew and Grant, 2017). It is thus essential to identify criteria for determining function elevation to a higher level of government.

The principle of subsidiarity is oftentimes stipulated in national legislation. Yet, its implementation framework is not always clear (Spicker, 1991). The concept of subsidiarity, that has withstood the challenges of time in the Christian, economic and political discourse, has been analysed in the Lithuanian discourse for some time, thus, its meaning can be fully clear to any user of the word. As the objective of this research, namely local self-government and local community, falls within the domain of public administration based on management theoreticians, the application of the principle of subsidiarity is fully appropriate to their activity that is also confirmed by the fact that this principle is enshrined in the Law of Public Administration of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law of Local Self-Government of the Republic of Lithuania (Fabbrini, 2016). The content analysis of the legal acts considered by the Committee on State Administration and Local Authorities revealed that the term "subsidiarity", even after being entrenched along with other principles of local self-governance in the Law on Local Self-Government in 2016, is not used, thus, it has merely a declarative effect in the process of making decisions related to local self-governance and local community (Kondratienė, 2012).

DECENTRALISATION

Decentralisation is a political and a technical process. Effective decentralisation brings decision-making closer to citizens and can yield programmes and services that better address local needs and demands. A general description of decentralisation involves shifting a combination of political, fiscal and administrative responsibilities from central to sub-national governments and civil society and the private sector (Halvorsen, 2019). Decentralisation is often described as part of democratic governance. It should enhance the roles that decentralised authorities play in local development and be conceptualised in terms of its impacts on the capabilities, accountability and responsiveness of local governance.

Central governments around the world are decentralising fiscal, political and administrative responsibilities to lower-level governments and to the private sector (Breuer, *et al.*, 2017). In Zimbabwe, for example, since independence, the country has embarked on a process of decentralisation through legislative and institutional initiatives in a bid to strengthen and democratise local government and to improve service delivery. Decentralisation involves the transfer of power and resources from the centre to sub-national units or local units that

exercise power and function with a significant degree of autonomy (Hope, 2000). Through decentralisation, communities are empowered to elect representatives, influence decision-making and participate in development.

Decentralisation is a broad concept that often takes a specific form, depending on the context where it is applied. There are, however, certain aspects of decentralisation that are considered to be standard, irrespective of application. Decentralisation is defined as the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resource raising and allocation from the central government and its agencies to field units of central government ministries or agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, area-wide, regional or functional authorities, or non-governmental private or voluntary organisations.

Decentralisation has widely been accepted as a key feature of the public sector reform programme and is associated with democratisation, development and good governance. At the international level, this is manifested in the United Nations Guidelines on Decentralisation and the Strengthening of Local Authorities and the requirements of institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. At the regional level, most African countries have adopted some form of decentralised government. A properly designed decentralisation programme has the potential of reaping several benefits (Kasim and Agbola, 2017; Helmsing, 2002). The policy intent of decentralisation in Zimbabwe is explored against the background of both pre and post-colonial local government initiatives. Decentralisation can be categorised into four main forms, namely deconcentration, devolution, delegation and privatisation (Anaafo, 2018). It is important to note that countries that have implemented decentralisation have adopted two or more forms of decentralisation and the result is often a mixture of these forms of decentralisation (Guha and Chakrabarti, 2019).

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is a principle of good governance. At local level, accountability is often seen in terms of service delivery. Citizens are concerned with service availability, relevance and appropriateness, or whether there is sufficient space and support for agricultural production and other economic aspects (Mees and Driessen, 2019).

There is a disconnect between state and citizens or, rather, these relationships are ritualised, with people going through the motions of meetings, participation and voting, without changes and they do not believe anything will change (Gabriel, 2017). In that situation, accountability remains an empty shell, unless the connection can be built and strengthened. In its core meaning, accountability refers to actors, organisations, leaders, etc. being called to account to some authority for their actions as observed by some set standard (Mdee and Mushi, 2020). It is historically and semantically related to 'accounting' in the meaning of bookkeeping ((Dyzenhaus and Cheeseman, 2018). Accountability is connected with the discourse of 'good governance' in which case accountability is seen as a virtue, rather than tied with financial administration and bookkeeping.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND LOCALISM

Many countries are embracing participatory local governance models – various forms of state decision-making processes that mandate local representatives to include and consult with citizens. These provisions are increasingly enshrined in policy and law, as many countries pursue ambitious decentralisation agendas. Governance and local community's participation refer to the citizens' capacity of engaging in public management affairs by taking part in decision-making, ultimately responding more proactively to citizen concerns (Nickson, 2019). These views consider the citizens' role in local governance from the logic of representative democracy. Citizens participate in and contribute to achieving greater equity and poverty reduction through electing more representative and accountable residents into local government. There are other approaches, however, that perceive a more active role for citizens, through direct participation in public matters. Such approaches are concerned with transformations that go beyond the traditional notion of the public sphere and representative democracy and challenge the boundaries between the public and private in favour of more direct forms of democratic engagement (Jingen, 2017).

Citizen participation becomes a concept and practice reaching beyond the traditional liberal notion of political participation as limited to electoral campaigning and voting. The practice of direct democracy extends citizens' political participation beyond the electoral process and draws on traditions of community participation - in identifying local priorities, planning and implementing programmes - to position the

citizen as a key decision-maker and implementing agent and beneficiary in local governance processes. The importance of the 'local' is that through processes of decentralisation, the local level can provide opportunities for state and citizens to engage that in some cases, are evolving into new, participatory forms of governance.

Citizenship participation thus defined, broadens the agenda around which people can mobilise and make demands (Fu and Ma, 2020). As clients or beneficiaries, people can question the quality or cost of a service, but they are excluded from participating in the formulation or reform of the policies that underpin service delivery and their privatisation. As citizens, people can exercise their right to propose or oppose social policies that affect them. Tracing the history of participation from the 1970s to the present day, Cornwall distinguishes between induced and invited participation (through user groups, 'consultation' etc.) and a form of citizen participation through that 'people come to create their own spaces and enact their own strategies for change (Cini and Felicetti, 2018). Furthermore, re-conceptualising citizenship as the exercise of agency, rather than the liberal notion of a national identity that entitles citizens to a bundle of rights, creates the basis for a more inclusionary approach and with it a re-casting of rights - rights as created by citizens themselves (*ibid*).

Citizens are engaging with local government in the interface between representative and participatory democracy. Rules and mechanisms for this direct engagement need to be established for new relationships of trust and cooperation to develop. This can be particularly implemented if sectors of society are to be included that have ‘historically been denied access to the public policy realm’ (Wang, *et al.*, 2018). While government needs to establish the mechanisms for participatory local governance, their efforts is most effective when they coincide with citizens’ demands. Thus, the challenge is to build capacity on both sides of the equation for good, participatory local governance.

Promoting citizen participation in local governance or state-civil society partnerships means opening up space for civil society organisations (CSOs) to engage with the state. As CSOs compete to occupy this

space, issues of representation and legitimacy need to be recognised. Chaskin and Garg (1997) studied several neighbourhood governance structures in the United States and found that representation and participation varied enormously, as did the relationship of each structure with local government. Efforts to connect 'strong, recognised neighbourhood organisations' to the government may lead to co-optation, 'in which case the fates of neighbourhood organisations and governance structures are so tied to the structure of authority that they are unable to advocate a minority position effectively'.

A central idea in community localism is the notion of participatory devolution; that citizens ought to be engaged, supported and included in local decision-making. Community localism views participatory engagement as a vital ingredient in the quest to empower communities and enliven local democracy. Yet, critics argue that in practice, many participatory initiatives inspired by community localism fail to empower citizens because they represent one-off consultation exercises with limited devolution of responsibility or control (Wang, *et al.*, 2018). The use of a participatory mechanism has received little attention in localism debates, the delegated citizen committee. These are committees composed of volunteer citizens who have formal devolved power to manage local assets such as public halls or sporting fields and, in some cases, to make decisions on broader policy issues.

Civic participation can help to promote good local governance, especially in countries where local governments must establish credibility. Such accountability mechanisms, however, can be mechanical. For example, participatory budgeting can be defined to meet normative principles, but if participation is token or non-inclusive, it is unlikely to bring about broad improvements in service coverage/quality and the associated impetus to pay local taxes (Fu and Ma, 2020). If these mechanisms are captured by political and economic elites – potentially including powerful but non-representative civil society organisations (CSOs) – their impact is limited or different than intended. In some cases, participation is mandatory or requires the involvement of under-represented groups (e.g. a certain percentage of women or disadvantaged groups), but such rules intended to broaden engagement do not automatically make participation meaningful.

TECHNIQUES IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

PARTICIPATORY MODELS

Participatory approaches are more likely to have the greatest potential for influence if they can be strengthened by claims to participation as a legal right. Although much of the important work on deliberative democracy that has emerged in the United States focuses on the quality of "public talk" and dialogue, in many other countries, the emphasis has been first and foremost on inclusion i.e. in seeing participation as a way of addressing critical issues of poverty and social justice by enhancing the voices of those who are directly affected by public policies but who are often excluded from the process of making them (Rosilawati, *et al.*, 2018). Put more simply, approaches to strengthening citizen participation have often emphasised who gets to the decision-making table, while approaches to deliberation often focus on the quality of conversation that occurs around the table. Both approaches are important. It is not enough to increase participation unless the quality of the decision-making processes also improves. Conversely, better deliberation without the broader engagement of the poor and powerless may simply strengthen existing inequities in the status quo.

The concept of participation is increasingly being related to the rights of citizenship and democratic governance. This is apparent in the multitude of programmes for decentralised governance in both Southern and Northern countries (Buchenrieder *et al.*, 2017). Linking citizen participation to the state at the local or grassroots level raises important questions about the nature of democracy and how to achieve it. The widespread engagement with issues of participation and local governance creates enormous opportunities for redefining and deepening meanings of democracy, for linking civil society and government reforms in new ways and for extending the rights of inclusive citizenship (Waheduzzaman, *et al.*, 2018). The success of new institutional arrangements for more inclusive and pro-poor participatory governance will depend largely on existing power relations. Bringing more direct and empowered forms of participation into the local sphere can lead to democracy-building and pro-poor developmental outcomes (Da Cruz and Marques, 2017). This requires promoting pro-poor and social justice outcomes, developing new models and approaches where enabling conditions are not favourable,

avoiding an overly narrow focus on the local and guarding against co-optation of the agenda for less progressive goals.

The decline in civic participation and the distance between citizens and state institutions must be addressed by 'working with both sides of the equation' – focusing on the intersection of civil society and state-based approaches. Linking participation to the political sphere means rethinking the ways in which participation has often been conceived and implemented. A more active notion of citizenship is needed, whereby citizens are recognised as proactive protagonists in the policy-making process, rather than passive users. A number of mechanisms to enable new forms of citizen-state engagement are being implemented around the world. However, we need to learn more about how such initiatives work in practice, for whom and with what social justice outcomes. Spaces for participation are not neutral (Jordan *et al.*, 2018). They are shaped by power relations that both surround and enter them. Participation is not only the right to participate effectively in a given space but also the right to define and shape that space.

There are critical challenges to ensure that participatory governance initiatives promote pro-poor and social justice outcomes. Priorities for policy-makers and practitioners include: learning more about the outcomes of different forms of participatory governance (Buchenrieder *et al.*, 2017). More research is needed on the optimal conditions for enabling positive pro-poor and pro-democracy outcomes. There is need to ask questions about the possibilities for moving towards pro-poor participatory governance where such ideal conditions are absent. A willingness to adapt to different situations and develop new models and approaches under such conditions is needed. An overly narrow focus on the local and situating each participatory governance mechanism in a wider developmental context should be avoided. An effective way to describe a participatory governance model is to identify the different levels or degrees at that it expresses the openness of the decision-making process to the contribution of the citizens or their associations (Da Cruz and Marques, 2017). Afterwards, it is possible to cross the identified levels with the typology of actors involved, at different stages, in the process, ranging from the public bodies to the individuals or groups of individuals.

BUDGETING

All parts of a local government are interdependent on other parts of the system. There are many steps in the budget process, including development, approval, implementation and feedback. Every step is important for residents, elected officials and employees. Before a local government can establish and develop a budget, they need to finish their strategic plan because it will determine how the government can best allocate funds (Velinov *et al.*, 2019). Citizen input is an important part of the process as they are looking for assurance on the use of their hard-earned tax dollars towards the programmes and services they want and need most. They have the right to know why budgets are useful in the planning process (Oktavia, 2017). Technology for local governments is of great value in helping to engage citizens and keep them informed about what's going on within their communities.

The budget must account for the local government's operating environment, including the political, economic, social and legal environments (Krueger and Park, 2020). Elected officials have a great deal of control over the internal environment, but they have little control over the external. Many aspects of a local government's budget are affected by higher levels of government. Council members must consider the future budgetary constraints and needs of their cities (Chinnasri and Amornsiriphong, 2018; Musah-Surugu, *et al.*, 2018). When the budget is not aligned with the strategy, it significantly limits a government's ability to execute that strategy and achieve its goals. When the budget and strategy are linked and decision-makers can see how the two impact each other, funds are allocated more effectively.

JOHN GAVENTA MODEL OF POWER AND SPACE

Gaventa developed a theoretical and methodological approach to the study of community power that has radically transformed community power studies in political sociology and opened a path for the legitimisation of participatory research in mainstream sociology and political science. Borrowing from Lukes, Gaventa identifies three analytical dimensions that are the proper study of social power. Each subsequent dimension is increasingly difficult to empirically observe using traditional political science methodologies, forcing Gaventa to synthesise various understandings of socialisation into a cogent articulation of observable processes through that symbolic production is channelled within identifiable networks and communities (Gaventa, 2004). Empirically, Gaventa's contribution is to develop a method for

examining the various channels through that those in power transform concerns, claims and potential challenges about inequitable outcomes into non-decisions (Thorpe *et al.*, 2019). The third dimension, therefore, adds the capacity to influence expectations about social outcomes by manipulating symbols and ideology so that inequities themselves become non-issues.

Gaventa's articulation and empirical demonstration of the "three-dimensional" approach to the study of power have informed many disciplines and scholars about the nuances of social power and the processes of its legitimisation. It also lent to scholars and social change advocates who would find the sources and the solutions of social problems not in the dictates or preconceived notions held by social scientists, theologians and philosophers, but in the narratives of the affected alienated populations (Gaventa, 1999; Udayanganie, 2020). In Gaventa's theory, methodological subjectivity allows the framing of a social problem and a social solution, to arise from within the group, thereby empowering and better enabling the group to take collective action in the face of authorities' power to frame issues as non-issues in the public's mind.

The issues of power and its links with processes of citizen engagement, participation and deepening forms of democracy were always lurking. Building on these experiences, inter-relationships of spaces of engagement, the places and levels of occurrence and the forms of power found within and across, were taken into consideration. These three dimensions that bind and shape citizen action can be presented using the illustration of a ‘power cube’ that in turn can be applied to assess the ways in which power works and the transformative possibilities of participation in various spaces. Though these relationships are visually presented as a cube, it is important to think about each side of the cube as a dimension or set of relationships, not as a fixed or static set of categories. The notion of ‘space’ is widely used across the literature on power, policy, democracy and citizen action. Some writers refer to ‘political spaces’ as those institutional channels, political discourse and social and political practices through that the poor and those organisations working with them can pursue poverty reduction.

Other scholars focus on ‘policy spaces’ to examine the moments and opportunities where citizens and policy-makers come together and

‘actual observable opportunities, behaviours, actions and interactions...sometimes signifying transformative potential’. Others examine ‘democratic spaces’ in which citizens can engage to claim citizenship and affect governance processes (Thorpe *et al.*, 2019). On citizen action and participation, ‘spaces’ are seen as opportunities, moments and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests. Space is a social product that is not simply ‘there’, a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control and hence of domination, of power. Inherent also in the idea of spaces and places is also the imagery of ‘boundary’. Power relations help to shape the boundaries of participatory spaces, what is possible within them and who may enter, with that identities, discourses and interests.

GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL CASE STUDIES

Local government reform programmes in most countries in Africa have focused on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of local governments as the prime players for delivery of basic services to the population. Some countries, however, have gone beyond this limited approach to provide local governments with a constitutional status and authority to manage their own affairs. Only a few have ventured into true empowerment of local authorities and other city stakeholders as joint policy and decision makers. The cases under study illustrate local government reform programmes initiated by national governments have achieved and other dimensions that need to be included in such programmes such as enhancement of transparency and accountability in local governments and effective participation of communities in local governance (Williams *et al.*, 2018).

In South Africa, the central government shares revenue with the local level using a specific formula. For local governments, the formula is based on household per capita income and for provinces, on household per capita income, augmented by a measure of the extent of the rural economy in the region. The system has eliminated ad hoc and inequitable fiscal transfers. Central Government has created a mechanism for grant funding for municipalities to expand their ability to buy, capacity for projects involving the private sector in the delivery and financing of municipal services.

In Namibia, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Namibia Association of Local Authorities Officers (NALAO), with the assistance of Management Systems International (MSI), initiated an integrity project for local authorities in 2001. In its initial assessment of areas that might be most vulnerable to corruption, the programme made use of the "municipal checklist", suitably adapted to the local context. Four towns were chosen to participate in the pilot phase of this project. The assessments in the four towns found that there were three major types of changes needed. These related to policies and procedures, public participation and relationships between the elected councillors and staff. The checklist appears to have been most useful for a self-assessment of the local authorities – enabling them to systematically go through and understand their own situation and develop an agenda for reform.

The local government system in Zimbabwe is two-tier and constitutes of urban and rural local governments. The local government system has the policy-making body elected from the various administrative wards within the various local governments and the administrative arm of council that is headed by the Town Clerk. The ceremonial Mayor, elected from among the councillors at the first sitting of council, heads the former policy-making body. However, Chapter 1 Part 5 of the 2013 Zimbabwean Constitution acknowledges that there are three tiers of government namely the central, provincial and the local government but these three constantly interact among themselves on governance and other related issues. The mayor's major roles include chairing ordinary full council meetings and represent the council in a majority of functions, including being the legal persona on institutional engagements such as cooperative arrangement (twinning of cities and partnerships and other business deals). Councils have two structures for service delivery: a policy-making component composed of elected councillors and an appointed executive.

Chakunda (2015) submits that the local government system in Zimbabwe is dualistic in nature, distinguished into urban local authorities (32 urban councils) that comprise local boards, town councils, municipalities and cities as provided for in the Urban Councils Act, Chapter 29:15, and rural local authorities (60 Rural District Councils (RDCs) as provided for in the Rural District Councils Act (Chapter: 29:13).

However, the relationship between the councils and the parastatals has not been at its best as the necessary funding to repair the roads. Chakunda (*ibid.*) further points out that the decentralisation of functions to local authorities also came with the institutionalisation of a package of control systems and supervisory mechanisms by central government to ensure that local authorities behave within the parameters set in the relevant Acts of Parliament. The President and Minister of Local Government are empowered by legislation to intervene where local authorities fail to provide some or all the services as provided for in the Acts. Musekiwa and Chatiza (2015) bemoan that the decline in service delivery in Zimbabwe has had an impact on public engagement and the development of associational life. The decline has been systemic to the extent that it requires systematic responses from citizens. To strengthen their voice, citizens have sought to act collectively and, in the process, institutionalised public participation.

DISCUSSION

In achieving a holistic and integrated human settlements development approach, it is unavoidable that local government and the department dealing with human settlements coordinate their strategies. This is also about synergies in respect of the national Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Leaders. In line with the enhancement of housing to human settlements, there is also a need for a common approach in respect of local government plans together with those of human settlements. This will help to avoid the mismatch and multiplicity of plans. That is why the new planning institution is considered to be vital. Regarding spatial development objectives, increased efficiencies are required from municipalities concerning the application of regulatory functions. This also applies to appropriate proclamations around development. The combined effect of this is to diminish or eradicate bureaucratic service delivery log-jams.

There is a necessity for a greater alignment of local government housing budgets with human settlements budgetary allocations. This is aimed at avoiding budgetary duplication. Local government land-use policies and practices should be user-friendly. This is more applicable to both rural and urban development policy implementations. It is crucial to the interests of human settlements that decision-making delays must be eliminated regarding environmental impact assessment studies to enable bulk infrastructure development such as electricity, water and sanitation, to be in tune with human settlements projects.

The essence of the principles of good governance at all levels can never be over-emphasised. All else could fail where the values of communities are not adhered to. If this is to be achieved, it enhances the development of human settlements that, ultimately, is also about the direct enhancement of LED, premised upon national economic development strategy. Municipalities stand to benefit directly from this approach. New human settlements with new tax bases. They mean new revenue streams in the form of utilities. They lead to the creation of local jobs in the construction of homes or the development of infrastructure in the form of roads, streetlights and electrical connections.

The multiplier effect should never be understated and its impact on the local economy must never be underestimated. The challenging economic conditions on developing human settlements should not be overlooked. Globally, economists are beginning to see “green shoots”, as the current phase of the global economic downturn is increasing in some developing countries. The local government lacks comprehensive information on the status of children within its administrative area. Local governments that foster participation also benefit as they can gain access to innovative ideas and solutions to pressing local challenges related to service delivery and the local environment.

Participation increases the visibility of the problems that children, adolescents and their families confront in their neighbourhoods and makes local government more aware of their responsibility to improve child-related services. Involving children and adolescents in local governance provides them with the opportunity to both learn about and practise responsible citizenship. Opportunities for constructive participation in political decision-making can strengthen state-society relations, and societies that offer such opportunities be less prone to violence. Local governments and urban development authorities in many developing countries rarely have the mandate and/or capacity required to undertake planning, let alone planning for sustainable development. Nor do they often have the mandate to plan or implement major items of strategic infrastructure needed to achieve such growth. While decentralisation has provided opportunities for local government to take greater responsibility for the funding and delivery of services, efficacy is often dependent upon the national

government providing appropriate enabling environments and supportive relationships to ensure they can operate efficiently.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

The chapter sought to unpack the concept of local governance and human settlements and how it can best be used to provide citizens with their needs and help attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The chapter concludes that citizen participation and good governance are key success factors in achieving sustainable human settlements. Local government has the capacity and resources to develop and implement local plans and budgets that respond to the priorities of the public in an efficient, effective and equitable manner.

The chapter recommends:

a) Support local government and other stakeholders in the generation and analysis of geographically disaggregated data and evidence.
b) Strengthen local planning and budgeting processes and support resource mobilisation.
c) Empower communities to influence local decision-making and monitor local service provision.
d) Support local government capacity to coordinate and leverage expertise and resources across public, private and non-government service providers.