



MPUMALANGA: NKOMANZI MUNICIPALITY

1. Executive Summary

Despite the high levels of social inequality and limited revenue stream the municipality continuously has to grapple with, the quality of its social services programmes were cited as a notable achievement by most of its senior officials. This was clearly demonstrable through the sterling work of the Department of Social Services where examples were made of its management of the parks, cemeteries and refuse removal infrastructure as some of its key achievements. In addition, it was noted that a near universal access of its inhabitants to water and electricity across its villages has been achieved despite the fact that growth of unmonitored informal settlements compromised their development efforts. HIV/AIDS infection rates were very high in the municipality. The municipality established a unit that trains on HIV/AIDS. In 2006, there was a 62% infection rate. In 2010 the municipality infection rate dropped to 35%. In an attempt to augment organisational administration effectiveness, efficiency and organizational performance, the Municipal Manager and all the Managers reporting directly to him have entered into performance agreements as prescribed by Section 57 of the Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000.

In recognition of its organizational excellence, SALGA has awarded the municipality in the following areas of excellence: electricity, MIG spending, sports development, twinning agreements with other municipalities and *Batho-Pele* public service improvements initiatives in their engagement with the communities. The high levels of social inequality in the municipality have impacted negatively in the capacity of the municipality to raise relevant revenue and meet its development obligations. Overall, rural underdevelopment as manifested in the fact that only the towns (formalized areas) are able to generate the required rates and taxes whilst the rural areas are largely indigent imply that a minority formal economy is largely responsible for the revenue required to meet the costs of service delivery in the municipality.

An over-arching theme noted in the discussions in this municipality centre on the developmental challenge the municipality is facing due to high levels of poverty of its inhabitants, the underdevelopment of its rural economy, and the fact its cross border location between Mozambique and Swaziland exacerbate the problem of migration and increasing service delivery demands. Currently, the municipality is providing free basic services to the indigent, which

amounts to 80% of the population (Interview discussions with Human Resource Division). Capacity of the infrastructure cannot cope with the situation the municipality is in. Population growth is very high in the villages. For example the municipality is a cross border municipality bordering Mozambique and Swaziland and this has implications in terms of service delivery. Traditional leaders in the rural areas let immigrants to settle on land which is not formalized and has not services. Other areas of reforms include developing a Local Economic Development (LED) plan which the municipality is yet to develop and ensure speedy implementation given the levels of under development in the municipality.

The Municipal area is so vast but the current revenue base is so small and limited to the few and small urban areas. For the Municipality to be financially independent there is a need to develop effective income generating strategies and debt collection mechanism. To be effect in its financial management, the Municipality has developed supply chain management policy and asset management policy. Municipality is totally dependent on equitable grants, which in turn makes running the municipality difficult. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the funds are for meeting service delivery costs the rest is for investment, where we get no returns from it.

One key area of envisaged reforms required in enhancing municipality performance is in the area of financial management where disclaimers have been issued by the auditor general in the past. The municipality is intent in achieving Operation Clean Audit by 2014. Thus far, the finance department has established a Supply Chain Unit which was not in existence before. The municipality is working hard to change the Disclaimers outcome it has received in the previous past. The system of monthly reports was irregular and not active but this has now been changed.

2. Municipality's Perception of its Performance - Political Perspectives and Administrative Perspectives

Nature of Relationships and Role of Private Sector

From the discussions held, it was evident that the municipal manager has a clear sense of what he wants the municipality to achieve. The high levels of social inequality in the municipality have impacted negatively in the capacity of the municipality to raise relevant revenue and meet its development obligations. Overall, rural underdevelopment as manifested in the fact that only the towns (formalized areas) are able to generate the required rates and taxes whilst the rural areas are largely indigent imply that a minority formal economy is largely responsible for the revenue required to meet the costs of service delivery. His overall vision is to achieve high levels of sustainable service delivery in the community and one achieves this if in his view one does:

.....away with the legacy of non-payments for services. I fear that rate payers will revolt and stop paying, if they feel they are paying for others because very few people are paying for services currently. In this municipality, 70% of our community members depend on state grants. The Council agreed to formalize four villages through land

tenure upgrade in order to have them pay for services. In revenue allocation, majority of the people do not pay for services. We deliver services of waste collection and water which is not being paid for. There are shortages of electricity due to an increase in population and migration of people into the municipality. The traditional leaders allocate stands to the community without consulting with the municipality. Land Use Management principles are not applicable in these instances due to the disregard of traditional authorities in complying with the municipality's development process (Interview discussions held with the acting municipal manager).

The discussions held with the Mayor with regard to his experience in interacting with a range of stakeholders within the municipality and the business sector revealed a rather positive, dynamic and progressive interaction that potentially augments the ability of the municipality to meet its service delivery development mandate:

The Mayor needs to be an instructional leader, and be there when people need you. You need to have an understanding of the budget as well, you must be as visible as possible everywhere. The Mayoral position is a political one and decisions taken are not always those you are comfortable with. You can be recalled anytime, which leads to an increasingly job insecurities. Officials can hide information from you which can be incapacitating. During my first year, I did not have the full control of the budget, which has subsequently changed, I am now fully involved and I attend the community meetings so that I can feel the pulse. We lack funds to inform about the accomplishments through the media as a way of highlighting those achievements (Interview discussions with the Mayor).

The Mayor's developmental vision and how this interface with the various stakeholder relations his office has is evident in his views below:

My primary focus is Service Delivery in terms of Water, Electricity, Roads and Infrastructure. I want to ensure that we meet the basic needs of the community. I also work on Governance and Municipality, to ensure a good relationship with the Troika, to ensure that there is goodwill. My basic tool is the IDP, which is my main responsibility to ensure that the community is consulted. In May- June, the IDP and Budget were approved, so I have to ensure that all these process are in place, which is why I am leading them, when dealing with Public Participation, the Speaker is also on Board. We are trying our best, but the IGR Programs are not doing well; we need to interact with them. We do not have the IGR offices yet. I am working with CoGTA from time to time. The relationship between Municipality and the Province is not at a level where one can say everything is fine. There is a need to establish a forum where we can meet with MECs and know where their programs are, e.g. IDP forums decision makers are not attending the forums. The Department of Health have their own programmes (HDPs), and there is no link between what they are doing and our own IDPs. When there are

IDP meetings, junior personnel are delegated to attend from sector departments. The DFIs such as the DBSA have seconded an Engineer, who had since left, but they have sent another one (Interview discussions with the Mayor).

In addition, to the intense and positive levels of relationships the mayor has had with the administration and other critical role players, the start of community demonstrations protesting due to the lack of service delivery was in his view a “wake up call” with regard to augmenting an effective and participatory governance system:

I went an extra mile to ensure that the councilors attend the meetings and there is effective communication with the community. I try and have meetings with all structures in the community, I try to be as visible as possible in terms of outreach activities and support for Councilors in terms of operationalising their respective roles. If a councilor does not have a program it becomes difficult to hold a meeting if there is nothing to be shown. I keep the community informed. I also keep an attendance register. I advertise on the local newspaper to inform the community about the meetings. I have both formal and informal meetings, as a way of keeping an Oversight role. We meet on a weekly basis to discuss critical issues and communicate with the Municipal Manager, to see how things are. The Municipal Manager has a hectic schedule, and there are things that happen which they can't account for in administrations terms. My Mayoral Committee is my right hand man who assists me with daily oversight process items and report to the Council. This is my fifth year as Mayor, I have in this regard established a good relationship with the Business Chamber, but currently there are problems with the Rate Payers Association. We have established a forum where we discuss. There are dissatisfactions with the new Ratepayers and the Evaluations that need to be done. The White Business Community wants regular meetings as opposed to other Stakeholders. They contest the evaluations made and resists the Ratepayers as well (Interview discussions with the Mayor).

In the quest of improving organisational administration effectiveness, efficiency and organizational performance, the Municipal Manager and all the Managers reporting directly to him have entered into performance agreements as prescribed by Section 57 of the Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000. The performance agreements entered into are based on the Municipal Performance Regulations for Section 57 Employees of the Ministry for Provincial and Local Government (Notice 715 of 2006). The Municipality has developed its Performance Framework Plan and has not yet developed its Performance Management System. The Municipality needs support in the development of a Performance Management System that will ensure that the performance contracts of the Section 57 employees are aligned to the Municipal Integrated Development Plan. In addition, the following were highlighted as some of the notable achievements of the municipality:

1. There has been a notable improvement in project implementation. For instance, through the sterling work of the Department of Social Services, the parks and the cemeteries are functioning well, and the refuse infrastructure is now complete. The municipality now has three compacters for the municipality. Almost all villagers have water in place and electricity has been connected to most of the villages.
2. HIV/AIDS infection rates were very high in the municipality. The municipality established a unit that trains on HIV/AIDS. In 2006, there was a 62% infection rate. In 2010 the municipality infection rate dropped to 35%. The municipality is also involved in the anti-litter campaign.
3. The municipality negotiated with a municipality in the Netherlands, which has brought people to assist with Water Management, to train engineers on how to manage water purification and quality. It is hoped cost savings can be achieved in this regard. SALGA has awarded the municipality in the following areas of excellence: electricity, MIG spending, sports development, twinning agreements with other municipalities and *Batho-Pele* public service improvements initiatives in their engagement with the communities (Interview discussions with the Mayor).
4. Since 2007 Water Schemes and Water Service Development Plan lacked a master plan for water and sanitation. This has now been done and projected budgets estimated. The municipality has also improved in the program management side which has improved capital investment. In addition, the municipality has established monthly management meetings in the department (Interview discussions with Human Resource Division).

The discussions held with the acting municipal manager espoused good relations between the mayor's office as the political embodiment of the municipality and the administrative layer of the municipality:

I report to the Mayor directly. I frequently hold programme meetings with the Mayor, where we check on progress. I have a very good relationship with the Mayor. I do not have a problem with anyone particularly the Mayoral committee which is very critical as he must ensure that sustainable and quality services are delivered to the people. I do not have a particular problem with anyone in the Mayoral committee (Interview discussions held with the acting municipal manager).

Similar discussions revealed that despite capacity constraints within the various divisions, the relationship the acting manager has with divisional heads is one of a collegial nature irrespective of the fact that he decries the low levels of work ethics some officials exude in their daily work chores:

Some Departments report directly to me, e.g. water, electricity, sanitation, roads and storm water. There are problems of capacity with appointed people, especially in terms of water and sewerage. They are the biggest problem because demand is more than the bulk supply. Secondly despite the skills limitations, officials want more money and they don't want to work. There is also a need for training and people need to understand why a municipality exists and also understand the role of the Local Government in the community. I do not respond directly to the community only through the Speaker, Mayor and the Ward councilors as their main role is administration, but what the Mayor wants is very important. The Section managers report directly to me to ensure that they do their jobs as I am their overall supervisor. As an accounting officer I must know what they are doing. These apply to other employees as well, but they report to their respective managers (Interview discussions held with the acting municipal manager).

It was inferred from the discussions that the low work ethic expressed by some officials of the municipality has to do with the appointment process:

Because I am in the acting position I do not select my team of managers, but indeed one should appoint a team with skills. Local government has differentiated people, it is very politicized. They are appointed from a political perspective. Sometime even cleaners can be appointed because they are part of the ANC branch (Interview discussions held with the acting municipal manager).

Technical Perspectives: Electricity; water; sanitation; refuse removal; transport; roads

Service delivery in the municipality is fundamentally affected due to the financial problems facing the municipality and this is aggravated by the fact that only 10% of the area is formalized. The majority of the local community members are indigent and survive on state grants. The equitable share formulae used by treasury in the disbursement of funds is grossly inaccurate. The formula uses stats SA figures of 2001 and yet population growth in the municipality has risen as a result of cross border migration. The Traditional leaders do not have control over people who come in and they allocate them with stands unilaterally. For instance, the water plan is for 600 000 people and Stats SA has 300-000 people as the number of residents in the municipality. MIG allocations are also inadequate to meet the increasing demand for bulk infrastructure programmes:

With regard to Infrastructure the area is growing and the municipality is unable to provide the infrastructure to handle this growth leading to sewage pipes spillages and power failures. The town is not affected as bad as the rural areas as people there are paying for the services. We have a situation where people no longer want the standard RDP houses; they don't want the Pit Latrine and now want the flush toilets. The MIG

grant and the equitable share needs to be reviewed (Interview discussions with the Mayor).

Despite these limitations, the municipality has managed to tar about seven and half kilometers of roads in the rural areas and they have scheduled plans to tar another six kilometers in phases over the next two years. In the interim, the municipality has put to a halt inception of huge infrastructure projects and instead is concentrating on smaller projects in the interest of wider coverage. For Electricity the municipality is relying on the DME grant and they have spent R50m for electricity connection in the rural villages. Traditional Leaders allocate people with stands without consulting the municipality and you have to follow the growth areas as they happen. All villages have electricity, but there are still portions that are outstanding, and this increases the backlogs. We have R55m to be divided by 18 villages, which leaves you with R3m per village. In towns, there are no problems with service provisions unlike in the rural areas. The municipality requires assistance with the Electricity grant since the MIG is inadequate and calls for its review are warranted. Current estimates from the municipality indicate that they need at least R90m for the 80 villages they are currently serving. The indigent Register has now been completed in 2010. We are improving on our spending since the establishment of Project Management Unit (PMU) in 2007 (Interview discussions with the Mayor).

As noted earlier, high levels of poverty have compromised on the ability of the municipality to raise adequate revenue needed for service delivery. The indigent Register has just been completed (2010). At the moment, the municipality is providing free basic services to the indigent, which amounts to 80% of the population (Interview discussions with Human Resource Division). Capacity of the infrastructure cannot cope with the situation the municipality is in. Population growth is very high in the villages. For example the municipality is a cross border municipality bordering Mozambique and Swaziland and this has implications in terms of service delivery. Traditional leaders in the rural areas let immigrants to settle on land which is not formalized and has not services. We have electricity and water as the biggest backlogs, there is no sustainability and plan for infrastructure. The human resource environment of the municipality is very bad. We have low skilled personnel in our staffing profile.

The municipality is currently trying to recruit young people who have matric in an attempt to upgrade personnel. Young people will upgrade and keep records as such. We are looking at a three month training program. Senior management is not doing well with regard to recruitment. With regard to water you need people who have skills and qualifications and are competent. For example water quality does not have personnel who are qualified, who know what water quality is all about. We also need specialists for all our sections (Interview discussions with Human Resource Division).

As noted earlier, the municipality is predominately rural and faces a number of challenges with regard to land ownership as most land is either under the authority of traditional leaders or belongs to farm owners. Further challenges to the land issue are the finalisation of Land claims

that emerge from the land restitution process that hinders developments across the entire municipal area. Land Control is only enforced in the formerly white urban areas. There is no enforcement of land use controls in the predominantly rural and tribal areas. Consequently the development of informal settlements and uncontrolled rural sprawl has become a major challenge to the Municipality. The municipality should implement a proper land use management for the whole Municipal area to resolve informal settlement mushrooming in all the urban and rural areas. Traditional Leaders need to be effectively consulted and engaged in addressing the land use management issue.¹ Service delivery backlogs are predominantly visible within the rural areas which carry a disproportionate burden of rural development:

The key challenge the municipality is facing is water, sanitation and sewer. The municipality has backlogs, which could have long been dealt with if it was not for the mushrooming of unregulated residence that are not known to the municipality. This problem is exacerbated by the Swaziland and Mozambique cross border migration. There are problems with the bulk water supply and the reticulation of water due to the infrastructure on the ground, which is not sufficient and in good shape. Officials at the ground need proper planning and training to ensure there are no reticulation problems. We also have Sanitation problem in the rural areas and water logging. VIP toilets are not preferable, we need to expand the sewer but finances are an issue. With regard to electricity we still need to catch up with the targets especially this year (Interview discussions held with the acting municipal manager).

Due to the predominantly rural character of the area coupled with an ever increasing population and settlement growth; the supply of water in the municipality area has been a major challenge. Due to its rural character the provision of basic sanitation has been one of the major challenges faced by the Nkomazi Local Municipality. The main challenge facing the district and its communities is the marginalization of the previously disadvantaged communities to enter into the main flow of the economy and to diversify the economy among the residence of the district.²

Financial Resources and Management

The Municipal area is so vast but the current revenue base is so small and limited to the few and small urban areas. For the Municipality to be financially independent there is a need to develop effective income generating strategies and debt collection mechanism. To be effect in its financial management, the Municipality has developed supply chain management policy and asset management policy. Municipality is totally dependent on equitable grants, which in turn makes running the municipality difficult. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the funds are for meeting service

¹ Nkomazi Local Municipality IDP 2008/2009 – 2011/12 pp. 32

² Nkomazi Local Municipality IDP 2008/2009 – 2011/12 pp. 33

delivery costs the rest is for investment, where we get no returns from it. The equitable share formula becomes unfair on some municipalities like Nkomanzi due to its high levels of social inequality and limited revenue base (Interview discussions with the Chief Financial Officer).

The implementation of the property rates has also been riddled with problems pertaining to under – and over-valuation of properties, currently the subject of disputation from property owners. Most villages are not registered with the Deeds Office, and therefore cannot be rated, which results in a loss of income for the municipality. Traditional leaders also feel they are entitled to get something, the farmers are also challenging the Act, and they too feel entitled to rebates as the Act provides for that (Interview discussions with the Chief Financial Officer). Another challenge the municipality is facing from the finance division are the expected accounting reforms the municipality must comply with from the treasury and the onerous and repetitive reporting formats required from the provincial and national sector departments such as treasury:

I joined the municipality when they were reporting on the GAMAP, we are currently reporting on GRAP, which is a new challenge for the municipality officials due to capacity constraints.... Implementation should have been gradual and would have been far more successful. Standards and systems vary between Treasury, the Auditor General and the municipality is not familiar with the GRAP systems, for example Transactions not being interpreted the same way across GRAP and the Cash-Based System. There is a need for better and more extensive training for GRAP system and more than that money is needed.....a some of the requirements noted in the GRAP system entail the services of actuaries which at the moment we cannot afford for pension benefits calculations (Interview Discussions with the Chief Financial Officer).

Despite these limitations, the municipality is intent in achieving Operation Clean Audit by 2014. Thus far, the finance department has established a Supply Chain Unit which was not in existence before. The municipality is working hard to change the Disclaimers outcome it has received in the previous past. The system of monthly reports was irregular and not active but this has now been changed (Interview Discussions with the Chief Financial Officer).

Planning: Integrated Development Plans (IDPs);

An Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is defined, in the Municipal Systems Act, as the principal strategic planning instrument through which all municipal planning, development and decisions are guided and informed. The purpose of an IDP is:

- To enable a municipality to align its financial and institutional resources behind agreed policy objectives and programmes.
- It is a vital tool to ensure the integration of local government activities with other spheres

- It serves as a basis for engagement between local government and the citizenry at the local level
- It enables a municipality to weigh up its obligations and systematically prioritise programmes and resource allocations.³

With regard to IDP, as a programme, there is a wide acknowledgement that the process level in terms of planning has worked well in the municipality. The principal problem is community ownership and participation in the programme:

IDP process is going well but as a new process many people are not aware of it. There is a need to heighten the awareness around it even the “white community” who do not understand the IDP process. There is a need for the community to make inputs. There is a legacy of non-attendance which is an ongoing problem. There is lack of understanding of the process itself and yet these are the people who cause community protests saying they do not participate in the IDP meetings. There is also a challenge with regard to participation where sometimes the community does not understand the Local government process itself most of the problems people complain about does not have substance. Unfunded mandates further complicate these difficulties. For instance, housing is seen as a Local Government competency by the community members but sector departments do not integrate it into their planning and bring projects to the community with the expectations of the municipality’s co-operation and this exacerbates the legacy problem of non-alignment and integration of projects at the local municipality level (Interview discussions held with the acting municipal manager).

Needs prioritization and realistic estimates of what can be practically achieved in the municipality is needed in order to build trust and confidence with local communities and manage their service delivery expectations:

If you have a huge IDP you have a five year plan as a community, we know what the needs are, but you need three of the key needs to be met given the current financial estimates. The administration must be given a platform for their input in the IDP consultation meetings in order for them to make informed decisions and communicate these to the community. In addition, the human resource must be very critical for staff and capacity retention purposes because people come as Consultants to the very Municipality they worked at before and this drains our meager resources. One should be able to tell the communities what you can realistically do (Interview discussions with Human Resource Division).

³ Dlamini, V. 2007. Local government implementation of policies for integrated water services provision – the practice in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

In addition, the IDP process is encumbered by a lack of cooperation, which is a key feature of the process. The process is slow to filter into other departments, and they have a crucial role to play. There are no prompt budget timelines for sector plans. There is lack of dedicated personnel to ensure the success of the IDP process (Interview discussions with Planning and Development Divisional Head).

Local Economic Development (LED's)

The Nkomazi Local Municipality is located in the eastern part of the Ehlanzeni District Municipality of the Mpumalanga Province. The municipality is strategically placed between Swaziland (North of Swaziland) and Mozambique (east of Mozambique). It is linked with Swaziland by two provincial roads and with Mozambique by a railway line and the main national road (N4), which forms the Maputo Corridor⁴. The Nkomazi Municipality is bounded by the Mozambique to the east, Swaziland to the south, Kruger National Park to the north, Umjindi Local Municipality to the south west and Mbombela Local Municipality from the northwest to west. In addition, the Nkomazi Local Municipality is made out of several villages that are under the control of traditional Authorities. There are 8 Tribal Authorities and about 43 villages in the municipality.⁵ Nkomazi Local Municipality is characterised by farms, Manufacturing and Tourism, as the main source of employment and economic activity. The discussions held in the municipality provided an "insider's perspective" of the goodwill and concerted attempts the municipal officials have invested in a context of limited financial and organizational capacity to meet the development mandate of the municipality to its local citizens.

The Municipality has not yet developed its Local Economic Development Plan. A provision has been made in the 2008/2009 budget to compile a Local Economic Development Plan and a request has been made to Ehlanzeni District Municipality to assist in this regard.⁶ Overall, the LED in this municipal though it portends great economic potential given the comparative economic advantages the area is endowed with (e.g. eco-tourism), achievements in this regard have not been evident:

With regard to financial resources and management, we have a complete staff yet we are outsourcing a lot, we should train people in order to minimize outsourcing, now we have a Project Management Unit (PMU) which is a saving reduced strategy. With regard to LED we are struggling just like everybody is, suggestions made are not followed through by the relevant Manager. Management must create a post for LED.

⁴ Nkomazi Local Municipality IDP 2008/2009 – 2011/12 pp. 2

⁵ Nkomazi Local Municipality IDP 2008/09 – 2011/12

⁶ Nkomazi Local Municipality IDP 2008/2009 – 2011/12

In sum, not much has been achieved within the LED front. Thus far, the municipality has focused on the growth niche sectors such as agriculture and mining and they have held stakeholder's meeting with business representative of these sectors. Funding is a constraint in actualizing some of the ideas they have with regard to LED. Some of the projects they have implemented under the aegis of the LED have collapsed due to poor financial management.

Human Resources

The municipality is characterized by varied levels of skills within its staffing profile. Though the discussions held aptly revealed levels of unevenness in appropriate skills within the senior management level, notable levels of relevant skills in a division such as finance was evident with the head of the finance division. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) was appointed in 2007 on a five year fixed term contract. The CFO can reapply but there are no guarantees that he will be appointed again. The CFO has ten years experience having worked in the Provincial Government in the financial department in various capacities. At the administrative level, the acting municipal manager was previously a school principal for ten years. The previous municipal manager was suspended, and he has thus far acted as the municipal manager for three and half years. On the political front, it was noted that the Speaker started as the Regional Administrator in the ANC office from 1995. Nkomazi was a region before the alignment, and I was a part time Councilor in this Municipality. In 2006 she was appointed Speaker of the Council. The mayor was a School Principal for 14 years, but a teacher for 22 years. I joined the municipality in 2006, as a councilor first and then appointed as a Mayor.

The municipality requires capacitating its employees in the senior and junior positions with appropriate skills and knowledge by means of relevant training and skills development programmes to be able to deliver on its developmental mandate. Management development programmes for managers will equally be encouraged so that the municipality continuously renders professional services.⁷ If the municipality is to achieve on its development mandate on service delivery a serious rethink on its recruitment procedure must be considered:

Internally we must change the way recruitment is being done, there are challenges with it due to political manipulation. The selection committee must be composed of people from human resource and the relevant sector division. Currently, the Municipal Manager makes decisions on this matter. Within the financial division, we are currently sitting with people who have no financial background, how can you make clean audits under these circumstances. Even if they were provided with training, that would not solve the situation. In finance department, we need to be independent, especially with supply chain; we always get told what to do hence our independence must be and need to be respected as we are honoring the policies as promulgated. If these are in place given

⁷ Nkomazi Local Municipality IDP 2008/2009 – 2011/12 pp.

the critical nature of scarce skills, success will follow (Interview Discussions with the Chief Financial Officer).

3.

Conclusion

Overall, Nkomanzi municipality typifies the problems bedeviling rural areas in South Africa with regard to infrastructure, service provision, and the levels of human skill base. The inability of the rural economy to sustain itself through viable economic activities has clearly spawned a financially unsustainable local economic regime where a minority of the population in many respects contributes towards the service provision of the majority indigent population residing in the rural areas. This problem is further compounded by the fact that the municipality is a cross-border municipality, and the prospects of economic opportunities attracts migrants from Mozambique and Swaziland who are able to access land through the assistance of the traditional authorities within their respective jurisdictions. The increase in migrant population coupled with a natural growth in population and declining economic activities and opportunities creates an insurmountable pressure on the municipality to meet its service delivery obligations due to its narrow revenue stream. This coupled with the problem of uneven capacity of municipal officials to deal decisively with the problem of service delivery presents a difficult environment in which the municipality must constantly mediate in meeting its development obligations.

4. Role of SALGA

SALGA's role in the municipality was cited as very good, their presence and programmes were visible within the municipality:

The relationship is very good and happy with the assistance I am receiving. SALGA is coordinating almost everything and the training provided has been very relevant. Co-ordination role has been vital. However, I do need support with the human resource section (Interview discussions held with the acting municipal manager).

SALGA has done a lot, they have made personnel available, they have provided training to the councilors, and they gave them great courses from various Universities. They are doing a fantastic job, but sometimes the municipality fails to consult SALGA and do things on their own. However, the Pension Fund Management from their part is not good. The cell phone allowance given to the Mayor is equal to other Councilors (Interview discussions with the Mayor).

SALGA is supportive and we expect support across all areas of municipality operational areas. With regard to skills and resources of finances, they need to support us. There is a need to venture into this area their support needs to be more comprehensive (Interview discussions with the Chief Financial Officer). SALGA should invest in Human Resources and training

programs because the municipality lack strategies in this division (Interview discussions with Human Resource Division).

