IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH PARTICIPATION: THE

CASE OF THE AREA COORDINATING TEAMS

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Executive summary

Municipalities have an important role to play in reducing poverty and enhancing poor peoples' livelihoods through the services that they deliver. The White Paper on Local Government of 1998 states that the *provision of basic household infrastructure is the central contribution made by local government to social and economic development* (Republic of South Africa, 1998a). However, some writers argue that these interventions can only be sustainable if communities participate in decision-making about the delivery of services (Amis and Lloyd-Jones, 2002).

Area Coordinating Teams (ACTs), introduced by the City of Cape Town in 1999, were one of the first attempts by the new local government regime to involve communities in decision-making about service delivery, and to hold officials accountable to the public. Between 1999 and 2000 ACTs were introduced in Guguletu, Hanover Park, Heideveld, Langa, Manenberg, Mitchell's Plain, Phillipi and Sea Point. These areas, with the exception of Sea Point, were selected based on their levels of poverty and social disintegration. In addition, the City of Cape Town had large numbers of rental properties and high numbers of defaulting tenants in these areas.

Local government officials, community representatives and public representatives were the key stakeholders of ACTs. All the key stakeholders met once a month in a particular community to discuss concerns about service delivery in the area. In one community these meetings became a forum for local development initiatives. By the end of 2001, only one of the ACTs was still functioning.

This report has three objectives: to identify the reasons why the ACTs failed to realise the goal of fostering community participation in municipal affairs; to highlight the factors which contributed to the ACT's success in one of the eight areas, Manenberg; and to identify lessons to be learned from the implementation of the ACTs.

The study examines the reasons for the ACTs' failure, as identified by the three main stakeholders, namely local government officials, public representatives (councillors) and community organisations. The main findings are highlighted below.

The ACTs were introduced on the eve of the Western Cape's second democratic elections, when the political leadership of the local government was about to change. This created a volatile institutional situation, particularly when the contract of the Director of the Community Development Cluster, at the time, was terminated. The ACTs became associated with the political party that initiated them, and the new political leadership provided no resources or support for them.

The change in political leadership resulted in some communities withdrawing their participation in local government initiatives. This was especially the case in the communities that aligned themselves with the previous political leadership. As a result there was a lack of support for ACTs from the new City of Cape Town leaders and from some communities in which ACTs were introduced.   This suggests that introducing programmes during or prior to changes in political power or elections needs careful consideration.

The ACTs had already experienced some obstacles in communities before the change in political leadership. ACTs were viewed as competition to more established community initiatives such as the Local Area Development Forums, the Reconstruction and Development Committees and the Community Policing Forums.

One of the major unanticipated problems in the implementation of ACTs was the lack of co-ordination in service delivery between the provincial and local government spheres.

At the community level, the Multi-Sectoral Action Teams (MSAT), a provincial initiative, were competing for the same audience as the ACTs (a local government initiative). The two spheres of government were led by competing political parties, which hampered co-ordination between them. Furthermore, the two spheres had different budgetary and fiscal systems, which made joint initiatives and resource co-ordination complex. This resulted in substantial confusion in the communities and among the "frontline" officials serving the communities since officials and community members had to attend several forums and meetings addressing issues of service delivery in their particular area.

Limited attempts at institutional reform were insufficient to fulfill the envisioned ideal of full community participation in municipal affairs. Officials at the local level often did not have sufficient resources at their disposal to bring about the desired improvements demanded by the community. This led to frustration and despondency on both sides.

Reform needs to go beyond the devolution of decision-making powers and resource allocation for programmes to be successful. It is necessary for an institution to adapt its activities and operations to suit the needs of the community it serves. The inability of the administration to commit its officials to work after hours (when ACT meetings were conducted) was identified as one of the main obstacles to the successful implementation of ACTs.

Initiatives that involve multiple departments within an institution should seek active buy-in and commitment from all the affected departments from the outset. The ACTs originated from within the Community Development Cluster, regarded as soft services in the City of Cape Town, and the majority of those chairing and facilitating the ACT meetings were also from that department. The majority of problems registered at the meetings, however, were routed in other departments such as engineering and building maintenance. This mismatch between the decision-making authority and those responsible for service delivery was complicated and exaggerated by the departments'

inability to change the units' priorities or budgets, since most of them were involved in capital projects stretching over a number of years.

Despite all these problems and obstacles, the Manenberg ACT succeeded - a place where most other municipal initiatives have failed. The study has shown that Manenberg's success was partly the result of a natural disaster (tornado) that destroyed Area 1 of Manenberg and forced all parties (politicians, NGOs and administrators) to work together in the interests of the beset community. An area known for its high crime levels and social dysfunction, the City of Cape Town saw the destruction caused by the tornado as an opportunity to rebuild Manenberg.

A second reason for the success of the Manenberg ACT was that it was chaired by a high-ranking local government official. The two ACTs chaired by this person have been identified as the most successful. During an interview, this chairperson indicated that he often complained to other directors at executive council meetings about the absence of their staff at ACT meetings. These indirect suggestions usually had the desired effect, prompting better attendance at the next meeting. This indicates that the seniority of the chairperson and his or her ability to influence staff (even when such staff is not directly accountable to him/her) plays a significant role in the successful outcome of events.

One of the local government officials working in Manenberg has received several nominations for the best local government staff member of the year award. The secretary for the ACT (a member of the City's Development Facilitation Unit) had been working in Manenberg prior to the introduction of the ACT. Unlike the other facilitation members, he had had a long working relationship with the organisations in the area.

The third objective is to discuss some of the lesson to be drawn from the implementation of the ACTs. This is discussed in the paragraphs below:

Bringing Council to the community leveled the power relationships to some extent. Officials were compelled to learn the language of the community instead of the

community adapting to the sterile and often intimidating rules of the City Council proceedings.

Once a programme has been implemented and delivers real benefits to its beneficiaries it is difficult to dismantle, despite political indifference.

The continuation of such a programme, will depend on the implementing officials' support for a programme. Senior officials are more effective champions of such initiatives because of their relative power or influence over staff in their departments and their relationships with the managers of other departments. Other unit managers are more likely to listen to them than to lower ranking officials.

The ACTs exposed the limitations of the system used by local government to cluster services. The needs of communities' span the range of services and departments. The current Community Development Cluster consists of housing, health, community development and sports and recreation. The ACTs were chaired and facilitated by the managers in the Community Development Cluster, while the majority of concerns, complaints and development plans involved other clusters, such as the economic and infrastructure clusters.

Programmes which deliver concrete benefits and obtain buy-in from all stakeholders are more likely to succeed. This requires extensive preliminary work to identify the relevant stakeholders, decision-makers, or power brokers in a particular community.

The ACT was one of the first attempts to empower communities to have some control over the standard and quality of services delivered in their community by the City of Cape Town, as outlined in the *White Paper on Service Delivery* (Batho Pele) of 1998 (South Africa, 1998b).

Local government is at the coalface of service delivery in South Africa. Whether communities' most basic needs are met or not depends on the effectiveness and

efficiency with which services are delivered and poor service delivery threatens the livelihoods of citizens.

This study provides useful lessons on the conditions necessary for successful community participation when facing the challenge of service delivery at local government level.

Section One: Introduction and background

A study conducted by the Development Action Group on the livelihood strategies of poor CapeTown residents in 2000 identified the now partly functioning Area Coordinating Teams (ACTs) as a potentially important instrument for improving the livelihoods of poor people (Houston, 2002).

The ACT concept is one of the first models promoting public participation in the affairs of municipalities, introduced by the new City of Cape Town, in 1999 in the post-apartheid era. The major aim of the ACTs was to bring service delivery agents closer to the people by compelling public servants to be transparent and accountable in the delivery of services. This represents a significant paradigm shift from the old arrogant and bureaucratic public service, which treated black citizens as second-class citizens. The key stakeholders (local government, councillors and community representatives) would meet once a month in a particular community to discuss service delivery in that area. In one of the pilot areas the ACT meetings were dominated by area development discussions.

At the time very limited, if any, legislation guiding public participation at local level was in existence, except for the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (African National Congress, 1994), the White Paper on Local Government of 1998 (Republic of South Africa (1998a) and the South African Constitution of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The RDP calls for democratisation, which goes beyond the right to vote, in both the public and private sectors. (Republic of South Africa, 1995).

This report consists of six sections, including the introduction and background.. Section two provides a brief overview of the legislative framework giving rise to the participatory approach to service delivery that has been instituted since 1994. Section three examines the roles municipalities play in enhancing people's livelihoods through the services they provide. An overview of the ACT concept, its design, conceptualisation and implementation is addressed in section four. The factors which led to the ACTs' failure are discussed in part one of section 5, and part two of the same section discusses the reasons for the ACT's success in one area. The final section concludes the paper.

Methodology

Information was gathered through face-to-face interviews using an interview guideline. The interview schedule was adapted as new issues emanating from the interviews arose. These issues were then followed up in subsequent interviews. The schedule was designed to collect information on the following issues:

- Understanding of ACT concept or model
- Institutional framework of ACTs
- Community participation in ACTs
- Political participation in ACTs
- Reasons for their failure and success

Twelve people were interviewed including four development facilitators, two managers, three councillors, and three community representatives.

Several difficulties were experienced during the data collection phase. Firstly, attempts at obtaining official documents (with the exception of the December 2000 ACT 4-page report card to the Director of the Community Development Cluster) on the ACTs failed. Thus the origin and conceptualisation of the ACTs had to be gleaned from interviews with stakeholders.

Many senior officials had left the administration or had accepted different positions at the time interviews were scheduled. Contacting individual community members proved to be equally difficult due to poor record keeping on the part of local government officials.

Only two of the initial eight ACTs were still functional at the time of the interviews. Furthermore, one of the two remaining ACTs was amalgamated with another community forum and therefore does not operate strictly as an ACT.

Section Two: The legislative framework

The South African Constitution assigns specific roles to local government as the third sphere of government. The sphere renowned for its closeness to the people must deliver services in a participatory, equitable, transparent manner in line with the developmental approach that the South African Government adopted in the post-apartheid period. This section of the report considers the national and local government legislative frameworks.

Legislation governing national and provincial departments

The *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* of 1995 stipulates that a mechanism must be created which will allow communities the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process on issues affecting their welfare (Republic of South Africa, 1995). In 1998, the Batho Pele (People First) White Paper provided the framework for the delivery of services to the public (Republic of South Africa, 1998b). The White Paper cautions that even though the paper speaks to national and provincial departments, all areas and employees of the public sector regulated by other legislation, including local government, must adhere to these guidelines. The document establishes eight principles - the first being consultation - according to which services must be delivered. These principles are outlined below.

Box 1: Service delivery principles

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1. **Consultation**
Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered

2. Service standards
Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect

3. Access
All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled

4. Courtesy
Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration

5. Information
Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive

6. Openness and transparency
Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge.

7. Redress
If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.

8. Value for money
Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.

Source: RSA Government, 1998(b)

Legislation governing local government

The post-apartheid government took a systematic approach towards reforming the different spheres of government. As a result, the legislation covering local government was introduced much later than that governing national and provincial government. For example, while the Public Finance Management Act regulating financial administration of national and provincial departments was introduced in 1999 (Republic of South Africa, 1999), the Municipal Finance Management Act regulating municipal spending was only passed in 2003 (Republic of South Africa, 2003).

One of the first pieces of legislation regulating local government, White Paper on Local Government of 1998, requires municipalities to seek active participation by citizens at four levels:

- *As voters* **-** *to ensure maximum democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote.*
- *As citizens who express, via different stakeholder associations, their views before, during and after the policy development process in order to ensure that policies reflect community preferences as far as possible.*
- *As consumers and end-users, who expect value-for-money, affordable services and courteous and responsive service.*
- *As organised partners involved in the mobilisation of resources for development via for-profit businesses, non-governmental organisations and community-based institutions.*

The main instrument regulating service delivery at a local government level is the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 (Republic of South Africa, 2000). The Act provides guidelines on community participation and the necessary mechanisms that must be established by local government to enhance community participation in service delivery. However, the Act goes beyond just the delivery of services as its focus, and also provides clear instructions on community participation in drawing up municipal budgets and, as a result, in resource distribution. Section 16(1) of the Act stipulates that a municipality must:

a) encourage and create the necessary conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, including:
- *the preparation, implementation and review of its Integrated Development Plan in terms of Chapter 5;*
- *the establishment, implementation and review of its performance management systems in terms of Chapter 6;*
- *the monitoring and review of its performance, including the outcomes and the impact of such performance;*
- *the preparation of its budget; and*

- *strategic decisions relating to the provision of municipal services in terms of Chapter 8.*

b) contribute to building the capacity of -

- *the local community to enable it to participate in the affairs of the community; and councillors and staff to foster community participation.*

Section 17 (2) of the Act instructs a municipality to establish appropriate *mechanisms,* processes and procedures to enable the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, and must for this purpose provide for:

- *the receipt, processing and consideration of petitions and complaints lodged by members of the local community;*
- *notification of public comment procedures, when appropriate;*
- *public meetings and hearings by the municipal council and other political structures and political office bearers of the municipality, when appropriate;*
- *consultative sessions with locally recognised community organisations and, where appropriate, traditional authorities*; and
- *report back to the local community.*

The above legislation clearly outlines the process of how communities must be involved in the affairs of local government. It also creates an obligation for local government to ensure community participation in its affairs.

Section Three: The role of local government in poverty reduction in South Africa

The City of Cape Town's 2004 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) states that local government is at the coalface of service delivery. In South Africa, local government is responsible for the provision of clean water, electricity, sanitation, refuse removal and

road maintenance, child care facilities and primary health care facilities. These services are essential to the livelihood of the urban poor.The City of Cape Town's 2004 IDP stipulates that service delivery must:

- improve the health of the community;
- ensure access to adequate shelter for all;
- improve community safety; and
- ensure community dignity, cohesion and self reliance.

The provision of essential services is not an end in itself; but must result in improved living conditions for clients.

Phillip Amis (2000) wrote that poor households suffer the most from the poor delivery of essential services, since they are unable to provide for those services by themselves. Poorly targeted, inefficient and ineffective delivery of services leaves poor households with no option but to spend their meager resources seeking appropriate services. The delivery of massive public housing opportunities for poor people in places where land is cheap but far removed from their places of work and established networks is an example of inefficient delivery of services to the poor, and has, in some cases, aggravated the burden of the poor. It is also an example of inappropriate service delivery resulting from a lack of consultation; a well-intended but top-down decision that has impacted negatively on the lives of millions of poor South Africans.

The majority of livelihood frameworks make reference to human capital, social capital, physical capital, natural capital and financial capital informing people's livelihood strategies. The sustainable livelihood frameworks also link household strategies to policies, institutions and processes. The model in Figure 1 below shows how the business of a municipality impacts on people's livelihoods through service delivery.

Figure 1: Sustainable Livelihood Framework
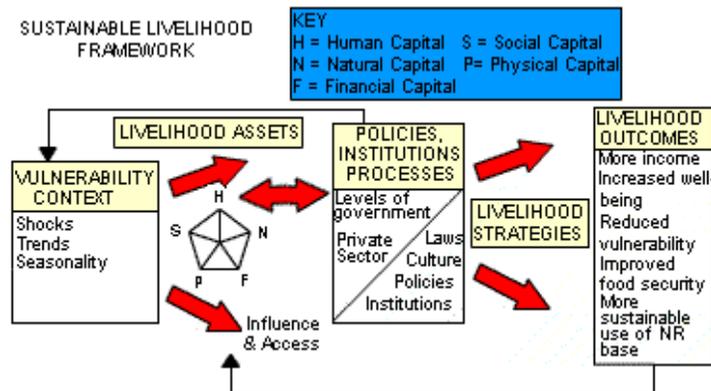
Source: DFID (1999)

Human capital

Human capital refers to the labour resources available to households, which have both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. The former refers to the number of household members and the time available to engage in income-earning activities. Qualitative aspects refer to the levels of education and skills and the health status of household members (Rakodi, 2002). Local government plays an important role in the provision of services essential to human capital formulation. The South African Constitution delegates primary health care, early childhood development, libraries, etc., to this sphere of government. In the city, much of a household's ability to withstand shocks and stresses or to take advantage of various employment opportunities depends on the human capital at its disposal.

Physical capital

Physical capital is the basic infrastructure (transport, shelter, water, energy, communications) and the product equipment and means which enable people to pursue their livelihoods (Rakodi, 2002). Brown and Lloyd-Jones in 2002 wrote that spatial planners need to recognise and support the asset base of poor people in urban areas.

According to them accessing livelihood opportunities means being well located in terms of physical proximity to opportunities or access to appropriate public transport. In South Africa local government is important in the delivery of productive assets such as housing. Housing has been identified as one of the most important assets at the disposal of poor households in urban areas. It is a space for productive and reproductive activities. Adequate shelter also provides protection against criminal elements, characteristic of urban areas. Decisions relating to the eviction of residents have a powerful impact on security of tenure. Bulk infrastructure services such as water, street lighting, street sweeping, roads, maintenance and collection of sanitation and waste also depend on the effective functioning of local government.

Financial capital

Financial capital refers to the financial resources available to people (including savings, credit, remittance and pensions) which provide them with different livelihood options (Rakodi, 2002). Well-maintained areas are more likely to draw capital investment and with it job opportunities than less well maintained areas. Similarly, the efficient delivery of services such as water and electricity play an important role in attracting capital to a particular area or community. A well-functioning municipality could therefore play an important role in the creation of jobs by attracting investors to its location or area. On the other hand, bylaws which prevent hawkers from selling their wares in the urban areas could negatively impact on households' financial resources.

Social and political capital

Social and political capital consists of the networks, membership of groups, relationships of trust and reciprocity and access to wider institutions of society on which people draw in pursuit of their livelihoods (Rakodi, 2002). Provision of community halls, sports facilities, sports grounds and libraries are essential to positive and cohesive social capital formulation as it encourages interaction and participation in community activities, thus facilitating social networks.

Natural capital

Natural resource stocks include water, land and other environmental resources (Rakodi, 2002). The maintenance of parks, public gardens and rivers encourages people to invest or build on their assets in a particular area.

It is against the background of the above that the delivery of basic services must be measured in South Africa. Municipalities have an important role to play in reducing poverty and increasing people's livelihood choices.

Section Four: The City that Works for All, 1996 to 2000

This section is divided into three parts: part one provides an overview of the purpose and origin of the ACT concept, part two deals with the institutional framework thereof, and part three describes the characteristics of the areas where ACTs were launched.

Part I: The origin of the ACT concept

The first democratic local government elections in Cape Town were held in 1996, two years after the national and provincial elections. The African National Congress won the local government elections in the City of Cape Town municipality (now the Cape Town Administration of the new City of Cape Town) a National Party-dominated province.

In 1996, when the then City of Cape Town Municipality was created, all managers were tasked with the responsibility of creating departments and service delivery goals in line with the then title of "the City that Works for All". This was particularly important in a city known for its exclusion and hostile treatment of blacks.

It is within this consultative developmental role that the ACTs were introduced by the then Executive Director of Community Services, Ahmedi Vawda. The purpose of the ACTs was threefold. First and foremost, they were to bring people closer to government

and service providers in line with the principles of Batho Pele and the *White Paper on the Delivery of Public Services*:

"...the council has also sought to build and empower residents, by consulting with them, by working through Area Co-ordinating Teams that bring together officials delivering services to the area, ward councillors and representatives from the community together in a single-forum." (City of Cape Town, 2000)

The second purpose was to bring it in line with the *Masakhane* campaign coordinated by the Department of Provincial and Local Government. This programme aimed to improve cost recovery initiatives through improved service delivery. Many of the areas where ACTs were introduced were characterised by high levels of non-payment of services. The following quotation demonstrates this point well:

"Given the culture of non-payment that developed in the apartheid era, it will be particularly important for public service departments and local government structures to communicate (through all appropriate official languages) their plans for service delivery, especially in relation to the service standards and guarantees that can be expected, and the complaints procedures that can be followed. This will be indispensable in mobilising local community support and developing a new culture of payment for services rendered in the spirit of Masakhane." (RSA Government, 1998(b))

The third purpose went beyond improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the city to the creation of empowered and active citizens in the running of the city, and to making it an inclusive city in line with the motto "the City that works for All". The ACTs were therefore tasked with a developmental role. This particular emphasis was subsequently added to the overall objectives of the ACT concept. The ACTs were to follow in the footsteps of the by now defunct RDP committees operating under the leadership of ward councillors.

What is the ACT concept?

Face-to-face interviews with the Manager of the Development Facilitation Unit suggested that the ACT originated from pressure put on the then City Manager by the community of Hanover Park as a result of bad service delivery:

"Hanover Park at that time was composed of very vocal groups of different organisations. And all of them differed in approaches, but they all saw the City of Cape Town not delivering enough. There were no accountable officials on the delivery of services. There was no broader plan to deal with capital projects for that area. Broadly speaking those were the issues that the former City Manager had to answer."

In 2000 the Municipal Systems Act was introduced which called for strong community participation in the development of Integrated Development Plans. The ACT report card 2000, also states that ACTs could form the basis for community participation in the Integrated Development Plan, as outlined in the Systems Act. ACT therefore shifted from the original intention as a forum where communities could register their grievances in relation to poor delivery of services, to a developmental focus towards the locus of development planning for a specific area.

The ACT concept has therefore come to represent an ambitious programme of community development and empowerment. A local government official defined ACTs as leveling the playing fields between the different stakeholders or creating a common platform where people could discuss issues of concern:

"Over and above it (ACT) boiled down to one concept of public participation in local government. To create a common platform for communities, organised civil society, the City, NGOs and other service providers."

Another local government official saw ACTs as a place where city officials had to respond to community complaints or problems regarding service delivery:

"The ACT is basically a forum when you have city officials requested to respond to particular issues. The community or representatives of organisations come to meetings to lodge the problem or complain. The official would then be requested to respond. So that was basically the interface where the city sends officials to a specific community to deal with its problems."

There was therefore a wide divergence on the actual purpose of the ACT, as gleaned from the above. However, a common understanding was that it was a place where officials, public representatives and the community met to discuss issues affecting communities.

Terms of reference for ACTs as outlined in the 2000 report card were as follows:

- To *co-ordinate Council services* of all clusters in the area.
- To improve the flow of information between the community, officials and councillors and *facilitate a better understanding of Council services by the community.*
- To *decentralise problem solving to deal with complaints and problems in the area.* If not resolved there, then to resolve them at the District Co-ordinating Team (DCT), and only if not solved there should the issue be referred to higher management in future. At the time there was discussion of sub-dividing areas with large populations such as Mitchell's Plain and Khayelitsha into several ACTs which would be combined and referred to as a DCT.

The above bullet points are supported by the interview findings. However, the points highlighted below as gleaned from the 2000 report card show a slight divergence from the initial purpose and steer ACTs towards a more developmental focus:

- To do needs analysis and *propose and prioritise development needs.*
- To *facilitate synergy* and a developmental approach between all clusters.
- To monitor and *co-ordinate local projects.*
- To *consolidate operational* services and *special projects* in the area.

- Develop *public and private* partnership and public and *community partnership.*
- To facilitate *community empowerment.*

The purpose of the ACTs therefore theoretically shifted significantly within the City since its inception in 1999. It moved from a reactive mechanism (responding to complaints in Hanover Park) to a broader development forum for the area, as gleaned from the 2000 report card and given the launch of the Municipal Systems Act, which makes community participation in drawing up IDPs compulsory. The IDP calls for the same stakeholders (local government officials, councillors, and community) to be involved.

Table 1, however, shows that complaints and issues of legitimacy dominated the agenda of most of the ACT meetings in 2000, with Manenberg as the exception.

Table 1: The focus of ACT meetings

ACT pilot areas	Type of issues discussed during ACT meetings (during 2000)
Manenberg	Development focus with few complaints tabled
Langa	Focuses on the purpose/legitimacy of ACT mostly
Guguletu	Focuses on the purpose/legitimacy of ACT mostly
Phillipi	Focuses on the purpose/legitimacy of ACT mostly
Mitchell's Plain	New housing development by the CTCHC
Atlantic Seaboard	Focuses on complaints mostly
Heideveld	Balance between development focus and complaints
Hanover Park	Focuses on complaints mostly

Source: City of Cape Town, 2000a

Part II: Institutional framework for the ACTs

The ACTs were housed under the Executive Director: Community Development (see Table 2). The Development Facilitation Unit staff, also housed under the Community Development Cluster, played a key role in communicating City plans and programmes to

communities and in setting up the ACTs. The development facilitators acted as the secretaries for the ACTs and produced the minutes and agendas for the meetings.

The 2000 document stipulates which officials should attend the local ACT meetings. Each local line manager within the Community Development Cluster was expected to attend the ACT meetings (see Appendix 1).

The implementation of ACTs within the City

The ACTs were not introduced in a uniform manner in the different areas. Some ACTs were introduced using existing forums such as the RDP Committees and Area Development Forums, while notices were posted at the local library or rent offices in other areas.

Meetings were held in the community once a month during the week, mostly in the evenings. The venue, time and date of the subsequent meetings would be announced at that particular meeting. The meetings were chaired by senior managers within the Community Development Cluster (see Table 2). The idea was for the local municipal manager to take over the chairing of the ACT as it became more established within that area.

Table 2: Chairpersons of the ACTs

ACT pilot areas	Chair of ACT	Launched
Guguletu	Manager: Development Facilitation Unit	April 2000
Hanover Park	Director: Health	November 1999
Heideveld	Manager: Existing Housing	March 2000
Langa	Manager: Sport and Recreation	March 2000
Manenberg	Director: Health	March 2000
Mitchell's Plain	Manager: Development Facilitation Unit	September 2000
Phillipi	Housing Project Manager: Hostels Redevelopment	October 2000
Sea Point	Acting Director: Community Services	September 2000

Source: City of Cape Town, 2000a

City of Cape Town staff met monthly to develop a response to specific complaints raised during ACT meetings. The complaints would then be forwarded to the specific unit manager who would then appoint a staff member to address that query at the next ACT meeting.

Part III: Socio-economic characteristics of the initial areas in which the ACT was launched

ACTs were launched in 8 areas initially. They were identified or piloted in areas which were categorised as pockets of poverty and social disintegration (where gangsterism, alcohol abuse, overcrowding, etc., were rife). A local government official described the areas as follows:

"These were pockets of poverty/zones that were experiencing social disintegration at a high level. Townships and informal settlements were the first groups to benefit from this process."

These areas also had large-scale public rental housing, with the exception of Sea Point (middle-class suburb) and Phillipi (informal settlement). They were also areas where the municipality had been experiencing problems with payment for services rendered.

The following quotation from a councillor provides insight into how the areas for intervention were chosen; it differs slightly from the official municipal point of view. At the time the City of Cape Town, in line with national government policy, was attempting to transfer ownership of public rental stock to the occupants of the dwellings through the discount benefit scheme:

"If I look at the areas, it is areas where we have rental stock of local government. So I found that the issues raised at most of these meetings are issues of housing maintenance and the development of infrastructure around the rental stock of local government."

In 2000 the number of households ranged from 2 817 in Heideveld to 49 278 in Mitchell's Plain. Sea Point registered the lowest number of people per household at 1.7,

followed by Langa with 3.1; the greatest number of occupants per household was recorded in Manenberg (see table below).

Table 3: Socio-economic overview of ACT pilot areas as at 2001

Area	Population	Households (HH)	Average HH Size
Guguletu	80 282	19 034	4.2
Hanover Park	33 755	6 949	4.8
Heideveld	12 781	2 817	4.5
Langa	49 666	15 549	3.1
Manenberg	92 509	9 336	9.9
Mitchell's Plain	233 918	49 278	4.7
Phillipi	116 002	35 911	3.2
Sea Point	10 405	6 012	1.7

Source: Census 2001

Table 4 below shows the relatively high unemployment rates, as registered during the 2001 Census. As with the other socio-economic data, the Sea Point unemployment rate of 6% is well below the average rates of the other areas, which range from 26% (Mitchell's Plain) to 57% (Phillipi).

Table 4: Employment status per area 2001

Area	Unemployment rate
Guguletu	51%
Hanover Park	39%
Heideveld	31%
Langa	49%
Manenberg	37.8%
Mitchell's Plain	26%
Phillipi	57%
Sea Point	6%

Source: Census 2001[1]

Table 5 shows the number of public rental stock in the pilot areas. All areas except for Phillipi (an informal settlement) and Sea Point (upper-middle-income suburb)

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[1] Information for Manenberg was not available

had large numbers of public rental stock. By 2000, 7 086 of the 29 378 public rental stock were transferred into private ownership, despite the public discount benefit scheme which covered the purchase cost of public rental stock to tenants. Most tenants refused to take ownership of these flats or houses because of the poor state they were in. They felt that once the property was registered in their names, the City would not be held accountable anymore. In addition, many of them were in arrears, and the property can only be transferred once the arrears have been cleared. In 2004 more than 50% of this rental stock had still not been transferred into tenants' names.

Table 5: Number of public rental stock in ACT pilot areas 2000

Area	Rented dwellings	No of dwellings sold up to year 2000	Purchasers who have taken transfer up to year 2000	Purchasers who have not taken transfers in year 2000	Balance of rental stock in year 2000	Balance of rental stock in year 2004
Guguletu	2 292	N/A	N/A	N/A	2 292	2 292
Hanover Park	5 366	1 526	1 114	412	3 840	3 680
Heideveld	3 276	1 484	1 322	162	1 792	1 626
Langa	2 343				2 343	932
Manenberg	5 530	963	802	161	4 567	3 815
Mitchell's Plain	10 571	7 632	3 848	3 784	2 939	2 770
Phillipi	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sea Point	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	**29 378**	**11 605**	**7 086**	**4519**	**17 773**	**15 115**

Source: City of Cape Town- personnel communication

Table 6 shows the number of dwellings and the amount in arrears in 2000 where ACTs were introduced.

Table 6: The rental arrears statistics as at 15-06-2000

Area	No. Dwellings in arrears	Amount in arrears Rand	Average household debt in 2000 per area in Rand
Guguletu	225		328.65

		73,946.10	
Hanover Park	2633	9,725,424.03	3,693.67
Heideveld	1142	3,971,318.56	3,477.51
Langa	87	14,684.46	168.79
Manenberg	3744	18,777,905.62	5,015.47
Mitchell's Plain	2496	12,697,388.74	5,087.09
Phillipi	n/a		
Sea Point	n/a		
Total	**10 327**	**45,260,667.51**	**4,382.75**

Source: City of Cape Town - personal communication

According to the 2000 report card, one of the objectives was to extend the ACTs to other areas such as Pinelands Garden Village/Maitland, Nyanga (including Crossroads), Athlone central to link with the Athlone stadium development, Kensington/Factreton, Salt River and the Business Improvement Areas in the City centre and Claremont. The second implementation phase also highlights the shift from purely residential (dormitory suburbs) to focusing on areas which offer economic development opportunities (such as the upgrading of a stadium and central business district revivals) in line with the developmental focus of ACTs.

Section Five: Factors leading to success and failure in the implementation of ACTs

This section will explore some of the problems which led to the failure of ACTs in some areas, and the factors which resulted in its success in others. It reveals that a host of factors such as community participation and representation, institutional organisation,

personality factors and political legitimacy, were instrumental in the success or failure of the ACTs.

The purpose of this section is to examine the reasons for the failure of most ACTs, as discussed during the face-to-face interviews and gleaned from the 2000 document. The problems identified cover interdepartmental co-ordination in response to ACT; the allocation of resources to help with the functioning of ACT; the relationship between the different levels of government; community response to ACT given the existence of other developmental initiatives in the areas; and the impact of political changes at local government level.

Part I: Participants' perceptions of the shortcomings of ACTs

Community participation policy vacuum at local government
ACT took place in a policy vacuum at municipal level as indicated by the following response from a local government official: "*ACT happened in a policy vacuum. Municipalities did not have a policy on public participation.*"

Lack of resources allocated to the functioning of ACTs
No additional or new resources were allocated to the ACTs. In addition, already overloaded development facilitators had to take on the additional burden of the ACTs. One development facilitator responsible for three ACTs in addition to an already heavy workload had the following to say:
"*We had no operating budget. No resources. Co-ordinating an ACT means extracting the relevant information, putting all the information into a business plan. A lot of information I had to pull together.*"

"*Having resources allocated to ACT would have given it much greater strength. And in the end the decision is made by the CCT because it is on their budget.*"

Poor attendance by officials responsible for service delivery at area level

Another factor highlighted by respondents was the fact that meetings took place after official office hours. This led to poor attendance by officials. High levels of violence, crime and gangsterism characterised many of the areas. Since few officials were from the areas concerned, they felt unsafe after dark. Many other officials had been threatened by residents when they tried to disconnect services due to non-payment of services. Municipal vans entering some of the areas often had to be accompanied by armed guards for fear of looting or violence. The responses below illustrate the level of frustration experienced with the poor attendance of officials:

"Some of the officials were not keen to come to public meetings especially after hours. We couldn't do anything about it. We couldn't force them to work after hours. That was one of the major flops of the ACT."

"I think that the downside was that ACT had no teeth. In fact, it was up to the local clinic, housing manager, land manager to actually attend meetings. It was on a voluntary basis. But officials could say 'sorry my Conditions of Service says this and not that'. 'I start at 8 and leave at 16:00."

Local staff capacity to respond to community's demands
Even though decision-making was devolved to the lowest level possible, resource allocation remained the responsibility of senior managers. Budgetary allocations were still controlled by the centre in a top-down and not bottom-up process. Line managers did not have the resources to respond to community complaints, which led to disillusionment and frustration on both sides.

"Officials used to say: 'we are not in charge. Our bosses are in charge'. Communities asked that they should be given managers who can make decisions, etc, and that only managers who could make decisions participated fully in this ACT process."

Facilitation skills and staff credibility

A local government manager remarked that given the tense nature of the meetings (it was at the time of the second democratic local government elections in 2000) facilitators and chairpersons needed exceptionally strong facilitation skills to control meetings as they would often end up in mudslinging matches between the different political representatives and organisations:

"You need a very strong person to facilitate the process. It would end up in a screaming match with Cllr X. At the ACT in Manenberg you had 200 people who attended. Ideally you have to get facilitators who people respect."

Lack of interdepartmental co-ordination in the City of Cape Town

The development facilitators responsible for the co-ordination of ACT were in a separate unit with no jurisdiction or powers over other departments. They therefore had to rely on their unit manager to address other managers during executive meetings. The rather cynical response below illustrates the lack of co-ordination within the City itself. According to the ACTs' guidelines, these departments would be responsible for the integration of service delivery at community level.

"That was another shortfall. Our facilitators had no jurisdiction over line function departments. So we left it to those departments to come up with their own plans.
Even the different departments within the City Council don't talk to one another. They do not really know what is going on and they want to co-ordinate or integrate service delivery at community level."(local government official)

Table 7 shows that few if any meetings took place between officials. The development facilitators were meant to co-ordinate the flow of information between the different clusters.

Table 7: City's response to issues raised at ACT meetings

ACT pilot areas	Official attendance	Councillor attendance	Community attendance
Guguletu	No meetings since launch	Poor attendance	Poor attendance

Hanover Park	No meeting of officials between ACT meetings	Two councillors	Well attended
Heideveld	No meetings of officials between ACT meetings	One councillor	Well attended
Langa	No meetings since launch	Poor attendance	Poor community attendance
Manenberg	No meetings of officials between ACT meetings	One councillor	Well attended
Mitchell's Plain	Poor attendance	Poor attendance	Lack representation
Phillipi	No meetings	No meetings	No meetings
Sea Point	Officials meet between ACT meetings	One councillor	Lack representation

Source: City of Cape Town, 2000a

Lack of co-ordinated delivery across the different spheres of government

At times, both the provincial and local government had programmes running in the same community. Many of the areas in which the ACTs were piloted were also part of the provincial MSAT programme. It therefore appeared as a duplication of service delivery improvement programmes. Officials often had to attend separate meetings co-ordinated by provincial government and local government regarding service delivery. Amalgamating or co-ordinating the different activities in communities was complicated by the provincial administration and local government being controlled by different political parties at the time. Mitchell's Plain (Tafelsig) is also part of the National Urban Renewal Strategy.

"Two levels of government are competing for the same audience. That creates a question mark from the communities. Because line authorities are very different. You find clinics and day-hospitals in the same area, one operated by local government and the other by provincial."

However, not everyone agreed that the different processes operating in the same community were problematic:

"[The ACT] is still going on and that is not a problem if there is more than one competing process in a particular community. [The ACT] is a positive sign that people on

the ground are vigilant/vibrant about issues. To me it is a good sign that something is happening." (local government official)

Another local government official said: *"It is the two spheres of government that has to work together. "MSAT was a provincial matter to some extent but it is actually a partnership between local government and provincial government. Of course there were politicians who exploited their position to push their own agendas. There is an agreement between City and province and it has to be worked through."*

The quotation below shows the level of frustration and confusion of the officials working in the pilot area. It also shows the difficulties around funding responsibilities:
"Officials would come out for MSAT they would then also have to come out for ACT as well."

Many of the requests that people wanted the ACTs to deal with (for example, regarding education) fell outside the scope of local government:
"People also wanted us to deal with other issues outside our scope (constitutionally mandated service delivery). Some of the questions that members had, had legal implications for the City Council, so they didn't want to respond. A lot of times meetings focused on issues that we couldn't resolve."

Changes in political leadership
Political changes in the running of local government had a severe impact on the continuation of the ACTs. The impact was felt at a staff level, as the Executive Director of Community Development's contract was not renewed, and at a community level, especially in those communities which shared closer ties with the previous ruling party:
 "There was an election in 2000 and Ahmedi's contract was not renewed in February 2001, right, so you know it is a political plot. ACT was seen as an ANC thing. And that is why nobody ever really wanted to see it being revived." (local government official)

 "After that, the ACTs had no political legitimacy. It is an anomaly and that is interesting. Without any political clout it has continued to exist in Manenberg and survived the changes. When wanting to start a new project the ACT is first consulted.

*"We had to time and again confirm it as a council property. That the 'ACT is about service delivery, not party political issue*s.'" (local government official)

"Right from the start we had to warn people that it is not a decision-making body but rather an advisory mechanism to the department."(local government official)

Legitimacy of ACTs within the different communities

Some communities were opposed to the ACTs because they were seen as local government initiatives. Because of strong political alliances they preferred to work with politically aligned spheres of government**.** Others felt that ACT was trying to undermine already existing structures:

" It always felt that people were a bit suspicious of it (ACT). In X the powerful people don't want another forum that will bring everyone together. There is a lot of positive stuff, but also the gate-keeping that comes in. In Y you have the issue of community development organisation. They want to control everything." (local government manager)

Community representation at ACT

Some interviewees highlighted the immaturity of community organisations at representing broad community issues. The quote below demonstrates the levels of frustration some ACT stakeholders experienced:

 "We don't have the structures or disciplines that representivity requires at this stage. I think that the level of ethical and organisational maturity at this stage is abysmal." (CBO employee)

Part II: Manenberg, the success story

The second objective of the report was to identify the factors which contributed to the success the ACT enjoyed in Manenberg.

The respondents identified a multitude of factors that contributed towards the success of the ACT in Manenberg and to some extent in Hanover Park. These are known as areas where few successes have been achieved due to social disintegration and poverty. The tornado which destroyed a large section of Manenberg in 1999 forced the residents and the organisations in the area to work together.

"Initially how I came to hear about the ACT was after the tornado struck Manenberg in 1999... So for me the ACT starts with the tornado recovery programme as the earlier manifestation of what we now think of as the ACT. All the people you have in the ACT structure, you had them together in the tornado recovery programme." (councillor and CBO employee)

"If it wasn't for the tornado all these people wouldn't have been together and asked: How can we rebuild not the physical but the emotional and structural fabric of Manenberg?" (CBO employee)

Judging from the previous quotation, the ACT then became a forum at which a future Manenberg was being articulated. The discussions in the ACT forum went beyond complaints regarding service delivery to focusing on the physical and social reconstruction of the area.

"Because [the tornado] has erased an area it allowed the question: 'How would we like this to be?' At the moment there is nothing there, it is a blank slate, we are able to say what we want." (CBO employee)

Many organisations, local government officials and public representatives responded positively to the opportunity that the redevelopment of Manenberg presented, and this

resulted in tangible benefits for the community as summed up by one local government manager:

"If plugs [are broken] in a council flat it will take three months if you're lucky before someone will come and fix it. However, if people come and make their complaints there (i.e. the ACT) we can get the electricity person there and sort of hold him accountable. The guy from cleansing is there all the time."

Other structures have also developed as a result of this process, namely:

- Economic Development Forum
- Youth Development forum
- Manenberg Speak (a local community newspaper)

The greatest success of the ACT in Manenberg has therefore been its ability to deliver services identified by the community and to commit the different stakeholders to a future vision for Manenberg.

Both councillors have been working in the area in community-based organisations (CBOs). They are therefore well versed in the issues which plague the Manenberg community:

"I think the other things which made a difference in Manenberg, we had Cllr X and Cllr Y, on the other hand, who were local NGO types. They had very strong connections and understand the City Council and could interpret it to people. Is seen as somebody who lives in the area and who can also speak local government language." (CBO employee)

Co-operation between the community and the City was facilitated by a decision taken earlier where the community consciously committed itself to work with the City, irrespective of political affiliation. At the time the ANC was in charge of local

government while the area had voted in support of the NNP in the local government elections.

In contrast, the respondent quoted below works for an NGO whose leadership is closely aligned with the ANC. It was therefore not problematic for that organisation to work with the local government at the time:

"At the same time I think that our organisation decided in 1997 that we wanted to work with the City on the Lansdowne-Wetton Corridor. We had the dealings with the city council. So we decided that the local authority would be the strategic partner that we would want to work with." (CBO employee)

The statement below indicates a different interpretation of the relationship between the organisations in the area and local government at the time. This organisation, through its leadership, has been closely aligned with the opposing political party while the ANC was in charge of local government. The person acknowledges that as soon as the political parties managed to overcome their initial differences at provincial level, relationships at local government level improved to the benefit of the communities. When asked why the ACT had succeeded when the RDP Forum failed, he said:

"I think the difference between the RDP and ACT was that the RDP was linked to the political ideological influence at the time. [In the] 1994 to 1996 period people still had their strong location in the ANC or NNP. That sort of divided the people. That overshadowed the RDP. At the end of the day people could not really see the benefits of the RDP. For most people the RDP was more a political battle where the politicians come and fight their political fights. Initially the ACT also had this problem because it is a historical problem that we have to deal with. But I think we in Manenberg have worked through that problem and through that process. And also now that we have at provincial level a type of an alliance between the ANC and the NNP. I think that has helped the process so that animosity or deliberate cold tactics have become secondary." (CBO employee and councillor)

The ACT in Manenberg is chaired by one of the highest ranking local government officials, with significant influence in the City, and he is supported by a development facilitator familiar with the area. The different stakeholders within the community contributed to the success the ACT enjoyed in that area.

"People felt that they could come and meet with relatively senior people from outside the area…."

This chairperson's interpretation of his role in the Manenberg ACT supports the previous quotation:

"I could go to officials' Directors and say: 'Your local official hasn't pitched. It is unacceptable, we have real problems.' "

The local government official had the following to say:

"What has made it work is persistence from the officials' side, and a measure of commitment from the councillors as well. It has become a habit, a good habit at that. I am not being paid over time but I will put that aside because I am actually committing myself."

The same respondent explained his involvement and commitment to the area prior to facilitating the Manenberg ACT as follows:

"I was involved in 1997 in the RDP Forum. Manenberg became my albatross. When I came to the area I knew the organisations, etc."

Section 6: Conclusions and recommendations

The first part of this section tries to interpret some of the issues which could have facilitated the success of ACT in Manenberg, and the second part looks at what lessons can be drawn from the ACTs as a mechanism for public participation.

Underlying reasons for the success of the Manenberg ACT

A long-term Manenberg CBO employee, when asked about the roles that different people played in contributing to the success of ACT in the area cautioned**: "***It is not useful to think about its (the ACT's) success being one person's idea. I think it was a forum which came about because different groups at the same time could see that it was a useful thing to do"*. It is with this in mind that we make the following observations:

Manenberg and Hanover Park, unlike the areas where the ACTs did not succeed, are politically more diverse communities. This means that projects will always have some level of support and opposition based on prevailing political support or affiliation in that community.

This comment does not make any sense. In this section I am speculating about the possible causes--- (the following paragraphs are also speculative, yet they are not questioned?

The communities of Manenberg, Heideveld and Hanover Park were also confronted by the City of Cape Town Housing Company's new housing programme, which meant that all vacant City-owned land could be used for housing development for people on the City's housing waiting list, irrespective of where they resided. The affected communities felt that they should get first preference in any housing development in their areas. This led to an unprecedented cohesion among community members in areas where social cohesion has been difficult to achieve. The ACTs provided a platform to make their views heard by some of the senior officials in local government.

Manenberg, unlike all the other areas, experienced the effects of a tornado in 1999, which caused considerable devastation and resulted in the loss of lives. The tornado gave rise to many civil society organisations, e.g. Manenberg Disaster Committee, Manenberg Tornado Reconstruction Group, and others. Because of the destruction caused by the tornado, a developmental agenda dominated ACT meetings in Manenberg whilst Service delivery quality ruled the agenda of other ACTs.

The chairperson and development facilitator for the Manenberg ACT have subsequently been recommended to provincial government to be part of the province's urban renewal strategy in recognition of the work they have done in Manenberg. One of the officials responsible for the cleansing of the area has often been nominated for and received awards for the excellent services he provides to the community of Manenberg.

The leadership shown in the area is not confined to local government only. Both Manenberg councillors have been nominated as chairs of their Portfolio Committees in recognition of their leadership skills. The pact between the NNP and the ANC has also facilitated and eased the tension between the different political parties, contributing to the success of ACT and other initiatives in the area. Both councillors have also been employees of two of the oldest CBOs in Manenberg, and are therefore very familiar with the community and its needs. They can therefore play a more meaningful mediating role between council, local government and the community.

These factors led to active participation and interest by all stakeholders in the ACT in Manenberg. These factors and the visible spin-offs for the community, resulted in the ACT's continuation in the area. It must be kept in mind that many other factors might have contributed to the success of the Manenberg ACTwhich are not listed here given the limited scope of the study and as guided by the respondents.

Lessons we can draw from the ACT experience

Some of the lessons that can be drawn from the ACT experience are outlined below.

Bringing Council to the community leveled the power relationships to some extent. The more fortunate members of the community with greater access to resources, e.g. telephones and cars, are typically able to gain easier access to Council than those less fortunate. The ACT gave those less fortunate members of the community an equal opportunity to present their cases to Council.

Set official hours minimises the participation of employed community members' in the ACT if it holds meetings during working hours. This calls for more flexible working hours for Council staff, such as being available certain evenings and over weekends.

Organisations and individuals alike were allowed to raise their concerns in the ACTs. However, the 2000 ACT report card proposed that only organisations registered members should participate in the ACT forum in future. This would make it easier for the City to respond to and prioritise certain problems, but prevents participation by members/communities who do not wish to be part of organisations or those without the time to state their grievances or vision for the area. It is an attempt by the Council to "silence" critical or difficult voices.

Once a programme has been implemented and that programme delivers real benefits, it is difficult to disestablish such a programme, despite political indifference.
However, the continuation of such a programme, will depend on the implementing officials' support for such a programme. In the case of Manenberg, the relatively high-ranking official chairing the ACT could circumvent the complaints from other officials that ACTs were merely advisory and not decision-making bodies because of his relative influence and seniority.

An important lesson is that higher ranking officials are more effective champions of particular initiatives because of their relative power or influence over staff in their departments and their relationships with the managers of other departments. Other unit managers are more likely to listen to them than to lower ranking officials.

Programmes which deliver concrete benefits and which manage to obtain buy-in from all stakeholders are more likely to succeed. This requires extensive preliminary work to identify the relevant stakeholders and decision-makers, or those with power in a particular community.

Devolution of decision-making powers must be accompanied by resources. The current funding of subcouncils to initiate own projects is therefore a positive step to be commended. However, these structures struggle with issues of community participation.

The ACTs exposed the limitations of the current clustering of services in the city. Communities' needs are multisectoral. The current Community Development Cluster consists of housing, health, community development, sports and recreation. However, economic factors or poverty have as devastating an impact on health as poor housing. The ACTs were chaired and facilitated by the managers in the Social Development Cluster, while the majority of concerns or complaints and future development plans were directed at or involved other clusters, such as the economic and infrastructure clusters.

In conclusion, the ACT concept was one of the first attempts by local government to entrench accountability and transparency in the local government bureaucracy in Cape Town. It also attempted to build capacity in communities to engage with government around issues of service delivery and to take some control for the standards or quality of services that poor people in South Africa had been forced to accept due to apartheid policies of racial segregation. Typical of the post-apartheid government's eagerness to deliver services to disadvantaged communities, it failed to form strategic partnerships with other non-governmental organisations, resulting in some communities seeing ACTs as competition, which resulted in limited support for the concept. The designers of the ACT concept also failed to form other strategic partnerships, for example, with other clusters within the City - many of the complaints registered at the ACT meetings had to do with the maintenance of buildings and other amenities, while the ACTs were housed and co-ordinated in the Community Development Cluster. In the final analysis, it is important that local government provides essential services to poor people in a manner

which supports their livelihoods. The experience of the ACTs shows that forums which facilitate community participation in decision-making about service delivery can potentially contribute toward this, but that there are many bureaucratic obstacles to be overcome.

The fact that delivery of essential services itself contributes towards improving peoples livelihoods is something which few of the local government officials understood. Only one respondent was able to draw a link between the livelihoods of poor households and the ACTs- underscoring the vital role they fulfill in minimising the daily struggle for survival in poor households.

Merely providing these resources to poor households are not sufficient. Service delivery must be provided in a transparent, efficient, effective and equitable manner as stipulated in the White Paper on Local Government of 1995, Batho Pele of 1999, and the Municipal Systems Act of 2000.

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