

The Integrated Development Plan as a Strategy to Empower Informal Traders: The Case of Thohoyandou

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Abstract: This analyses the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) as a strategy to empower informal traders using Thohoyandou as a case study. The aim is to integrate and explore the importance of, and the role that could be played by the IDP to empower informal traders. The main objectives of this paper are; first, find out IDP initiatives that support informal trading in Thohoyandou. Secondly, to find out socio-economic challenges faced or facing informal traders in Thohoyandou. In this paper, the use of qualitative research method was employed. The paper concludes that IDP strategy in the local municipality of Thulamela in Thohoyandou has not done much for informal traders.

Keywords: Empowerment, Governance, Informal Trading, Integrated Development Plan, Local Economic Development

1. Introduction

The advent of the democratic period in South Africa has brought tremendous changes and challenges within the sphere of local government. The traditional role of the local government in South Africa formerly that entailed conspicuously inequitable rendering of basic services to the community at large has been completely redefined into a developmental role. This is in line with the *White Paper on Local Government* of 1998, which advocates for a developmental local government. Some of the challenges and bottlenecks within the municipalities stem from, shortage of skills required to propel growth and development, lack of administrative capacity and ineffective implementation of development policy frameworks. At the midst of these, informal markets and traders are faced or facing with or the most unbearable challenges in transforming their business into a more progressive businesses. However, Municipalities in South Africa are guided by, *amongst other policies and legislative frameworks*, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) to execute and direct its administration and rendering of services. Thulamela Municipality is a Category B municipality established in terms of Local Government Structures Act number 117 of 1998 and is one of the four local municipalities comprising Vhembe District Municipality.

Vermaak (2014) states that informal markets are important indicators of the political and economic health of a society. In addition to that, Nenzhelele

(2014) states that the informal sector is one of the popular business ventures in the Thohoyandou Central Business Areas. Most products are sold in streets and sidewalks (pathways). The informal traders are mostly based at the Mvusuludzo taxi rank and they occupy 1-2 square metres of space to exhibit their products. Motala (2002) defines informal trader(s) as any person who operates any commercial activity in non-permanent structures. These may range from semi-permanent business on street sides to mobile services in parks, stations and other public and private areas. Examples include shoe repairers, small roadside food sellers and those selling sweets on carts. In addition, informal/street traders are those who belong to the informal economy and who trade in the streets. Moyo & Madlopha (2016) state that IDP is based on the theory of decentralized governance. This paper intends to identify two objectives which are; firstly, to find out relevant IDP initiatives supporting informal trading in Thohoyandou. Secondly, to determine the socio-economic challenges of informal trading in Thohoyandou

Universally, it is accepted and acknowledged that the informal sector is an essential factor in promoting and achieving economic growth and development, and a major contributor to job creation, innovation and social stability (Majadibodu, 2016). However, in South Africa Local government (local municipalities) are bound by the constitution to provide for socio-economic environment that enables citizens to maximise their standard of living at the local

level (van Heerden, 2011). The Thulamela municipality IDP (2013-2014) clearly indicates that IDP is within the context of legislations that governs the Local Government (i.e. Constitution, 1996 sec 152; Municipal System Act, section 25(1) and sections 26, 34, 41. The Municipal Systems Act (2000) obliges the municipalities to determine development strategies with which they can use to empower informal traders.

Informal traders occur on a large scale in the town of Thohoyandou of whereby most of them trade under difficult conditions. Yet, amongst other Key Performance Areas (KPAs) of Thulamela Municipality is that the municipality must perform profoundly in service delivery and local economic development whereby the informal traders are supposed to be recognised under these areas through the empowerment on various factors, such as the transfer of skills and training and the advancement of entrepreneurial skills. This paper argues further that while the government is pledging its support to this sector in the national policies like National Development Plan (NDP). Different studies and researches disapprove that the sector is given the expected attention and opportunity of development like other sector such as sports and recreation within the municipality. This paper, therefore, questions whether Thulamela municipality indeed fulfils its mandate, given the IDP strategy on local economic development on the empowerment of informal traders in Thohoyandou. However, much more emphasis will have to be placed on the nature of IDP and its importance within South African landscape.

2. The Integrated Development Plan and its Significance in South Africa

Vhonani (2010) states that the IDP was first introduced in 1996 in an amendment to the Local Transition Act, 209 of 1993. All transitional local councils were required to prepare IDPs. The ANC led government shifted firmly from the reconstruction of national and provincial government to the creation of a new system of local government. The introduction of the IDP created confusion as it competed with other planning instruments. However, the White Paper on Local Government 1998 clarified the role of the IDP as the lead instrument of local planning. The need for the strategy that would assist newly constituted municipalities in performing their functions in a coordinated, strategic, developmental and fiscal responsible way was recognized and

the IDP was constructed for this purpose (Vhonani, 2010). The constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 mandates the local government sphere to be developmental in nature. The developmental objectives of the local government make provision for services to be delivered in a sustainable and consultative manner (Davis, 2003). The developmental mandate of the South African local government has necessitated the introduction of the Integrated Developmental Plans (IDPs) by all municipalities in South Africa (Cloete, Merrifield & Masiteng, 2003; Mashamba, 2008).

The *Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000* defines the IDP as a "single inclusive and strategic plan" that links, integrates and co-ordinates a municipality's sector specific plans; aligns the resources and capacity of the municipality to the overall development objectives of the municipality; forms the policy framework on which annual budgets rest; and informs and is informed by similar development plans at national and provincial developments plans. Thulamela Municipality IDP Review (2009/10-2011/12) defines an IDP as a "development plan for the municipality that will guide the municipality in taking planning decisions". Sikrweqe (2016) states that the IDP is an approach to planning that involves the entire municipality, and its citizens, in finding the best solutions to achieve long-term development.

The significance of IDP can be seen on various issues such as whereby the plan is used as a key tool by the South African local government to cope with its new developmental role (Sikrweqe, 2016). IDP is seen as a function of the municipal management and part of an integrated system of planning and service delivery (Gunter, 2006). IDP also plays a role as a strategic planning instrument in guiding and informing planning, budgeting, management and decision making in the municipality. Parnell & Pieterse (1999) see the importance of the IDP in representing a major change from the traditional apartheid design to a powerful policy instrument that brings about local government transformation. Maphunye & Mafunisa (2008), are of the idea the embedment of the IDP in South Africa is to address the past apartheid legacies of spatial and development planning process that has left the country with cities and towns that have racially divided businesses and residential areas and that were poorly planned to accommodate even the disadvantaged. Sikrweqe (2016) states that the IDP fosters a culture of cooperative governance. The IDP serves a basis

for communication and interaction between the three spheres of government and sectors of development. Amongst other roles, IDP can be used as a strategy for service delivery, infrastructure development, and community participation.

3. Legislative Imperatives for IDP in South Africa

The drafting and implementation of IDPs by municipalities in South Africa is a lawful requirement. It is a mandate bestowed upon them by various pieces of legislation. Amongst other notable legislations, there is: *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*; *The Development Facilitation Act, 1995*; *The Municipal Structures Act, 1998*; *the Municipal Systems Act, 2000*; *the White Paper on Local Government, 1998* and *The Local Government Transition Act, 1993 as amended*. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, makes provision that municipalities can draft and implement the IDPs to promote the ration, manage their administration, budgeting and planning process to priorities the basic needs of local communities. In terms of the Constitution, local government as a distinct sphere of government is required to provide democratic and accountable government, ensure the provision of services to all communities in a sustainable way, promote social and economic development and encourage the involvement of local communities in local governance.

The *Development Facilitation Act of 1995* provides superiority to the local sphere of government as the means for transformation and development. The IDP, in terms of this Act, is seen as a key point and the main pillar for development and the provision of basic services to local communities. The Act encourages the efficient integration of social, economic, institutional and physical aspects of development. The IDP process, in terms of the Development Facilitation Act, is regarded as the main organising device for encouraging municipalities to identify key delivery targets.

The *Municipal Structures Act of 1998* makes provision for the formation of wards and wards committees in the South African local sphere of government. The objective of ward committees, in terms of the Municipal Structures Act, is to enhance participatory democracy in local government. This Act also gives municipalities the responsibility to apply the IDP framework whilst delivering basic services to

communities and outlines a framework on how IDPs can be developed. The *White Paper on Local Government, 1998* is regarded as a stepping-stone between the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Municipal Structures and Municipal Systems Acts. The central idea of the White Paper is developmental local government. As in the case of the Municipal Structures Act, the Local Government White Paper requires that local government works hand in hand with the members of local communities and groups in the planning and implementation of developmental plans.

The *Local Government Transition Act of 1993* and its second amendment, 1996, also laid the basis for municipalities to implement IDPs. The Act asserts that local government should put into practice the IDPs and must focus on key development challenges facing their municipalities. The *Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000* mandates municipalities to draft and implement the IDPs in their areas of jurisdiction. The Act requires that the local communities be consulted about decisions on matters that concern them, e.g. their needs and priorities. In terms of the Act, municipal councils must develop a culture of participatory governance as well as conditions conducive for the community and local stakeholders to participate freely in local government matters. Section 25 (1) of the Municipal Systems Act requires municipalities to develop a single and inclusive plan that links, integrates and coordinates plans of municipal departments, and one that aligns resources and capacity with implementation. This plan must be seen as a foundation on which annual budgets must be based, and aligned with plans of national and provincial spheres of government. The IDP legislative framework is only related to those legislations that encourage service delivery and those that confer the powers to the local municipalities as to how they can exercise and execute those powers and to development needy sectors like informal sector.

4. Informal Trading and its Significance in South Africa

Bromley (2000) states that informal trading is an ancient and important occupation found in virtually every country and major cities around the world. In addition, Majadibodu (2016) states that new changes, in a new democratic South Africa, have brought many challenges to unemployed people in the various municipalities. These challenges have

led many unemployed people to start informal trading in various areas of local government. At a local level, informal trading has therefore become an argumentative issue whereby there are perceptions about women leading informal markets, foreign traders conquering the space as well as few or less profit being made from the informal economy. There is, however, a general consensus that informal trading has both positive and negative aspects. On the positive view, Vermaak (2014) & Nenzhelele (2013) contends that informal trading contributes to the economic viability and dynamism of the city, creates employment, alleviates the hardships of unemployment and poverty and develops entrepreneurial skills. On the other hand, the Informal Trading Development Programme (2002) reports the negativity of informal sector on the bases that street trading often results in the obstruction of pavements, large volumes of litter and often unsanitary waste products, traffic congestion, unfair competition for formal sector businesses, crime and hygienic environment and general deterioration and dilapidation of the urban landscape.

5. Policy and Legislative Framework for Informal Markets in South Africa

Much has been done on the policy front in South Africa to facilitate informal economic practices, with the hope that these practices will translate into sustainable semi-formal enterprises. Different pieces of legislation and policies were adopted to support the informal trading. Amongst other policies, there is: *The Business Act of 1991; Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; White Paper on a National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Business, 1996; The White paper on Local Government, 1998; The 1995 White Paper of DTI (Department of Trade and Industry) on Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs)*. This policy and legislative framework are also established to address a myriad of socio-economic challenges faced by the informal traders.

6. Socio-Economic Challenges Faced by Informal Traders in South Africa

In the South African context, the informal economy presents a number of challenges for those engaged in it. Environmental toxicants, harsh environmental conditions, which can result in health problems and adversely affect the quality of the street trader's wares (Shrestha, 2013; Basinksi, 2014). In addition,

a lack of access to finance further complicates the already difficult environment and conditions that street trader's face. There further exists a lack of sponsorship and funding for individuals in the informal economy. This has resulted not only in an increased opportunity cost of lost business, but also precludes individuals from purchasing products in bulk, thereby driving up product costs due to purchases having to be made in small quantities (Tshuma & Jari, 2013).

Lack of training, entrepreneurial business skills and industry information is prevalent in the informal economy, due to individuals training themselves or obtaining information from informal and unreliable sources (Nkrumah-Abebrese & Schachtebeck, 2017). This has further contributed to a lack of knowledge around legislation affecting informal trading, such as municipal policies and by-laws, compounded by inaccessibility of information and lack of effective communication between municipalities and informal traders (SEDA, 2008).

7. Informal Sector Empowerment Approaches: Department of Trade and Industry

According to the DTI (2013) there are various empowerment measures established by the department to address the market failures mostly where they affecting the nations' development goals. These measures focused on targeted beneficiaries, including microenterprises, informal businesses as well as black-owned enterprises. These empowerment measures, amongst others, include:

7.1 Small Business Support Since 1995

The 1995 white paper identified a number of constraints facing small enterprises. These include legal and regulatory environment, access to finance and business premises, access to markets, acquisition of skills and managerial expertise, the tax burden, appropriate technology and proper business infrastructure (DTI, 2013).

7.2 Access to Finance

The DTI (2012) argues that it offers various financial opportunities comprising of loans and incentive grants that play an important role in enabling access to finance to small enterprises through the following instruments, agencies and institutions:

- *South African Micro-Finance Apex Fund (SAMAF)*
- *Khula Enterprise Finance Limited*
- *The Thuso Mentorship scheme*
- *National Empowerment Fund (NEF)*
- *Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)*
- *Industrial Development Corporation (IDC)*

7.3 Business Development Services

Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) is spreading its existence countrywide through branch offices and a link with independent partners, with an idea of serving small business development (DTI 2013). Provincial government agencies also play a vital in small business development in South Africa, amongst others, these include: *Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP)*; *Limpopo Business Support Agency (LIBSA) found in Limpopo*. In addition, Legodi & Kanjere (2016:62) states that, many municipalities continue to support and boost small businesses through and under a programme called Local Economic Development (LED).

8. The Status of Informal Markets in Thohoyandou

Nenzhelele (2013) notes that street traders in Thohoyandou have taken a great volume of pedestrians attracted by the shopping malls and transport hubs within town. Informal traders are based at the Mvusuludzo taxi rank, most of them occupying 1-2 square metres of space to exhibit their products. There are no clear demarcations for trading space although traders themselves have a clear notion of where their businesses operate from. Various products and services are sold and traded at the Thohoyandou informal market. Vermaak (2014) further states that, the observation came to light that Thohoyandou informal sector is composed of candle makers, tailors, bakers, photographers, food sellers, brick makers, hairdressers, artists, mobile phone operators, money lenders, debt collectors, mobile phone technicians, domestic workers, carpenters, gardeners, car washers, painters, and fruit and vegetable dealers. Most goods are basic, locally produced commodities and raw materials and value-added products such as processed foods and sun-dried worms. If business is good, traders will trade after sunset and reside temporarily near the market.

Nenzhelele (2013) further attest that most of the informal traders, however, seem not to comply

with the annual levies payment to Thulamela Municipality – attributed by traders to maladministration by municipality officials.

9. Research Methods

The research was explorative in nature. The researcher used qualitative research method, Qualitative approach in this paper included personal interviews and observations. The study was conducted in Thohoyandou town. The population groups were Thulamela municipal officials and Informal Traders. The researcher sampled about 20 municipal officials and about 50 informal traders. Purposive or judgemental sampling method was used because the respondents have been judged to be the ones who can be in a position to give additional information than may be expected. Since it was impossible to study all members of the defined population, generalization was a necessary scientific procedure. The researcher took a portion of the population, made observations on this smaller group and then generalized the findings to the populations.

For the purpose of pilot testing, the researcher interviewed 3 respondents of each group who possess the same characteristics as the respondents but were not part of the actual study. This enabled the researcher to restructure the interview schedule, collect relevant and accurate data, and to remove improper and unacceptable terms. Pilot survey herein increased validity of the research instrument, it was also used to determine the time that should be taken to complete the interview session with each respondent. Data collection instrument such as interview schedules were used. Interview schedules were administered in a face to face interview with respondents. Analysis techniques were employed to different research approaches. Data collected through interviews is analysed using thematic, narrative and/or content analysis approach. Considerable research ethics were considered, amongst others, the ethics included: Informed consent; whereby the researcher ensured that full informed consent is given and consent forms are signed by the participants before the study could commence. Protection from harm; the researcher ascertained that no participant will experience any psychological, physical and/or emotional harm in the study. Confidence, anonymity and the right to privacy; in this study participants or respondents' names, or personal details in particular cannot be

revealed to the public. The centre of these ethical norms is mutual agreement between the researcher and the participants that their details should not be known by anyone, except the researcher.

10. Findings and Discussions

Most of the municipal officials indicated that although the strategy is not doing enough, but there are initiatives that the municipality through IDP has provided for informal traders in Thohoyandou; those are the provision of: funding reserved for small businesses; training for small businesses; local economic development; motivation programmes; useful equipments and loans. Municipal officials mentioned few challenges faced by informal traders in Thohoyandou, such as; Insufficient basic infrastructure; insecurity and crime; migrants become continuously attracted; creation of new markets, destruction of space. Most foreign nationals are operating shops which results in local traders going out of business and most business licences are in South African names.

According to the personal interview made with the informal traders, the respondent made it clear that informal traders face challenges in their businesses which are slightly different and similar to those of the municipal officials, amongst others, respondents mentioned that; the stock gets rotten if not sold on time, and subject to disposal, No sufficient income, their stock is expensive, Lack of security and safety for goods, Theft, Lack communication with municipality, lack of full support from the community to the traders as well as competition amongst traders. Municipal officials added that: the space is very limited; Thohoyandou town is not a well-planned; the town is too small; limited budget or budget constraints; not enough money allocated in the IDP projects; there are people who damage the market, theft and robbery.

The findings on the biographical information of respondents appear to be consistent with the national norm, in which there are more females than males in the informal markets. As a result of the majority of females and males who served as respondents in this study being Africans, the findings may well be used as confirmation that though the engagement in the informal sector tends to be higher amongst blacks (Africans) when compared to whites, Africans tend to be the worst affected. In the same light, the data obtained during fieldwork

indicated that different ranges of age participate in the Thohoyandou informal markets with more of the informal traders being illiterate. That becomes a different case with the municipal personnel/officials, in a sense that most of them are semi-literate and literate. However, from the analysis and observation, it was found that Thulamela Municipality is not really doing a great deal of work to include the informal trading in their city management framework through regulation.

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

In view of the increasing number of informal traders (both nationals and non-nationals) engaging in street vending in Thohoyandou town, Thulamela Municipality and other stakeholders involved in the urban management should make provision for more trading space to accommodate this increasing population of informal traders in the town. In order to make street trade more viable, Thulamela Municipality together with other stakeholders involved in its regulation should facilitate financing of activities through the creation of microfinance institutions that can provide loans on favourable conditions for the street vendors (both nationals and non-nationals).

Nationals should also be encouraged to learn from immigrants by becoming self-employed in the informal sector to reduce dependence on the government and the formal sector for employment. This could be done through open days, competition and awards to outstanding street vendors. This would go a long way to reduce dependence on the government and reduce xenophobic attacks that have often been directed towards foreign vendors. Informal trading is one of the biggest sectors of the informal economy in South Africa in terms of the provision of the basic needs for the workers and contributing towards the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. The IDPs of municipalities are originally observed as the strategic plans specified for the municipalities concerned. The IDP is today regarded as a potential cornerstone for raising and addressing issues that have to be attended to by the all the three spheres of government. It can still be argued that the IDP involves different actors and sectors which are bound to work together under a commonly designed goal and re-aligning the needs of the citizens to the superior goal of municipalities – which is development oriented, that includes the provision of strategic needs for empowering the

informal traders. Basic recommendations can be made in order to improve the sector in terms of management as well as increase in information on the sector. This would greatly boost the sector as a strategic tool to fight unemployment and poverty in South Africa. The following recommendations are therefore put forward:

- **Preferences on Trading Fee/Levies:** The issue of the payment of rental or levies must be carefully addressed. Once again the type of market/trader will determine the amount of the levy/rental. Preferences on trading fees could be made in the same way as value is placed on built property depending on where it is located, a value is placed on a trading site, such as a pavement trading site. A system of differentiated rentals is applied, to cover street vendors, itinerant vendors and people trading in built markets.
- **Limiting Overtrading:** A problem that is endemic of informal trading is often the numbers of informal traders. Very few can be accommodated in markets and the informal sector cannot accommodate all the subsistence traders. In that case, in revamping the sector in the long-term, the subsistence traders will disappear from the sector and be absorbed into the burgeoning economy as employees in the formal sector. It is probably futile to hope that the informal sector (even in its current format) would be fully absorbed in future. Therefore, there must be a limit to the number of traders the streets can accommodate.
- **Integrated Management Planning:** Informal trading is not merely the responsibility of one department of the municipality. Many departments are involved, for example Local Economic Development, Metro Police, Safety and Security, Environmental Health, Health, Legal Services, Land-use Planning and Sanitation. An Interdepartmental technical task teams should be involved in issues relating to informal trading. The establishment of an integrated service delivery consisting of three portfolios, namely utilities, services and cleansing; economic development and planning; and community services could be useful in this case. In addition to managing informal trade, a large number of external institutions may also be involved as service providers. These include the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), welfare departments and NGOs. These institutions should also be involved in the Informal Sector Coordinating Committee (ISCC) to ensure a comprehensive support programme.
- **Enhancing Informal Trader Participation: The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000** is devoted to the issue of community participation in municipal government. One of the major proposals is that municipal councils must establish appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures for residents, communities and community organisations to participate in municipal affairs. Every municipality is entrusted with developing a culture of municipal governance (section 16) and municipalities must create appropriate structures, mechanisms, processes and procedures for public participation (section 17). Against that background the municipality must provide the necessary atmosphere for communities to participate in establishing and developing an informal trading policy and also the suitable environment for informal traders to participate in local level affairs.
- **Spatial Planning:** Spatial planning is part of the integrated development of a municipality. An IDP contains a Spatial Development Framework (SDF). Both the IDP and the SDF must accommodate informal trading. The land-use management scheme within the SDF must indicate those areas demarcated for informal trading.
- **Provision of Services and Infrastructure for Informal Traders:** The provision of infrastructure for informal traders is related to the establishment of markets. The view is that it is necessary to improve the infrastructure available to the sellers, especially those selling food. Preparing foods can pose serious health hazards. As far as infrastructure is concerned, the issue is what extent of infrastructure should be provided.

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