Including Women? (Dis)junctures between Voice, Policy and Implementation in Integrated Development Planning

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Introduction

Since 1994, the South African Constitution has given greater weight and autonomy to local government than previously. In performing their new role as 'developmental local government', municipalities are tasked to prepare Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) – statutory five year strategic plans linked to budgets. IDPs are processes through which municipalities, engaging with stakeholders and communities, reach consensus about future development in their area. They are also expected to provide the space for a range of marginalized groups, including women, to participate in formulating municipal plans and to influence their development practices. This paper explores the extent to which women have been able to have voice in these processes, and whether this has affected municipal policy and its implementation.

There is a long history of initiatives to incorporate women, and to take gender into account in urban development. One dominant approach is largely technocratic, and focuses on 'mainstreaming gender' in development through improving the awareness and understanding of gender by development workers (eg. Moser, 1993; Levy; 1996). While considerable attention is paid to including women in participation, the main focus here is on bringing to bear a gender aware approach to all aspects of development. This approach is also associated with the use of gender targeting mechanisms and special structures dealing with gender in government and local government. It has however been criticised for its depoliticisation of development and gender issues (Goetz, 2004; Mukhopadhyay, 2004), its neglect of the extent to which politics and power affects mainstreaming (Beall, 2001), and questions are being raised as to its effectiveness (Woodford-Berger, 2003). By contrast, political scientists have focused to a greater extent on women's voice and access to power within mainstream politics, in everyday life, and through pressure in social movements (eg. Goetz and Hassim, 2003; Hassim, 2006; Fick et al, 2002). Yet inclusion at a political level is not necessarily a guarantee of gender-awareness in policy and practice, particularly where the focus is on representation.

In the South African context, the literature linked to inclusion of gender in IDP and local government has tended to focus on ways in which gender can be mainstreamed in local government (eg. Van Donk, 2003) and IDPs (Cole and Parnell, 2000), on analyzing the IDP process itself (eg. Naidooo, 2000), or on representation (eg. Coetzee and Naidoo, 2002; HSRC, 2004). There is also been some attention to participation in IDP processes (GAP 2000a; Mathye, 2002), to local government budgets (Budlender, 1999), awareness of gender issues in local government (Marie et al, 2004), and to service delivery (GAP, 2000b; Beall and Todes, 2004). However, there has been relatively limited work tracing through from politics and participation to IDPs to practice at the level of projects. There is often an underlying assumption that these elements are well-linked – that 'voice' leads to gender aware policy and practice, or that gaps at the level of 'voice' or policy (eg. in the IDP) necessarily mean that practice is not gender aware. This paper explores these links and disjunctures. It suggests that inclusiveness with regard to gender is uneven and partial at all three levels, and that there is not a one to one correspondence between voice, policy and implementation. Outcomes are influenced by both a technocratic rationale (including the use of indicators and targets), and by politics within and outside of local government.

The paper is based on research in three municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal with different politics, and levels of capacity and resources: eThekwini, Hibiscus Coast and Msinga. eThekwini is a city of 3 million people. It is a large metropolitan municipality with relatively high levels of capacity, and a history of financial stability and innovation. Hibiscus Coast, with a population of 194,000, is a medium sized municipality on KZN's south coast, comprising several small towns, commercial farming areas, and rural areas under traditional authority. Msinga is a small, predominantly rural municipality, with scattered settlement under traditional tenure, and a few very small towns. It is one of the poorest municipalities in South Africa, with limited resources and capacity. It is usually seen as a conservative area politically, where traditional gender relations are more likely to be dominant.

Within each case study, the following issues were examined:

- The representation of women as councillors and officials, the establishment of special structures such as gender desks and its effect on addressing women's issues and gender within the municipality.
- The participatory process linked to the IDP, and the extent to which it gave voice to women.
- The incorporation of gender within the IDPs, and whether they reflect women's interests, needs and rights.
- The extent to which projects and implementation processes take account of national policy guidelines on gender equity, and whether women benefit from them. Some 30 projects across the three areas were examined.

Research was based on interviews and focus groups with councillors, municipal officials, NGOs, and project committees and beneficiaries. In addition, interviews were held with

national and provincial government departments, and with feminist activists in government, NGOs and academia.

The next section provides an outline of South Africa's system of local government, and its Integrated Development Plans. The following section presents the results of the case study material, by examining women's voice in municipalities, IDPs and gender, and projects. The paper concludes by drawing together the key findings of the study.

South Africa's Local Government and Integrated Development Plans

Under apartheid, local government was highly fragmented and divided across racial lines. Since 1994, local government has undergone two rounds of consolidation, the last in 2000, when the current system was set in place. Local government is now very large by international standards. A system of wall to wall district and local municipalities is now in operation, while metropolitan municipalities combine the functions of district and local government. The mandate of local government has also been transformed from a relatively limited and technocratic role, concerned mainly with the supply of engineering services, to that of 'developmental local government', focused on the social and economic development of communities.

IDPs are intended to play a key role in developmental local government. They are expected to provide strategic direction to municipalities, and to the work of national and provincial departments operating in their area. IDPs include a situational analysis, the development of visions, strategies, programmes and projects, which should link to municipal budgets. They are intended to be based on participatory processes, which draw together the views of a range of stakeholders, although final decisions are made by the council itself. A set of IDP Guidelines were produced in 2001 to assist municipalities after the 2000 amalgamation (DPLG, 2001). Gender, like environment, poverty and HIV/AIDS, is seen as a 'cross cutting issue' in these guides, and a mainstreaming approach is adopted, with gender being expected to be taken through at each stage of the IDP process. Women are seen as part of the 'vulnerable groups', and particular attention is given to including them in participatory processes linked to the IDP.

IDPs that were produced often fell short of objectives, even if the quality of plans and level of participation were better than before (Harrison, 2002). Many municipalities struggled to deal with the most basic requirements. Most had to confront the institutional issues related to amalgamation; capacity and resources were scarce in many of the smaller local authorities; and it was difficult to achieve the intended participation by national and provincial government (Harrison, 2006). 'Cross cutting' issues were generally neglected or weakly developed (eg. see Todes, 2004), and many plans did little more than organize the delivery of services. Further, plans rarely related to budgets, and the intended co-ordination between spheres of government proved difficult to achieve through the IDP process. Many IDPs were weak as strategic documents, and participation was limited (Rauch, 2002). In response to these problems, Project Consolidate was initiated at national level to support weak local governments. This programme focuses on procedural and institutional issues across some 132 out of the 284 municipalities. In

addition, new legislation and procedures were introduced to improve co-ordination between the spheres of government.

The weak position of local government in many parts of the country meant that national support tended to focus on the 'basics'. In this context, gender tended to be seen as a luxury, and was neglected. Mathaye's (2002) study of IDPs in nine municipalities found that limited attention had been given to the inclusion of women and women's organisations in the participatory process, that gender analysis did not go beyond demographic description, and that an understanding of women's interests and needs had not informed the plan. Similarly, Marie et al (2004) found that local governments had a limited awareness of gender issues and dynamics. At a political level, women were comparatively poorly represented in local government compared to other spheres of government, and struggled to access coveted seats as locally chosen ward councillors, suggesting that local politics was also playing a role in the neglect of gender. Women had to rely on appointments as proportional representation (PR) councillors[1], chosen by political parties (HSRC, 2004). Municipalities have not on the whole paid much attention to gender, and where they have, the focus has largely been on questions of representation as councillors and officials. Findings are similar in the three case studies, as the following section demonstrates.

Including Women and Gender in the Case Studies: Representation and Voice

This section explores the extent to which women have voice and gender issues are taken up within the three municipal case studies. It focuses on four main arenas in which this form of inclusion becomes evident:
- the 'place' accorded to gender within the municipality, including the role of special structures;
- women's representation as councillors and leaders, and its impact;
- the extent to which civil society has been able to give voice to women's concerns and be heard; and
- the participatory processes linked to the IDP.

Gender in the Municipality

Gender has not been given priority attention in any of the three municipalities. While it is generally regarded as peripheral to their main concerns, gender has received some attention in eThekwini and Hibiscus Coast. In these municipalities, the goal of promoting gender equality is usually interpreted as improving levels of employment equity, and visible efforts have been taken to appoint women to senior management positions. Msinga has not addressed gender issues at all: given its extremely low levels of capacity, paying attention to gender is seen as a luxury.

eThekwini has begun to institutionalise gender through the creation of two committee structures, the appointment of a gender co-ordinator, the formation of a Gender Forum,

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[1] South African local government combines ward councillors (constituency representation) with a PR system.

the preparation of a Gender Policy Framework, and the introduction of gender training workshops for councillors and officials. It has recently expanded its gender structure and is now placing 'gender focal points' in each department, although there are concerns that these are at too low a level in departments, and might thus have less impact than hoped. Hibiscus Coast has a gender committee, and several small-scale women's projects, but there is no policy, and at the time research on of this aspect of the research (2005), it had no dedicated personnel either. At present, the municipality is struggling with a lack of capacity around both gender and the IDP, and one person is fulfilling both functions. In eThekwini, gender structures are far removed from IDP processes and decision-making structures, and generally operate on the margins of the municipal policy and operations. This was also the case in Hibiscus Coast until recently, but the reality is that lack of capacity and pressure on the current joint gender and IDP co-ordinator means that gender dimensions have been given less attention.

Gender has been championed by high-profile personalities in both eThekwini (Speaker) and Hibiscus Coast (Transformation Manager/Municipal Manager). However, these associations have produced limited results, as they are vulnerable to loss of continuity when other interests and responsibilities demand the attention of these people.

Women Councillors and Leadership

At the time of the research in 2005, women councillors were outnumbered by their male counterparts in all three municipalities. Some attempts had been made to ensure that there was representation of women at executive committee level. Despite their assertions that they represented the interests of women, it is difficult to find evidence that the influential positions of women were having beneficial impacts on women within municipal structures. While many felt that mindsets were changing, they also pointed to resistance and hostility from men. At the time of research, these tensions were being raised by the ruling African National Congress's (ANC) attempts to institute a 50:50 male: female council representation, which constituted a direct threat to men's prospects in the upcoming local government elections. These findings are consistent with research at a national level cited above (HSRC, 2004).

The research suggests that increasing the number of women councillors is of some importance to improving inclusiveness, but there is no guarantee that they will take up gender issues. Many women councillors were familiar with the needs of poor women, and they were committed to addressing them. In addition, they played a significant role in listening and responding to women's needs. However, many of them preferred to become practically involved in meeting these needs at a ward level, rather than pursuing them at a more strategic level through time-consuming and ineffective committee and municipal structures. Women councillors in all three municipalities felt highly constrained in what they could do, and derived little support from municipal structures, which were often hostile to these issues. Other women councillors appeared reluctant to be seen to be associated with gender structures or with women's issues, and preferred to invest their energy in more influential committees and mainstream concerns.

Beall (2005) has noted that rural women's participation is customarily denied in the male-dominated decision-making structures and processes associated with traditional authorities. These observations are also borne out in the research on rural components of municipalities, particularly in Msinga. However, in this context, *ondlunkulu*, the wives of traditional leaders, play a similar role to women councillors in being receptive to women's needs. Like female councillors, too, they received little support from either municipal or traditional structures to address these needs. Relationships between traditional authorities and municipalities were often fraught with tensions, but interestingly relationships with municipalities and *ondlunkulu* are more focused on development, and do not necessarily share these tensions.

Although both women councillors and *ondlunkulu* hold some potential for taking forward women's issues, they have not drawn together in collective groupings to deal with these issues, and they largely pursue them in a reactive and isolated manner. It is difficult for councillors to move beyond party political divides – a problem that has often bedeviled initiatives at national level (Hassim, 2006), while *ondlunkulu* do not appear to be aware of their potential role in advancing women's rights.

Women in Civil Society Organizations

Civil society is weakly organised in all municipalities, and it is almost absent in Msinga where small-scale social groupings predominate. There is a plethora of CBOs in all municipalities, many of which are dominated by women, providing services to address women's needs on a local basis. Typically, they are isolated, lack capacity and resources, and have limited understanding of gender issues and IDP processes. NGOs are more capacitated and articulate, and they provide a range of welfare and social services to support women. There are several well-established NGOs in Hibiscus Coast, whereas NGOs are more numerous and diverse in eThekwini. While they network with one another to some extent, they have not cohered at a strategic level to engage with each other about gender-specific issues. Women's organisations have not come together to form a unified sector, or to formulate their agendas for engagement with other structures.

NGOs and municipalities are alienated from each other, distrusting their motives and political agendas and *modus operandi* and distancing themselves from building a constructive working relationship. Each of them claims that they are the true representatives of the people, and undermines the efforts of the other.

IDP Participatory Processes

Although women have not been invited to participate in IDPs as a distinct constituency, participatory processes linked to IDPs nevertheless have provided a new arena in which women's voices can be heard. Women's attendance at meetings and workshops is noticeable in all municipalities, and women are often in the majority in eThekwini and Hibiscus Coast. These trends are even evident in Msinga, although most women are still largely passive observers in meetings. Women are increasingly contributing to discussion and raising issues that affect them, although women still need to be encouraged to talk,

and their voices as not as strong as those of men. Usually the issues they raise relate to the domestic sphere, and do not in themselves challenge gender stereotypes. However, in a context of extremely conservative cultural norms, giving expression to their needs marks significant progress for women. Yet, despite these visible impacts on the way in which women conduct themselves publicly, they still do not perceive themselves as leaders, and are reluctant to nominate themselves or elect other women to positions of leadership. Further, in spite of their expressed concerns, women's needs are still largely unmet, and other issues claim priority in the IDP and its implementation processes.

Over time, even the most comprehensive participatory processes have become diluted. For several years, eThekwini implemented an extensive system of community participation, but changes in municipal management have undermined this basis of democratic governance. In all municipalities, these processes seem to be undertaken for legislative compliance or political mileage, rather than any meaningful interaction with a diverse range of stakeholders. Increasingly, these processes have been characterised by top-down presentations of technocratic information that allow little opportunity for discussion. Where inputs have been made, there is disappointment that they are not reflected in the final document, or that they influence implementation processes.

Civil society organisations are vociferous in their condemnation of the participatory methods employed in recent IDP processes and the extent to which they have been marginalised in these processes. They are also critical of the apparent irrelevance of consultation process in the face of excessive politicisation of development. Resource allocation is perceived to be politically determined and civil society organisations despair at councillors' dismissal of urgent community needs in favour of party politics.

Despite these limitations, other community-based processes are emerging and could offer ways in which closer interaction between the municipality and community representatives can be effected. Ward committees have yet to demonstrate their ability to transcend political opportunism and function as decentralised forms of governance. In eThekwini, community-based planning processes appear to offer opportunities for more inclusive forms of governance, and for women to become more centrally involved in development processes.

Gender in the IDP

In all of the municipalities, attention to gender in the IDP was limited and sporadic, and where it was present, it remained largely a side issue. In all cases, women are conceptualized as part of the 'vulnerable groups', deserving of special attention, although this is not carried through into the content of the IDPs. There are nevertheless significant differences between municipalities.

As might be expected, the eThekwini municipality went furthest: the 2002 IDP included a commitment to address the needs of vulnerable groups through the establishment of special desks, the development of guidelines for incorporating concerns into council plans, and partnerships with key stakeholders. In addition, a set of women's needs based

on consultations with community groups were identified. These included: gender equity, equal opportunity and personal safety, education on women's rights, skills training, protection against abuse, access to social support, targeted support for women's groups and working women, crèche facilities, counselling for abused women and people with HIV/AIDS, health services, child support funds, and access to job opportunities. These needs are consistent with those identified in discussion with women's organizations in our research. They are interesting in that they include strategic gender needs, aimed at changing the position of women. An analysis of the eThekwini quality of life survey revealed a similar range of concerns, but also included practical gender concerns such as basic services, housing, and poverty reduction. Gender is being taken up to some extent in recent rounds of IDP Reviews and IDPs (2005/6 and 2006-11), with non-sexism included in city values, an interest in engagement with women's organizations, attention to affirmative procurement and inclusion of women in enterprise support. As the previous section showed, there has been some progress with the establishment of a gender structure, but its effects remain to be seen. Service delivery is the most significant element in the IDP, but is treated in a gender-blind manner, and for the most part, the IDPs do not respond explicitly to the range of women's needs identified.

In Hibiscus Coast, a 2003 IDP Review included gender in the sustainability framework, and incorporated a set of guidelines derived from national guides (Cole and Parnell, 2000). A checklist for decision-making, a departmental scorecard, and gender key performance indicators were included. In setting priorities, however, gender was allocated a 'C' priority, and was neglected. The inclusion of gender reflected the efforts of the IDP manager at the time, but once he left, the focus disappeared. In the 2005 IDP Review, attention to gender disappeared from view, and the main focus was on service delivery. In Msinga, attention to gender in the IDP was negligible. Yet the role of the IDP itself is also questionable: there is a wide chasm between the IDP itself and what actually occurs on the ground. As a consequence of the limited resources and capacity of the municipality, most development work in the area (largely service delivery, and a few survivalist projects) is funded and often carried by other agencies.

There is room for debate over whether IDPs reflect the needs of women. Needs similar to those expressed in eThekwini were identified in interviews in the other municipalities as well. For the most part, women's strategic needs for gender equity, empowerment, personal safety and protection against abuse, equal opportunity, access to employment, social development and the like are not the focus of IDPs. It could be argued that municipalities are not in a position to address all of these needs, but the reality is that several issues are not being dealt with by any sphere of government, nor are these issues necessarily addressed as an element within municipal projects (eg. violence/safety). IDPs largely deal with service delivery and local economic development, particularly the former. It can be argued that basic services, such as water, sanitation, energy and roads are of importance to women since they respond to their practical needs. Yet the way in which they are undertaken is of some importance: if treated in a gender-blind manner they are unlikely to address the specific needs of women.

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There is more space for debate over the direction of economic development strategies in municipalities, but none of the municipalities provided an analysis of the position of men and women in the economy, nor did they consider the gendered impact of economic development strategies. Both eThekwini and Hibiscus Coast include projects aimed at the poor, and flagship projects focused particularly on improving the competitive advantage of the local economy, particularly with regard to tourism. The large expenditures on flagship projects contrasted with the largely unmet needs of women remain unchallenged within the municipality. Several of these projects are oriented to tourism, a sector which employs large numbers of women, but often in menial positions. Nevertheless, these are still key sectors for the local economy. Infrastructure development (and thus construction) is usually a significant part of these and other projects in support of the local economic development, but as the following section shows, women and small contractors are often excluded from these projects. Pro-poor local economic development includes poverty alleviation, informal sector support, and small business promotion, although many of the latter programmes assume businesses that are well beyond the reach of poor women. The following section provides commentary on the gendered experience of a selection of these projects.

Gender within Projects

Despite the lack of attention that has been paid to gender in the IDPs, municipal projects often involve and benefit women. The following discussion focuses on water and sanitation, road infrastructure and public works, local economic development, and flagship projects. The distinction between interventions that promote women's strategic interests or address their practical needs is a useful starting point for analysis. Projects that provide households with water, sanitation and energy, and assist women in attending to their domestic responsibilities (feeding the family, educating children) can be easily recognised as those that address their practical needs. Projects that challenge traditional gender stereotypes (women's involvement in non-traditional sectors), promote their economic empowerment, or provide a space for women to develop and assert their own voice and take decisions that impact upon their own lives are clearly those that work towards achieving their strategic interests. Often this distinction is understood in terms of the type of project, thus infrastructural projects attend to women's practical needs, whereas those programmes that focus on their organisational development or institutional position can be associated with their strategic interests. However, the distinction becomes less clearcut when applied to a closer analysis of projects, as the way in which specific projects are designed and implemented demand a more nuanced approach. Thus while comments are made per project type, it should be recognized that there are variations in within project types, even within municipalities, depending on the specific way in which such projects are implemented.

Most of the projects examined have been informed by national guidelines, and thus by the influence of the mainstreaming approach and of gender politics at this level. In part as a consequence of the influence of national guidelines, women's involvement in projects is increasingly regarded as normal. Interviews with project personnel revealed a high level of acceptance by men of women's involvement and their tolerance and respect of

women's growing voice. Project managers (usually men) are often directly or indirectly supportive of women's involvement in projects. They have consistently argued in favour of women's participation and leadership in projects, based on their experience of women's reliability and hard working contributions to project efforts, as well as their willingness to work for low levels of remuneration, if anything at all.

In some instances, municipalities have demonstrated a capacity to be innovative and experimental in their attempts to address some of the development challenges that address them. Their efforts to promote more cost-effective, environmentally sustainable, commercially viable or sometimes gender sensitive approaches to service provision indicates that some officials are not simply being coerced into compliance with national guidelines, but that they are responding creatively to problems within the national parameters.

As discussed below, women's presence in projects also reflects their own practical interests, usually linked to their traditional role. Their presence in these projects is for the most part widely accepted in communities for these reasons. In all municipalities, but perhaps to a lesser extent in Msinga, women are very evident in committees linked to projects, and are often in the majority. Except in cases where there is a dominant charismatic women leader, men are largely in positions of leadership – a point that has been noted in other studies in KwaZulu-Natal (eg. see Beall and Todes, 2004). Reasons for this are complex, reflecting dominant social relations, but it is also a strategy used by women who sometimes argue that men are in more of a position to take on the work associated with being chair (traveling, meeting government departments etc), and will be taken more seriously by government and other agencies.

Infrastructure and Service Projects

Infrastructure and service projects hold a great deal of significance for women. Not only do they directly assist women in fulfilling their domestic responsibilities and alleviating the difficulties often associated with them, but also the national guidelines provide a state-sanctioned space for women to engage in the public domain, and often for the first time. In this latter respect, these infrastructure projects create the possibility to challenge traditional social patterns and cultural attitudes. Importantly, these challenges are not usually contested by local elites or men because household infrastructure and services are regarded as 'women's work'. Nevertheless, through their involvement in community meetings, project steering committees, site selection, decision-making, training exercises, construction processes and maintenance operations, women have been able to enter territory from which they had often been excluded.

Water and sanitation are perhaps the most crucial services for women, particularly in rural areas. They offer direct benefits in terms of health, convenience, time, safety and privacy for both men and women. It is widely recognised that they make a great difference to women's lives, and these services are appreciated by recipients. In rural areas, the complaint most often is that water services are not reaching remote locations fast enough, and that services are too distant from homes. In some areas, the use of

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ventilated pit systems (versus water borne sewerage) can be seen as inferior, although it is recognised as an improvement on previous service conditions.

The Department of Water Affairs' (DWAF) is one of the most progressive departments with regard to gender. Their insistence on a 50:50 quota for women in water committees, coupled with women's own interest in this issue, appears to have borne fruit. There is a strong presence of women in water committees, even if men are in leadership positions, as is common in many projects. Women's voices are nevertheless heard, and women are involved in selecting the best locations for water taps and pipes. Committee members also benefit from training, and some go on to start their own income-generating projects. Both men and women are included as labourers on projects, providing a short-term source of income, although something of a division of labour occurs here, with women often in more menial positions.

Roads and public works projects are strongly influenced by national guidelines, which specifically target women. In most cases, women are included as labourers, but in eThekwini, there have been some initiatives (sometimes using national or provincial programmes) to target poor women as co-ordinators, contractors, and for contractor learnerships. However, women have been reluctant to participate, seeing it as 'low type of work', that 'does not pay well', and is not respected by the community. Notwithstanding these concerns, women who do participate feel that they have benefited significantly in terms of incomes, skills and experience, improved economic opportunities, and self-confidence. These women become role models in the community. These benefits however are dependent on careful project conceptualisation, design and management. It would appear that the greatest potential for addressing women's needs and rights is found in those projects in which women's empowerment is deliberately prioritised. Targeting, capacity building, mentoring and multi-dimensional support for women leads to important lasting benefits, which may include self-confidence and personal growth, as well as increased assertiveness and awareness of opportunities. While the national guidelines require that capacity-building and support are incorporated into municipal programmes, the extent to which these aspects are prioritised and the way in which they are undertaken by municipalities is of critical importance for their impacts on women.

Local Economic Development Projects

In all three municipalities, there were many projects focused on women's traditional activities: farming, sewing, informal trading and the like. These projects are not necessarily aimed at women, but they have high levels of women's participation in part due to their close association with women's survivalist activities. Generally these are subsistence activities, but in several cases (mainly in eThekwini and Hibiscus Coast), there are plans to expand into commercial operations. These intentions, however have been slow to materialise, and returns from these projects are limited. Many projects are struggling to survive, and offer negligible financial remuneration for participants. The limited tangible benefits from many of these projects has reduced interest (especially among men), and some of these remain highly dependent on the municipality to survive.

Although these projects provide a level of food security, and may offer a way of linking women together, and building new skills and hope, their sustainability is questionable, and few are likely to transform into viable enterprises.

The research included an assessment of flagship projects in eThekwini and Hibiscus Coast. None could be found in Msinga, and in the case of Hibiscus Coast, the flagship project chosen turned out to be similar in practice to many of the survivalist projects described above. The eThekwini flagship examined was the Riverhorse Valley project, a large industrial park developed in partnership with the private sector, and its linked project, Queen Nandi Drive. The project was primarily a large construction initiative. Projects of this sort tend to be based on highly sophisticated construction technologies making involvement almost impossible for small and emergent contractors – and women – and project managers unwilling to take these risks. Instead, attention is given to using large companies with Black Economic Empowerment status. Although some women are employed as labourers, there are limited opportunities for women. A few women have taken the opportunity to undertake informal trade in Riverhorse Valley, but the area is physically isolated in terms of public transport, making it difficult to access, and there is a lack of basic infrastructure for vendors (spaces/shelters, toilets). Thus little attention has been given to gender equality in this project.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that inclusion of women and gender within local government has been partial and uneven, and that there are significant differences between municipalities. As might be expected, local politics is most inclusive in the eThekwini municipality, and least in Msinga, where more traditional political practices prevail. There are also significant differences in capacities and resources, and it is evident that eThekwini municipality has been able to go furthest in introducing gender structures and innovative projects which benefit women in more substantial ways.

The IDP process is imposed on pre-existing social and gender relations, which shape the way in which women's voice is heard and translated into action. In all three municipalities, women were very present in the IDP participatory processes, but local politics shapes the extent to which they have real voice in these processes. A key gap in women's voice is the lack of a strong women's movement with coherent demands and an ability to put pressure on council in their interests. Women's organizations are limited and do not unite at a strategic level, and for the most part are too small to be captured in the standard IDP process. This deficit affects both the IDP process and the support for initiatives to engender local government policy and practices. Women councillors do not necessarily provide this support, even when they are elected to positions of power. Their access to power in this way however is highly contested. In the 2006 local elections, women's representation as councillors was increased significantly – largely the consequence of quotas imposed by the leading political party. It remains to be seen whether the greater concentration of women councillors will result in more gender-aware policies and implementation, , or whether women councillors will continue to be informed by gender-blind party political issues.

Although women have had voice in the participatory processes linked to the IDPs, the IDPs themselves are largely silent on gender. In addition, only some of the issues raised by women and women's organizations were addressed, although it has to be acknowledged that not all of the issues raised were within the scope of local government, even if some could have been addressed in the way programmes were carried out. This disjuncture is in part due to delinking (in practice) of participation to the actual production of IDP documents, a more general problem noted in IDPs (Harrison, 2002). It is also the outcome of the difficulty of 'engendering' highly aggregated documents like IDPs, in the absence of a substantive analysis of the position of men and women in relation to the municipality's main activities. The voices of other 'vulnerable groups' also disappear in this context. Sectoral policies within municipalities and/or strategic decisions about how 'needs' are to be met are not interrogated from a gender perspective in the IDP process. Nor are these decisions about these aspects necessarily open to influence by women through other channels. It remains to be seen how gender structures in some municipalities (like eThekwini) will be able to impact on these issues, once they are more established. At the time of study, however, they remained in a relatively marginal position.

Despite these limitations, women appear to be benefiting at a project level in several areas of infrastructure development and local economy. For the most part, they are involved in committees, as workers, and as beneficiaries. This apparent disjuncture can be explained in part by the presence of national guidelines which insist on the inclusion of women. Thus the use of technocratic approaches, including targeting, does appear to have made a difference. The fact that it has been possible to give effect to these approaches, however, has depended on the space given to gender issues at national level – itself the result of women's political organization at one stage (Hassim, 2006). Interestingly, the rising presence of discourses of gender equity has meant that project managers are keen to involve women. In some cases, as in Cato Manor (Beall and Todes, 2004), women are seen as the stable base by project managers, and both project managers and communities frequently see women's involvement in projects as an extension of their traditional/domestic roles. Their position in these projects tends not to be contested. In addition, women's own interests in these kinds of developments has meant that they have become involved in local projects. Their more marginal economic position and responsibility for the household has also meant that they have been prepared to work for lower returns than men might tolerate – a pattern noted also in other parts of the world.

Although there is evidence of progress, the situation should not be overstated as women continue to remain in marginal positions in development projects. Women and small contractors are hardly present in large flagship projects, and most projects associated with women's traditional roles or designed to facilitate their economic empowerment have displayed disappointing results. To a large extent the farming activities and crèches have not transformed the lives and opportunities of women, and many are not even sustainable. Nevertheless, they do contribute in some way to reducing the vulnerability of poor households and improving quality of life at a basic level. Thus while these projects

address women's practical interests to an extent, they do not necessarily serve to transform their position.

The research therefore shows that women are being 'included' in local politics, IDP processes, and in local projects to a greater extent than before, but that these processes do not necessarily change pre-existing gender relations, nor result in programmes that address the many of the deeper gender issues that affect women at local level. There are disjunctures between voice, policy and implementation, in part due to the relative isolation of IDP participatory processes, but also as a consequence of the different influences affecting policy and practice. Although technocratic approaches have helped to move towards greater inclusion of women, the nature of that inclusion is limited by broader social relations and local politics.

Acknowledgements

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Cilna De Kock/Hsrc   To Hanlie Rossinger/Hsrc@HSRC
03/08/2007 12:38 PM   cc

             bcc

        Subject Fw: publications

---- Forwarded by Cilna De Kock/Hsrc on 03/08/2007 12:37 PM ----

Alison Todes/Hsrc
03/08/2007 12:03 PM   To Jennifer van Rensburg/Hsrc@Hsrc

          cc Cilna De Kock/Hsrc@HSRC

        Subject Fw: publications

Dear Jen and Cilna

Enclosed please find publications from Claire that need to go on the UCCSM minutes, and into the URED output material. Cilna, I have asked Claire to send copies to you as well.

I also include the paper which I presented at the Inclusive Cities conference, which needs to go on both lists

Regards

Alison

Inclusive city paper feb 9.doc

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---- Forwarded by Alison Todes/Hsrc on 2007/03/08 11:59 AM ----

Claire Benit/Hsrc
2007/03/08 11:55 AM   To Alison Todes/Hsrc

          cc

        Subject publications

Dear alison,

me again... I do not know if it is relevant to the HSRC, but a book where I contributed in several chapter was just published. Here are the references:

Claire Bénit-Gbaffou (main author) with Sophie Didier, Elisabeth Dorier-Appril and Philippe

Gervais-Lambony, « Fragmentations », in Dorier-Apprill E., Gervais-Lambony P. (coord.), Vies citadines, Paris : Belin, 2007, pp. 15-38.

Virginie Baby-Collin (main author), Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, Florence Bouillon, Boris Grésillon and Christian Rinaudot, « Détourner », in Dorier-Apprill E., Gervais-Lambony P. (coord.), Vies citadines, Paris : Belin, 2007, pp. 149-170.

Florence Bouillon (main author), Virginie Baby-Collin, Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, Domnique Vidal, « Imprévu, mixité, rencontre », in Dorier-Apprill E., Gervais-Lambony P. (coord.), Vies citadines, Paris : Belin, 2007, pp. 129-148.

Dominique Vidal (main author), Claire Bénit-Gbaffou and Philippe Gervais-Lambony, « Mobiliser », in Dorier-Apprill E., Gervais-Lambony P. (coord.), Vies citadines, Paris : Belin, 2007, pp. 39-58.

Please let me know if I should ask for the pdf versions (I am not sure they are available but I can try).

Warm regards,

Claire