Community development workers (CDWs): a case study of the Bitou Local Municipality

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Abstract

Local government in South Africa is no longer simply an extension of the national and provincial spheres of government; it has become an independent sphere in its own right. Steady progress has been made in the delivery of services since the advent of a democratic and developmental state in 1994. The 1996 South African Constitution positions local government as an independent sphere of the government, interrelated to and interdependent with the national and provincial governments. To give it a collective voice, local government speaks from a position of strength through organised local government, as embodied in the South African Local Government Association (hereafter referred to as SALGA). The government is aware of the challenges facing local government service delivery, particularly in the rural areas, where progress in service delivery has been slow. During the former Presidential Izimbizo's, the gap between the government's delivery efforts and communities' ability to benefit from that delivery was repeatedly highlighted. The introduction of community development workers (CDWs) is to assist the three spheres of government to ensure that service delivery reaches the intended recipients effectively and efficiently (IDASA, 2006: On-Line).

It was against this background that community development workers (CDWs) were introduced as a link between the government and communities. CDWs are defined as participatory change agents who work in the community in which the live, and to whom they have to answer for their activities. They are required to help members of the community to improve their living standards and change circumstances. To do this, CDWs are expected to make the poor aware of their constitutional rights such as their right to basic service delivery including social grants and assist community members to understand how they can participate in the development plans for their communities. CDWs are expected to facilitate community participation in policy-making, implementation and in service delivery (Republic of South Africa. Grassroots Innovation, 2007). In this article, the role of community development workers in enhancing service delivery within the Bitou Local Municipality is discussed. The article concludes with recommendations based on an empirical survey to establish the extent to which CDWs play a role in improving service delivery and enhancing the accessibility of government services to communities.

Keywords: Bitou Local Municipality, local governance, community development workers, participation, ward committees.

Disciplines: Public Management and Administration, social science research methodology, development studies.

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Introduction

Local government in South Africa has undergone significant and far-reaching changes since 1995. In terms of the new mandate conferred in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996, local government is no longer only required to render basic services, but also to serve as an agent to promote the social and economic development of communities. These expanded responsibilities coincide with the new status conferred on local government. In a departure from the centralised tier system of government, local government now constitutes an independent sphere, embedded in a context of co-operative government with the national and provincial spheres.

The following legislative framework makes provision for, *inter alia,* community participation in matters of local government in South Africa. In terms of Section 152 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996, local government is mandated to:

a) provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
b) ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;
c) promote social and economic development;
d) promote a safe and healthy environment; and
e) encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

The CDW programme (CDWP) aims to improve service delivery for the people, facilitate community development and work jointly towards sustainable economic and social upliftment. The basis for the CDWP can be found in the preamble of the South African Constitution, namely to "*improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person*". The principles of the CDWP reflect the Batho Pele principles and the spirit of Ubuntu. The CDWP occupies a very special place in the South African Public Service (Republic of South Africa. Community Development Workers Conference Report, 2007).

When the government created the new echelon of public service officials in the form of CDWs, it made it clear that it was important for all spheres of government to work in collaboration to implement the CDWP. In order to consolidate this position, Cabinet took a policy decision at its sitting in November 2003, stating that:

> *provincial government should be the employer and that local government should be the work place of the CDWs; however, there would be provincial variation according to capacity and budgetary requirements.*

Cabinet recommended that municipalities should take:

> *responsibility for the daily activities of the CDWs and these arrangements should take place through the office of the municipal manager* (Republic of South Africa. Community Development Workers Conference Report, 2007).

The CDWP is driven at the national sphere by the Department of Public Service and Administration and was piloted and implemented in the provinces of Western Cape, North West, Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. The Departments of Public Service and Administration, Labour, and the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) have been tasked with the development of job descriptions and the training of CDWs (Community Development Workers Progress Report, 2003-2010: On-Line).

As a formal communication channel between the community and the three spheres of government (national, provincial and local), the CDWP in the Bitou Local Municipality is intended to serve as a vehicle for channelling communal needs and challenges to the Council and government departments. In terms of the *Local Government*: *Municipal Structures Act* 117 of 1998, the Bitou Local Municipality is classified as a Category B Municipality, with an executive mayoral system, and with seven wards and thirteen councillors of which seven are ward councillors. The Municipality has eighteen community development workers, of whom three are employed by the Provincial Department of Housing and Local Government in the Western Cape (Community Development Workers Progress Report, 2003-2010: On-Line).

The Community Services Directorate is responsible for the provision of services to Bitou Local Municipality's communities, visitors and tourists. This is done as an integrated and co-ordinated effort with other State organs, within the Constitutional and Local Government legislative framework.

The services below are provided in line with Bitou's Vision: "To be the best together" and its Mission statement, with the focus of enshrining the Batho Pele principles that ensure the customer is put first and the services rendered are of a high quality.

a) Traffic control and policing services
b) Law enforcement
c) Fire and rescue services
d) Library services
e) Parks and recreation
f) Disaster management
g) Housing
h) Environmental health services
i) Personal Primary health care services.

The macro administrative structure of the Bitou Local Municipality views the Office of the Municipal Manager at its head. Five departments or directorates report to the Municipal Manager.

Corporate services is chiefly responsible for secretarial and customer care, property and amenity services, legal services and human resource management.

Financial services is responsible for expenditure, income, budget and ICT functions of the municipality.

Community services is responsible for protection services, fire and disaster management, integrated human settlement, parks and recreation and library services.

Municipal Services and Infrastructure Development is responsible for roads, refuse sites and cleaning, civil works, electrical engineering, water quality and control, building control and infrastructure maintenance.

Strategic services are responsible for integrated development planning and local economic development, performance management and developmental planning and integration (Bitou Municipality. Departments and Directorates, 2012: On-Line).

It is against this background that this article investigates the role of community development workers in enhancing service delivery within the Bitou Local Municipality. In the following section, concepts are defined as proposed for the purposes of this article.

Definition of concepts

Public Administration

Kuye (2001:14) describes public administration as the management of individual and group efforts for the sustenance of the activities of the state, while Stillman (1983:2) defines public administration as the management of scarce resources to accomplish the goals of public policy. It involves the coordination of all organised activity having as its purpose the implementation of public policy. Public administration is also a cooperative effort in a public setting; it covers the executive, legislative and judicial formulation of public policy and is thus part of the political process. It is different from private administration but works in partnership with private groups in providing services to the community.

Municipality

Section 2 of the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act* 117 of 1998 defines a municipality as an organ of state within the local sphere of government exercising legislative and executive authority within an area determined in terms of the *Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act* 27of 1998.

Local Community

The *Local Government: Municipal Systems Ac*t 32 of 2000 defines a local community in relation to a municipality as a body of persons comprising the residents of the municipality; the ratepayers of the municipality; any civic organisations and non-governmental, private sector or labour sector organisations, or bodies involved in local affairs within the municipality.

Community Development

According to De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:8), community development entails placing individuals at the centre of the development process and helping them realise their potential. It acknowledges that the best solution to a problem invariably comes from the individuals within the community who are experiencing the problem.

Community Development Workers (CDWs)

The Department of Public Service and Administration defines CDWs as civil servants with particularly close links to local communities. The main role of CDWs is to work with government departments in order to help bridge the gap between government and communities. In pursuit of this goal, CDWs must act to improve community access to government services and strengthen integration and coordination between different government line services. Where feasible, CDWs should also attempt to strengthen the integration and coordination of public services between the three spheres of government (Republic of South Africa. Grassroots Innovation, 2007).

Community Participation

De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:20) assert that community participation is normally associated with the actions of communities, groups or individuals in relation to development and promoting positive change in an existing, less acceptable situation. Community participation is local, active and direct, and communities must be fully involved in the local development process.

Public Participation

The World Bank Learning Group defines public participation as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources that affect them (World Bank, 1995). From this perspective, public participation could be required in the decision-making phases of programmes or project cycles in the community, namely from needs assessment, to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. For the purpose of this article, the terms 'public' and 'community' will be used interchangeably.

Basic municipal service

According to the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act* 117 of 1998, basic municipal service means a municipal service that is necessary to ensure an acceptable and reasonable quality of life, and, if not provided, would endanger public health or the safety of the environment.

In the following section, the establishment of community development workers and the difference between ward councillors and ward committees is discussed briefly.

Community development workers

The CWDP as a concept was not introduced as a legislative enactment but rather as a policy decision that emanated from an announcement by the former State President, Thabo Mbeki, in his State of the Nation Address of 14 February 2003:

> *Government will create a public service echelon of multi-skilled Community Development Workers (CDWs) who will maintain direct contact with the people where these masses live. We are determined to ensure that government goes to the people so that we sharply improve the quality of the outcomes of public expenditures intended to raise the standards of living of our people. It is wrong that government should oblige people to come to government even in circumstances in which people do not know what services the government offers and have no means to pay for the transport to reach government offices.*

In the establishment of the programme, there was a clear understanding that CDWs were to complement the work of other departments at all levels, including municipalities, with the main aim of ensuring that services reach the people for whom they are intended. The new cadre of public servants were to be:

> *skilled facilitators, filling the gap between government services and the people. They will be public servants who assist citizens with matters such as birth certificates, IDs and social grants applications, and small business start-up, at their doorstep and in their own communities* (Republic of South Africa. Community Development Workers Conference Report, 2007).

The above illustrates the fact that community development workers are the only public servants whose work cuts across all spheres of government and they:

> *are different to the mainline public servants or local government officials* (Republic of South Africa. Community Development Workers Conference Report, 2007).

The concept of CDWs in local government would have favourable consequences for participatory governance since the key responsibility of CDWs is to bring the government closer to the people. These officials are recruited from the communities in which they live. CDWs are special public servants who undergo training to enable them to enter communities and households, engage with citizens and determine what services are needed, and ensure that these services are made available. Therefore, they have a better understanding of the dynamics and needs of the citizens they serve. This enables them to enter communities, facilitate stakeholder interaction, and make effective interventions.

The critical role that CDWs must perform is that of promoting and encouraging public participation at the local government sphere. CDWs link communities with many government services and programmes. CDWs assist citizens by helping them to access services such as health, welfare, housing, agriculture, economic activity, education and training, and employment opportunities. CDWs are officially mandated to 'develop' and 'transform' communities by, among other activities: informing and assisting them to access the services provided by government; determining the needs of communities and communicating these to the government; promoting networks between community workers and projects to improve service delivery; and compiling reports and documents pertaining to progress and local issues (Williams, 2006:5-6).

These tasks suggest that CDWs must become advocacy planners (Friedmann, 1992:12), that is, they must act as advocates of development and transformation in a specific community, especially in relation to Integrated Development Planning (IDP).

This, therefore, means that the CDWs must be aware of the IDP, as stated in the *White Paper on Local Government of 1998* and the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act* 32 of 2000, which both require public participation.

The critical element with regard to CDWs is the institutional and support framework provided by the different spheres of government, for example, the programme formulation is the primary responsibility of the national sphere; the province undertakes research, *inter alia,* to identify districts affected by poverty; and local authorities must assess the needs of the public and work together with ward development associations. The latter are responsible for planning and taking cognisance of IDPs (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2004).

The management and control of CDWs take place in ward development associations (where the CDWs are deployed), where they work together with ward councillors. The CDW programme supports the ideas promoted by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996, and the relevant local government legislation concerning the promotion of participatory democracy. It envisages a structured participatory framework, which ultimately leads to social learning and cohesion, building trust in and credibility for the planning process and inculcating a sense of ownership of the development process (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2004). These ideas are articulated by the International Association for Public Participation (2000) and the Manilla Declaration on People's Participation and Sustainable Development (1989).

CDWs are community-based resource persons who work with other local activists to help their fellow community members obtain information and resources from service providers. The main function of the CDWs is to assist in progressively meeting the communities' needs and, helping them achieve their goals, realise their aspirations and maintain their overall

well-being. This may include assisting a citizen to apply for an ID through the Department of Home Affairs. It may also involve helping a second beneficiary access a child support grant in the event of the death of the primary beneficiary. The CDWs are also expected to explain government policy to ordinary citizens in their mother tongue (IDASA, 2006: On-Line).

CDWs are required to be multi-skilled and knowledgeable about all government departments and services, as their work cuts across all facets. They must have sound listening and facilitation skills, as they are often called in to act as mediators in the community. In addition, CDWs are required to:

a) live in the communities in which they work;
b) show respect towards the people, their norms and values;
c) realise that they are dealing with a living entity;
d) acknowledge and accept leaders;
e) be open about their positions and task;
f) get to know people and their circumstances;
g) deepen their insights into people's needs and resources;
h) begin to identify local structures with which they can work;
i) promote partnerships between themselves and local structures, such as ward committees; and
j) exchange information, guide and provide expertise as well as enable, advocate and catalyse action (IDASA, 2006: On-Line).

They work as community facilitators, focusing on finding solutions to identified needs and blockages by interacting with national, provincial and local government structures. Their training combines both class-based and in-service training (South Africa, 2005: On-Line).

Speaking at the launch of the CDWP in Winterveldt in the Western Cape in November 2005, the former Minister of Public Service and Administration, Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, urged the workers to help ensure that government was based on the will of the people, and encouraged them to work, live, walk and talk to people in their language (South Africa, 2005: On-Line).

The CDWs programme is essential for:

a) assisting in removing development deadlocks;
b) strengthening the democratic social contract;
c) advocating an organised voice for the poor; and
d) improving a government community network (IDASA, 2006: On-Line).

On 24 February 2012, at Batho Pele House – Pretoria, the Deputy Minister for Public Service and Administration highlighted the need to implement the Batho Pele principles as a guide in the work of Community Development Workers. The need to shift the focus to the positive when reporting on government programmes to build the moral fibre of workers was emphasised (DPSA, 24 February 2012: On-Line).

In addition, the need for information sharing "in order to plan better, and the need to synergise to derive more value in what we put in" was stressed. The sterling work undertaken by the CDWs in the Western Cape was acknowledged by the MEC of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning in the province. The common objective is

to align all government community practitioners in the delivery of services to the communities (DPSA, 24 February 2012: On-Line).

At a workshop hosted by the Department of Public Service and Administration on 19 March 2012, the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Local Government, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, touched on the Macro-Organisation of state as a government system in practice in accelerating service delivery and the review of the role of Community Development Workers as special cadres. CDWs should be able to "relate policies and programmes of government" to enable them to carry out their work (DPSA, 19 March 2012: On-Line).

A presentation on the provincial perspective of the Community Development Workers Programme (CDWP) highlighted the programmes the CDWs are involved in namely: Identity Document, Balelapa War on Poverty Programme, Social Grants, Human Rights, Education- Back to School Campaign and pauper funerals. Challenges faced in the province include an unfunded mandate, no service level agreement or MOU between SALGA and the department, the relationship between Community Development Workers, Ward Committees and Councillors and no Monitoring and Evaluations Tool (DPSA, 19 March 2012: On-Line).

The CDWP is coordinated by all three spheres of government (national, provincial and local). Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) facilitates the relationships between these three spheres around CDWs, while the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) is responsible for the overall coordination of the programme. Provincial administrations are the employers of the CDWs, while SALGA and municipalities provide workplaces for the CDWs and create the necessary environment for them to perform their duties. Finally, provincial local government associations and the offices of the Speakers within municipalities are tasked with overseeing the creation of an enabling environment for CDWs (IDASA, 2006: On-Line).

In discharging their duties, CDWs must interact with ward committees and ward councillors. Since CDWs serve the same constituencies, it is imperative that they work together and complement each other. They contribute in ensuring that the government meets its target with regard to service delivery and poverty alleviation (South Africa, 2005: On-Line).

The following table identifies the different roles and responsibilities of CDWs, councillors and ward committees:

Councillors	Ward committee	CDWs
Politically elected representatives who live in and serve wards.	10 community or sectoral representatives elected at a Ward general meeting and who represent sectoral interests.	Appointed public servants governed by the Public Service Act 104 of 1994.
Ward Councillors: Chair the ward committee meeting and convene the constituency meeting to elect ward committee members.	The committees are the centre of local development.	Are expected to communicate government and other information to communities regularly in an accessible way.

Call committee meetings.	Take issues of local concern to the councillor, who in turn takes these to council.	Pass concerns and issues on to service providers.
Ensure a schedule of meetings is prepared, including ward committee and constituency meetings.	Have a direct say in the planning, decision-making and project implementation that has an impact on the ward.	Coordinate teams of volunteers in community projects.
Work with the ward committee to draw up an annual plan of activities.	Increase the participation of local residents in municipal decision-making.	Coordinate teams employed on public works programmes.
The Proportional Representative (PR) Councillors should attend ward committee meetings, constituency meetings and special meetings.	Identify and initiate projects to improve the lives of people in the Ward.	Promote the principles of Batho Pele and community participation.
Assist with resolving disputes and making referrals.	Support the councillor in dispute resolutions.	Inform communities about problems in the delivery of basic services.
Help with implementation of projects.	Monitor the performance of the municipality and take issues of concern to the local ward.	Help implement projects.
Support ward councillors, but do not replace them.	Help with community awareness campaigns on issues such as waste, water and sewage, and payment of fees and charges.	Liaise with and advocate on behalf of communities with parastatals, NGOs and private donors.
	Forwards names of prospective CDW candidates from their respective wards for learnership.	Monitor, evaluate and report on the impact of developmental projects.
		Help communities deal with disease (such as TB, HIV and Aids) and intensify education and awareness of sexually transmitted diseases and other health matters.

		Help government achieve the People's Contract of a better life for all.
		Act as resourceful and dedicated public servants.

Source: (Republic of South Africa. Grassroots Innovation, 2007)

In the section that follows, a brief synopsis is provided on the research instrument used to conduct the empirical survey to investigate the role of community development workers in enhancing service delivery in the Bitou Local Municipality's geographical area of responsibility. Using the Bitou Local Municipality as a case study, the survey aimed to provide an understanding of the role of CDW over and above the existing ward committee members relating to service delivery against the background of developmental local government. A quantitative approach was used and the sample included selected CDWs and ward councillors.

Empirical research

In the paragraphs that follow, a synopsis of an empirical survey conducted in the Bitou Local Municipality by Gogi (2012) to investigate the role of community development workers in enhancing service delivery, is reviewed.

Research instrument

The research conducted by Gogi (2012) employed a self-administered structured questionnaire designed in the form of a Likert scale. Through quantitative research the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships was provided. The questionnaire contained the response categories: *'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.* It was assumed that the measuring technique employed would presuppose that a particular test item had the same meaning for all respondents, and thus a given response was scored identically for each respondent.

Test sample

The questionnaire for purposes of the survey was referred to a statistician for final approval so that the data contained in the questionnaire could be quantified and subjected to statistical analysis.

Eighteen (18) questionnaires were distributed to the CDWs and six (06) to ward councillors of the Bitou Local Municipality. The questionnaires were hand delivered. Sixteen (16) questionnaires were returned, (eleven from CDWs and five from Ward Councillors) representing a response rate of 67 per cent (Gogi, 2012:67). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003:156), a high response rate will ensure that a sample is representative of the target population.

The responses by the participants to the various questions are presented descriptively.

A statistician from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (hereinafter referred to as NMMU) utilised the computer programme "SAS" to process the collected data and to generate the various statistical results. The relative values pertaining to the set statements that emerged from the survey were transferred in codified form to a computer database.

Interpretation of research findings

The objective of the empirical survey was to test attitudinal responses to aspects such as the role played by the appointment of community development workers regarding service delivery within the Bitou Local Municipality in the Western Cape Province, the institutional capacity of CDWs in the Bitou Local Municipality to deliver services, public participation and cooperative government. The inherent subjectivity in attitude surveys was realised and kept in mind during the analysis of the results. However, according to Zimbardo and Ebbeson (1969:125), it is possible to measure subjective attitudes by using quantitative techniques, so that each individual's opinion can be represented by some numerical score.

The objective of Gogi's empirical survey was to investigate the role played by community development workers regarding service delivery within the Bitou Local Municipality in the Western Cape Province.

Empirical survey results

The following responses were recorded in response to the statements highlighted in bold print:

Community development workers/Ward councillors assist in accessing services to the community

100 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that CDWs and ward councillors assist in accessing services for the community. The research findings indicate that when the municipality implemented the CDWP, there has been a positive impact on basic services. The members of the community, particularly the poor, are now able to access government services, for example, subsidised basic services (such as water, refuse collection, electricity), social grants and identity documents through the assistance of the CDWs and ward councillors.

Ward councillors do not support community development workers in performing their functions.

The CDWs strongly agreed that ward councillors do not support them in performing or executing their duties in meeting the needs of the communities. This result is of concern as in terms of legislative prescriptions, ward councillors are required to work closely with ward committee members.

The living conditions in my ward improved with the introduction of the community development workers programme.

Only 13 per cent of respondents strongly agreed that the living conditions in their wards had improved with the introduction of the community development worker programme, while 81 per cent agreed that the conditions had improved and 6 per cent remained neutral. CDWs play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between communities and government services, making it easier for poor communities to access service delivery. CDWs should inform the community of how the government works and what the government is doing. Owing to their close working relationship with communities, CDWs can become the eyes and ears in the fight against corruption at grassroots level. CDWs should be encouraged to report any untoward activities to the right authorities to enable the government to take corrective action.

Community development workers must affiliate to the ruling or majority political party.

The results indicated that 91per cent of the respondents strongly disagreed that CDWs should affiliate to the ruling or a political party in the Council, while only 9 per cent agreed that CDWs should affiliate to the ruling party. In terms of CDW Policy (2009), CDWs should be appointed on merit as civil servants in terms of the *Public Service Act* 103 of 1994.

Community members participate in the council decision-making process.

As indicated by the results, 20 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that community members should participate in the council's decision-making process, 60 per cent agreed that community members should be part of the decision-making process while the remaining 20per cent of the respondents disagreed. This is indicative of the fact that more should be done to enhance public participation through ward committee meetings.

I have completed the community development worker learnership programme.

According to the survey, 64 per cent of the respondents indicated that they had completed the CDW learnership programme. It is cause for concern that 36 per cent of CDWs did not understand nor have knowledge of the CDW learnership programme. The successful completion of the learnership programme is a core requirement before one can be appointed as a CDW. The former South African Development Institute (SAMDI), now called the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA), is tasked with the development of job description and training of CDWs. Cognisance must be taken of the fact that the CDWP was not introduced as a legislative enactment but rather as a policy decision that emanated from an announcement by the former State President, Thabo Mbeki.

Community development workers/ward councillors regularly attend and participate in ward committee meetings.

The respondents indicated that they regularly attended and actively participated in the ward committee meetings. This indicates that CDWs are active in engaging public participation through ward committee meetings. However, the results from the study indicate that there should be a closer working relationship between the ward councillors, ward committee members and CDWs.

I actively participate in the development of the Integrated Development Plan and compilation of the annual budget of the council as a community development worker/ward councillor.

The results revealed that 25 per cent of the respondents were actively involved in the development of the IDP and annual budget, 56 per cent had partially participated in the process while 13per cent had not participated in the development of the IDP and annual budget. Six per cent of the respondents remained neutral about their participation in the IDP development process. Considering that one of the aims of the CDWP is to improve the general conditions in the wards, this percentage indicates that greater cooperation between the CDWs and the council should be pursued.

The ward committee/community development workers do not disagree or compete against each other in the ward which they serve.

The results show that 73 per cent of the respondents indicated that there was a clear process and procedure that prevent Ward Committee members and Community Development Workers from clashing in their wards, while 18 per cent reflected that no clear process existed because they usually disagreed with ward committee members in the execution of their duties. The remaining 9 per cent did not know whether any process or method was in place. The ward committees and CDWs are at loggerheads because of a lack of clarity about the role of CDWs. Ward committees are appointed in terms of section 72 of the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act* 117 of 1998, while the CDWs have no legislative prescription. This conflict usually arises with the execution of their duties and remuneration. Ward committee members receive a stipend for every meeting they attend, while the CDWs are salaried with benefits.

The overall results for the survey indicate that the Bitou Local Municipality does not adhere to certain requirements of the CDWP, because only three out of 18 CDWs are employed by the Provincial Department of Local Government and Housing. Only a few of the Community Development Workers confirmed that they had completed the CDW learnership programme. Nonetheless, the Bitou Local Municipality's CDWs executed their role and responsibilities to the best of their ability in bringing government services closer to the people of Bitou.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the literature and empirical survey:

The roles and responsibilities of CDWs should be clearly defined, with clear terms of reference. The majority of the stakeholders felt that relationships would improve if they had a better understanding of the roles, functions and responsibilities of CDWs. A major cause of tension in this relationship is because CDWs and the stakeholders play similar roles. People are generally confused as to who does what.

All CDWs who have not completed their learnership programme must register with Local Government Seta (LG-Seta) to complete their learnership, within agreed time-frames. The CDW learnership was introduced under the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority in 2004 to enable CDWs to gain theoretical and practical skills while gaining work experience and a nationally recognised qualification. The CDWP comprises 40

days of formal academic training divided into five block periods per year and; 18 days for mentors to engage with learners and fieldwork assignments given at the end of each training block with practical experience in the field, which accounts for another 35 days. The CDW learnership leads to a national diploma in community development after successful completion of a course and assignments. The CDW learnership is designed to be completed within a year and CDWs should be given an ultimatum to complete this programme within not later than one and half years. Failure to do so should lead to their release from the programme.

The CDWs should be formally introduced to the community and other stakeholders, including government departments, to avoid confusion. Since CDWs are a relatively new type of public civil servant, the natural progression would be an introduction of CDWs at all spheres of the government and the broader community.

The CDWs should be depoliticised in order to obtain cooperative governance from stakeholders. Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution guarantees everyone the right to freedom of association. Yet CDWs are meant to be politically neutral or non-political public servants. The reality is that CDWs operate within a political arena and contextually, politics is a factor. The belief held by the majority of the respondents is that everyone should be the beneficiary of the programme, irrespective of the political party they support. The politics of the CDW is under-development, poverty, a non-racial society and transformation.

A performance management system should be established for the Bitou Local Municipality's CDWs with a view to monitor, evaluate and manage community development workers. Stakeholders should be involved in the process. All government departments that fail to cooperate with CDWs should be reported to the Office of the Presidency, since the CDWP was the initiative of the Presidency.

Conclusion

CDWs are a fundamental building block of the developmental state as their work is primarily aimed at accelerating service delivery by taking government services to communities. This service delivery thrust places the CDWs programme in line with government's Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF, 2009-2014) which is rooted on the revitalisation and renewal of government in terms of how it goes about with its tasks and how it encourages and values citizen participation in development.

Currently, CDWs are capacitating citizens to know their service rights and responsibilities and also encourage and mobilise communities to participate in government's service delivery and development programmes such as government outreach programmes and municipal IDP and budget processes.

The primary objective of this article was to review the role of community development workers in enhancing service delivery in the Bitou Local Municipality. The findings from the empirical study emphasise the vital role CDWs play in bringing government services closer to the people. The expectations of enhanced service delivery through public participation on the one hand, and the realities of poverty on the other, suggest a need to understand more fully the dynamics and barriers of public participation at the local government sphere.

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