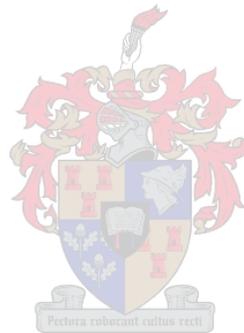


Internship Report

**Community Participation in Sustainable Human Settlements.
The case of Khomas Regional Council**

by

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**Assignment presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Philosophy, Sustainable Development Planning and
Management at the University of Stellenbosch**

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:.....

Date:.....



Abstract

This assignment presents the analysis of poor public participation in the Khomas Regional Council where there is a need for popular participation in the development initiatives and projects. Public participation, allows the public to participate in programmes and projects through established institutions and structures. The main objective of the study was to conduct three months' internships to investigate the importance of community participation. The study envisaged assessing the effectiveness of the Council to deliver basic services such as drinking water, adequate shelter, and sanitation to the community by taking the limited resources into consideration. The study also analysed some challenges the Council is facing in the implementation of the sustainable human settlement projects.

The complex and multidimensional nature of public participation is dealt with. As a result, participation can give women and other groups of people who are usually marginalized from the community activities the opportunity to influence development initiatives in their communities.

In terms of design and methodology, the active participation and direct involvement as well as working with Council's staff and the community at large formed the basis of the study. The survey on public participation conducted by Regional Council revealed that absence of public participation policy and legislation makes it difficult for Councillors to implement the public participation process. There is lack of information sharing and communication breaks down between councilors and residents. Lack of capacity building and resources for Constituency Development Committee members prevails in Khomas region. There is confusion regarding political meetings and there is also poor attendance to meetings. In addition, the study recommends that Council should forge a constant consultation and collaboration between the Regional Council and citizens. Establish mechanisms and structures through which citizens can initiate voluntary and interested groups to facilitate their participation in the Regional affairs. Create forums for meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences to discuss and debate pertinent issues. Strengthen

the capacity of Regional Development Coordinating Committee (RDCC), Constituency Development Committee (CDCs) and other structures.



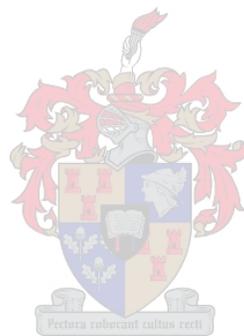
Opsomming

Hierdie tesis bied 'n ontleding van die swak openbare deelname in die Khomas Streeksraad, waar daar 'n behoefte aan populêre deelname aan die ontwikkelingsaksies en projekte is. Terselfdertyd laat dit publieke deelname aan programme en projekte deur gevestigde instellings en strukture toe.

Die hoofdoel van die studie was om internskappe van drie maande in te stel om die belangrikheid van gemeenskapsdeelname te ondersoek. Die studie het ten doel die evaluering van die doeltreffendheid van die Raad wat betref die lewering van basiese dienste soos drinkwater, voldoende behuising en sanitasie aan die gemeenskap, met inagneming van die beperkte hulpbronne tot die Raad se beskikking. Die studie ontleed van die uitdagings wat die Raad in die implementering van volhoubare behuisingsprojekte in die gesig staar. Die ingewikkelde en multidimensionele aard van openbare deelname word ondersoek. Deelname kan vroue en ander groepe wat gewoonlik gemarginaliseerd word die geleentheid gee om ontwikkelingsaksies in hul gemeenskappe te beïnvloed. Aktiewe deelname aan en direkte betrokkenheid by aksies en samewerking met die Raad se personeel en die breë gemeenskap het die basis van die studie-ontwerp en metodologie gevorm. Die Streeksraad se studie van openbare deelname het getoon dat die afwesigheid van beleids- en wetgewing oor openbare deelname die Raadslede se taak om die proses van openbare deelname te implementeer, bemoeilik. Daar word nie genoeg inligting uitgeruil nie en kommunikasie tussen raadslede en inwoners is gebrekkig. Daar is ook 'n gebrek aan vertroue en die Kiesafdeling – ontwikkelingskomitee (KOK) het te min kapasiteit en hulpbronne. Politieke vergaderings word swak bygewoon en daar is verwarring by vergaderings.

Die studie beveel aan dat die Raad deurlopende konsultasie en samewerking tussen die Streeksraad en inwoners bewerkstellig, en meganismes en strukture in plek stel sodat inwoners vrywillige en belanghebbende groepe kan vorm om hul betrokkenheid by streeksake te vergemaklik. Dit beveel ook aan dat forums vir vergaderings, werksessies, seminare en konferensies waar tersaaklike aangeleenthede bespreek en gedebatteer kan word, geskep word.

Laastens moet die kapasiteit van die Koördineringskomitee vir Streeksontwikking, KOK's en ander strukture uitgebrei word.



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1. Introduction

The development of community participation in sustainable human settlement is currently a widespread problem in Namibia because of exodus of people from rural areas to urban areas and high rate of unemployment. According to Burkey (1993:56) community participation in the development process stems from the fundamental rights of individuals and communities to be informed about matters affecting their lives and to influence the decision-making process. Many researchers have recently turned to effective community participation which resulted in community development.

Effective community participation is used as a strategy in suggesting possible policy proposals. Three levels of community participation strategies, namely community participation through “informing” participants; “consulting” participants and empowering participants are commonly used (Davids et al. 2005: 127-129).

According to International Association for Public Participation (2002:1) communities should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives. Hence, participation is a process through which stakeholders’ influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them. “Community participation can therefore be defined as a process in which members of the public –as individuals, members of groups, or group representatives- deliberately take part in a goal-oriented activity” (Masango, 2002:53).

Kayuni and Tambulasi (2005:5) argue that most of the urban poor are found in squatter settlements as the only alternative for them. The major problems with these squatter settlements are:

- Social amenities such as water and sanitation services are inadequate.
- Dwelling units are built with no consideration for community infrastructure such as access roads.
- In terms of legislation, they are categorised as informal settlements hence are not eligible for important developments.

- There is no guarantee for security of land ownership and the buying or selling of land is based on customary principle which is legally irrelevant and often leads to conflict.

Furthermore, the focus of Regional Developing Planning is to promote sustainable development, especially development that will improve the quality of life of the poor. In Namibia, where many poor people live, it is vital to justify the statement of purpose by adding that development planning should, especially address the problems of the poor. "Development planning defines as processes to determine course of action aimed at changing from a worse state to a better state" (Claassen, 2004:3). Moreover, in terms of the South African Municipal Systems Act (2000), development means sustainable development, and includes integrated social, economic, environmental, spatial, infrastructure, institutional, organizational and natural resources upliftment of a community aimed at:

- a)** Improving the quality of life of its members with specific reference to the poor and other disadvantaged sections of the community; and
- b)** Ensuring that development serves present and future generations (Republic of South Africa, 2000).

This internship report detailed my experience as an intern development planner in a professional setting and makes recommendations for other students interested in conducting their internship at Khomas Regional Council or similar structures. The intern started the internship programme on 6 September and concluded it on 16 December 2005.

2. Background to the study

Namibia does not have enough resources to build houses for all of the country's homeless families. Some of the resources required may have to be borrowed from foreign development aid agencies (National Housing Enterprise, 1994:6). Khomas Region, the name reflecting the significance of the Khomas Hochland Mountains, is located in the central part of the country and has, according to the Second Delimitation Commission (1998), a surface area of 36,805sq km. The north is bordered by the Otjozondjupa Region, to the east by the Omaheke Region, to the south by the Hardap Region and to the west it borders on the Erongo Region (see maps in Appendix from page 57 on)

Furthermore, the Region is the only region in Namibia that has a dominant urban character, as nine of the region's constituencies fall within the urban area of Windhoek. The main urban centre of the region, Windhoek, is the administrative, legislative and judicial centre of the country. In addition, the city of Windhoek hosts all the head offices of the various ministries and the headquarters of major financial institutions as well as parastatals.

In terms of infrastructures, the Region is well endowed with basic infrastructure, telecommunication, water provision and access to electricity supply to the urban settlements of the region.

In contrast, the housing backlog in the city has reached alarming proportions. Apart from the large number of houses in the formal settlements, the Windhoek city is characterized by mushrooming squatter settlements. Most residents live in informal, unplanned, sub-standard structures on unsurveyed land without legal title deeds and unsuitable for human settlements. In terms of basic services delivery such as water, most informal areas have access to safe water and communal taps are within considerable walking distance.

In respect to the transport system, Windhoek forms an important railway junction, linking the city with the rest of the country's rail network as well as South Africa. The major national roads connect the city with Namibia's southern, eastern and northern neighbours. On the other hand, the country's major international airport, the Hosea Kutako International Airport, is located approximately 35km east of Windhoek. The Khomas Region forms an important tourist gateway through the section of the Trans Kalahari Highway and the B1 National Road, which connect the neighbouring SADC countries.

In terms of settlements, the Region is presently responsible for the settlement areas of Aris, Dordabis, Groot Aub and Kappsfarm, just to name but a few (Regional Development Plan, 2001/2002:1).

3. The objective of the study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To investigate the importance of community participation with the view to make recommendations as to improving housing provision to the communities and to stimulate Local Economic Development.
2. To assess the effectiveness of the Council to deliver basic services such as safe drinking water; adequate shelter; sanitation to the community by taking the availability of resources into consideration.
3. To analyse some of the challenges the Council is facing in the implementation of the sustainable human settlement projects.
4. To find out how the Council is dealing with the settlements and unproclaimed areas.
5. To learn about participatory democracy, public participation process and development planning issues not necessary one learns what he doesn't know/unfamiliar.
6. To make recommendations to the Council in regard to how to resolve possible problems encountered in its planning and management process.

4. Significance of the study

The empirical study will contribute to the development of strategies to foster community participation in development for example i) having consultative meetings with the community based structures in the area; ii) community participation in managing the projects through steering committees and by so doing empowering the community in project management skills; iii) by applying participation strategies that could influence the community to participate, such as meetings; iv) the influence of community to take control of their development initiatives and translate their aspirations and needs into appropriate action plans which are realistic, affordable and attainable; and v) to improve the living standard of the community through interactive participation.

5. Preliminary survey of relevant literature

Namibia has developed a number of development strategies to guide rural and urban development and planning. These include National Development Plan One and Two, Vision 2030 and Regional Development Plan. The most important strategy that the government has used for regional planning and implementation is the Regional Development Plan (RDP). It established the Regional Development Co-ordinating Committee (RDCC), Constituency Development Committee (CDC), and Village Development Committee (VDC).

According to Ngau and Mwangi (2003:110) the main objectives of the strategy for regional planning and development are to:

- I. Encourage local participation in decision-making in development matters;
- II. Broaden the base for rural development;
- III. Arrest rural-urban migration;
- IV. Promote cost-sharing;
- V. Increase employment opportunities;
- VI. Enhance utilization of local resources;

- VII. Reduce delay in decision-making and speed up project implementation; and
- VIII. Strengthen intersectoral coordination and cooperation at the regional level (Ngau and Mwangi, 2003:110).

Furthermore, a review of relevant sources was done as indicated by Bless & Higson-Smith (1995: 22-23). This was done in consultation with UN Habitat Settlements Regional Office in Windhoek for Istanbul Declaration of June 1996 and Habitat II Agenda documents. World Bank and UNDP reports on sustainable human settlements in the developing countries were examined. Acts of Parliament such as the National Housing Development Act no 28 of 2000, National Housing Enterprise Act no 5 of 1993, Local Authorities Act of 1992 and other policy documents like the National Housing Policy and Build Together policy guidelines was obtained from the national Archives of Namibia. Literature reviews were made by obtaining information on sustainable human settlements in Namibia from the Ministry of Regional and Local government and Housing: Division of Housing; and Division of Community Development and Services. The researcher established contact with the Deputy-Directors in the Divisions. The researcher established contact with the Director: Division of Planning for Council's records and files on community participation. The purpose of this review was to study the different literature relating to the topic and to familiarise himself with the latest developments in the area of research.

The literature review was conducted as indicated by Bless & Higson-Smith (1995:24) by visiting the University library and consulting books, journals and websites on community planning; community participation by Burkey inter alia (1993); Kok and Gelderblom (1994) and Davids et al (2005).

6. Problem statement

What leads to poor community participation in the human settlements in Khomas Region and what effect does this have on human development? Public participation is at the heart of developmental sub-national government. Participation can happen in many different ways, of which the Parliamentary Outreach Programs and Constituency Development Committees, Regional Development Coordinating Committees and Village and Settlement Committees are examples. This typically engages communities and Civil Society Organizations to have an important role in ensuring that community's participation in these processes happen (Keulder, 2005:9).

It is against this background that Davids et al (2005:120) argue that the complex and multidimensional nature of public participation is due to the fact that *public participation* is the first building block of development. The other two building blocks of development are: the *social learning process approach* and *empowerment*. Davids et al (2005:120) further argue that public participation is a component of the process of human growth. This means that the process of public participation and its assumptions is as complex as human nature because of it is an integral part of human development. Although the role of external interventions through change agents, consultants or enablers of development is accepted in development planning, public participation means that the most important role player is and should be the public- the people or beneficiaries themselves (Davids et al, 2005:120). Public participation involves a two-way interchange of decision making, views and preferences (Davids et al, 2005:19).

It should not be confused with consultation (which involves a process of asking people's opinions such as through social surveys, opinion polls or referenda) or involvement (which refers to certain individuals or key groups who are taken to represent the views of wider groups, such as via public hearings or consultation with community leaders. Davids et al (2005:19) pointed out that public participation should be understood in the sense of:

- Participation in decision making.
- Participation in the implementation of development programmes and projects.
- Participation in the monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and projects.
- Participation in sharing the benefits of development.

In the same vein, potential benefits of public participation should include the following:

- Participation can lead to greater acceptance of development activities as it gives people the feeling that they “belong” to a programme or project and vice versa.
- Participation can give women and other groups of people who are usually marginalized from community activities the opportunity to influence development initiatives in their communities.
- Participation can motivate people to accept responsibility for their own development, thus promoting self-reliance.
- Participation can lead to capacity building and empowerment especially at an organizational level.
- Participation can create a basis for understanding affordability issues and creating the necessary conditions for cost recovery (Davids et al, 2005:20).

On the other hand, Davids et al (2005:20) argue that public participation has its own set of costs and constraints such as:

- Participation can be *time-consuming* and therefore *costly*.
- Participation can *delay* project start-up.
- Participation can *increase the demands* on project managers and personnel.
- Participation can bring latent conflicts to the surface.
- Participation can increase the risk of the project being *co-opted* by certain groups or interests.

- Participatory exercises may be perceived as *elitist* in that only a small segment of the population is involved.

Through public participation people share in, belong to, establish dignity and self-esteem, and own the development process (ibid). Currently there is poor community participation in the development planning projects in the Region.

The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia provides for community participation and calls for the facilitation of such a process. Community participation is enshrined in Chapter 11 on Principles of State Policy, Chapter 7 on the National Assembly, Chapter 8 on the National Council and Chapter 12 for the Regional and Local Government (Republic of Namibia, 1990). Keulder (2005:3) argues that “community participation is a process that extends beyond granting rights to vote and the constant exercise of such rights at election time to the adoption of strategies and practices that would make community participation and consultation an on-going process in the formulation of public policies and legislation”.

Community participation is negligible, because Namibia remains a society that continues to be filled with inequalities (Keulder, 2005:4). Benjamin (2005:5) argues that the gap between the rich and poor has been exacerbated through the rapid acquisition of wealth and the accumulation of profits by political elites and big capital. This juxtaposed with the institutionalizing of what ought to be democratic processes between citizen and state to decide on issues of life and living, has created a schism in public participation. She further debates that no longer is participation about the public participating in political, social and economic life, but it has mutated into the participation of elites to serve their own interests around accumulation of wealth and profit making (Benjamin, 2005:5). It has been argued that the speed and complexity of the legislative and policy making process has been compounded by the transformative nature of Namibia in terms of policies and legislation that seek to correct the inequalities of the past.

It is often said that the Namibian public is not interested in participating in development decision making, because there is no social tradition that is supportive of participation, there is lack of culture or ethos of public participation. This means that community participation is likely to be low, because there is a need for a high volume of legislation and policies to be considered and amended. Though public hearings are currently one of the most important and visible in the Region, the fact that they are often held in the urban areas with neglect of rural communities (for example Windhoek Rural Constituency) which are made up of scattered and isolated settlements. Keulder (2005:4) contends that community participation in Namibia is low, due to the short notification of public hearings which gives the public very little time to prepare submissions to appropriate committees and structures. It is alleged that publicity of hearings and meetings is often poor and assumes the presence of highly literate population in the region. "People are sometimes confused by the complexity of the public hearing process and the technical jargon and volume of information" (Keulder, 2005:4).

Similarly, the issue of language difficulty also poses a challenge for community participation (Keulder, 2005:4). It is for this reason that the public are not allowed to attend Parliamentary proceedings as well as meetings of Regional Council, legislative and policy information is often available in the official language- English. The language barrier makes the entire community participation process inaccessible in many ways and those who do not have English skills are disadvantaged. It is clear to see that critical policy issues relating to the well-being of the citizens of a country are being decided at a forum where the public are not invited to make representations, and at the same time remaining dislocated from the state (Benjamin, 2005:6).

In contrast, the better organized, educated and privileged groups in society dominate the process, thus reinforcing inequality (Keulder, 2005:5). Moreover, community participation is assumed to be low in the region, because Regional Councillors, Parliamentarians and Council officials have the benefit of getting the opinion of legal advisors, while the public is not afforded the same privileges. Keulder (2005:5) contends that there is also uneven availability of information and means of participation and a growing culture of self-

censorship by members of the public themselves for fear of being discovered to be politically incorrect.

Equally important, the researcher argues that another contributing factor to the low community participation is the fact that some members of the public do not fully understand the structure and functions of committees in Parliament and structures of the Regional Development Coordinating Committees, Constituency Development Committees, and Village and Settlement Committees. These are the structures that can be used to address public concerns and make input into the legislative and policy making process (Keulder, 2005:5). He further argues that “the principal contributing factor to the weakness of the public ability in this role is the lack of explicitness on the rules and the means of participation” (Keulder, 2005:5-6). There is little standardized procedure for the community to approach committees to raise issues of concern. It is perceived that committees seem to lack adequate links with communities to receive concerns related to Ministerial implementation of legislation, and performance of officials (Keulder, 2005:5).

Similarly, it is a well-known fact that where a submission is made by those who are clear about the rules of the process, feedback is limited and this discourages participation while inculcating disillusionment and apathy amongst the public. Community participation is not fully utilized, because of non-representation and community apathy. To consolidate and quantify the statement, the Khomas Regional Council has taken pro-participatory democracy and public participation initiatives, especially in the form of workshops, to present and discuss issues, ways and means to improve public participation, especially through regional planning exercises and management of projects and public services (Khomas Regional Council, 2005b:1).

Further on, one of those initiatives was the very successful workshop on 28th June 2005 which enabled participants to share a common understanding of “public participation” and “participatory democracy” concepts and agreed on the need to go through a methodological and participatory approach for identifying the most relevant mechanisms and tools to address Region

specific needs pertaining to public involvement. As a point of departure and to kick-start the process of public participation in the region, the participants at the workshop have decided on three types of actions to facilitate the process for setting up new public participation mechanisms and approaches, namely:

- **To set up Constituency Development Committees** (where missing) in the constituency areas and revitalize the ones who have not met for some time;
- **To give feedback from the workshop to the communities** and inform them about the Regional Council's approach to come up with new ways to involve people in public affairs; and
- **To implement a short survey** to understand inhabitants' expectations for being involved in public affairs at regional levels and constraints facing public participation (Khomas Regional Council, 2005a:1-2).

Furthermore, community apathy are due to the fact that Council officials do not view residents as citizens who express, via different stakeholder associations, their views before, during and after the policy development process in order to ensure that policies reflect community preferences as far as possible. Instead they considered active participation by citizens as voters, and as consumers and end-users who expect value-for money, affordable service and courteous and responsive service (Bakker and Leilde, 2003:137).

It is assumed that it is for this reason that current approaches to community participation tend to be ad hoc, incremental, unstructured, unbalanced and uncoordinated and some even smack of window dressing (Davids et al, 2005:113). Community participation has become a buzz word, adding to a growing family of development jargon (Davids et al, 2005:113).

It is against this background, the researcher poses the following questions:

- Why community participation is needed?
- How community participation is linked to and integrated with the building blocks of development?
- How is community participation linked to human settlement?
- What is the role of the government, the municipality and the communities in fostering community development?

7. Hypothesis

Based on the research problem, the researcher formulated the following hypothesis: Effective community participation in development initiatives enables development. The hypothesis is deductive, because it starts from an existing theoretical point of view that community participation will empower the community and promote sustainable human settlements in the Region. Community participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizen presently excluded from the political and economic process, to be deliberately included in the future (Muller, 1991:216).

In another words, community participation is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programmes are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out (Muller, 1991:216). Popular participation is, in essence, the empowerment of the people to effectively involve themselves in creating the structures and in designing policies and programmes that serve the interest of all (African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation). Therefore, there must be an opening up of political process to accommodate freedom of opinions, tolerate differences, accept consensus on issues as well as ensure the effective participation of the people and their organizations and associations (ibid). The emphasis on participation in the development arena for the public is imperative, because it requires actions on the part of all, first and foremost

of the people themselves. But most important are the actions of the State, to create the necessary conditions for such an empowerment (ibid).

It is for this reason that community must participate in the development programmes in order to develop and to inculcate the spirit of “self-help”. Roodt (2001:470-480) defines. Community development as the conscious process wherein small, geographically contiguous communities are assisted by the more developed community to achieved improved standards of social and economic life. This is done through their own local efforts and through local community participation at all stages of goal selection, mobilisation of resources, and execution of projects, thus enabling these communities to become increasingly self-reliance

8. Research Methodology

The research was a direct and participatory one, meaning that information was collected and obtained through personal interaction. The researcher undertook on with an internship programme with the Khomas Regional Council, whereby a logbook was used to record daily activities.

The active participation and direct involvement as well as working with Council's staff and the community at large formed the basis of the report. The intern attended the Ordinary Council Meetings; community meetings and participated in the Khomas Regional Survey on Public Participation, as well as Regional Development Coordinating Committee meetings in order to gather more information on the participation process in the Region.

In terms of qualitative study, the researcher relied on the analysis of the Council's documents so as to gather the necessary information on community participation in sustainable human settlement development projects.

Khomas Regional Council was identified as a good case study area to test the theory of community participation. This was targeted because it is currently in the process of implementing a public participation strategy. In this regard, a number of concepts such as community participation and community

development can be tested. Although a request was made to the community leaders for a focus group interview with ordinary members of the community, this did not materialize, due to the two surveys (Public Participation, and Participatory Poverty Assessment) which were conducted at the same time. Another inhibiting factor was the assembling of a disjointed group of people unaccustomed to the discipline of attending meetings. It was fairly easy to arrange a focus group with the community leaders and Regional Councillors, since they meet regularly on a monthly basis. However, informal and unstructured discussions have been held with some people who live in the rural areas (Windhoek Rural Constituency) and in the informal settlements (Tobias Hainyeko and Samora Machel Constituencies) in order to get a broader picture of the state of affairs. It must be acknowledged that in the absence of formal interview, the opportunity to expand and alter the arguments advanced in this document were lost.

8. 1 Participatory observation experience

The researcher used the observational method, of participant observation. Participant observation was used to gather information about physical conditions and behavioural practices (Narayan, 1996:65). According to Davids et al (2005:161) participatory observation uses variations of conversation and observation. Davids et al (2005:161) further argue that participatory observation means the researcher becomes resident in a community for a period often many months and observes the normal daily lives of its members, and conducts informal interviews and focus groups. It is important to note that interviews, when combined with information obtained through observation, can lead to an understanding of a situation or to a correctly interpreting a description of an event.

The researcher is fully aware of the benefit and positive outcomes of personal interviews with community members and Council's staff, however, the researcher was unable to do interviews for the two obvious reasons: One, the Regional Council was planning to conduct a

Regional Survey on public participation with the view to gauge the level of community participation in the region; two, most of the staff members including the Regional Councillors are new and have just been in the council for a few months. Thus, it is premature to judge and evaluate them on the basis of public participation strategy. Bell (1993:111) contends that during the participant observation process, the researcher has to observe events, situations, behaviour and then write up all observations immediately afterwards. As an observer, the researcher will have his/her own particular focus and interpret significant events in his/her own way. In contrast, the researcher is fully aware that the participant observation strategy is not a perfect research strategy, because of societal dynamics, complexity, diversity, power relations and conflict within the unit of analysis. It is for this reason that Bell (1993:110) argues that there are limitations in participant observation for the accounts that typically emerge from participant observation are often described as subjective, biased, impressionistic, idiosyncratic and lacking in the precise quantifiable measures that are the hallmark of survey research and experimentation (Bell, 1993:110-111). It is true that participatory observation can be criticized as being subjective and biased. The main objective of the researcher is to observe and record in as objective way as possible and then to interpret the data gathered. For example, the researcher interviewed some of the community members at Dordabis and Mix settlements; they argued that there is poor communication between the Regional Council's office and settlements committees. At Mix settlement, community members contended that they have not seen their Constituency Councillor since the Regional election of 2004. Thus, they felt that they want to participate in the public matters which affect their lives and address the community's pressing problems. These communities further argued that they are willing to engage in income-generating projects, such as urban agriculture, aqua-culture, waste collection and recycling of waste products, but they need some relevant information on possible funding from the Council's officials.

Furthermore, it is the view of “Africa’s development thinking since independence- a Reader” (2002:295-309) that, participation can lead to community development. Popular participation is both a means and an end. As an instrument of development, popular participation provides the driving force for collective commitment for the determination of people-based development process and willingness by the people to undertake sacrifices and expend their social energies for its execution. As an end itself, popular participation is the fundamental right of the people to fully and effectively participate in the determination of the decisions which affect their lives at all levels and at all times (AISA, 2002:297-298).

Participation helps to create more informed government decision-making by incorporating diverse opinions, values and ideas and by resulting in direct, immediate acknowledge of the environmental conditions from community and citizens. It is for this reason that community participation and involvement improves the quality of decision-making, raises citizens awareness of environmental issues and increases community understanding of projects involved in the decision making (REC Public Participation, 2003:1). “Participation has become a legitimating device, drawing on the moral authority of claims to involve the poor in defining and pursuing their own development to place the pursuit of other agendas beyond reproach” (Ngwenya, 2005:9). In the classic definition of community development put forward by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (1963:4), the linkage between community participation and community development is clearly stated:

“The process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress” (Davids et al, 2005:114).

It is therefore, important to note that participation of the community is essential for improving the outcomes of a programme or project through cost sharing increased efficiency and effectiveness (Davids et al, 2005:116).

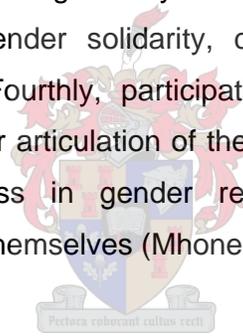
Keulder (2005:9) argues that community participation is at the heart of developmental sub-national government. It can happen in many different ways of which the Regional Development Coordinating Committees, Constituency Development Committees and Village and Settlement Development Committees are examples. Keulder (2005:1) takes for granted that different scholars have defined participation differently. "Participation may mean just attending a meeting even if one does not say anything at the meeting; contributing money to a community project; providing one's labour to a community project; providing information and opinion in a survey" (Mukwena, 2005:1).

Thus, the definitions of participation include:

- Passive participation;
- Participation in information giving;
- Participation by consultation;
- Participation for material incentives;
- Functional participation;
- Interactive participation; and
- Self-mobilization

In addition, while participation results in social, cultural and other effects, there are some forms of participation that do not require decision-makers to regard public opinion; in other words, where community participation is not legally binding. For example if the community advises the government authority to change the current education system in the country to a better one, the position adopted, being favourable or unfavourable, would not invalidate the government's decision to the contrary (Regional Environmental Centre for Public Participation, 2003:1).

Equally, the notion of participation has widespread common sense appeal and impact. According to Mhone and Edigheji (2003:225) citizen participation carries with it system-transformation expectations, in the sense of being closely tied up with equity and empowerment ideas. Moreover, Rahman (1990:45-49) identifies several dimensions of empowerment that provide a good starting-point for understanding what participation can do for the poor and marginalized in asserting their position in regional government decision-making. Firstly, participation encourages marginalized groups to be organized in structures under their control. Secondly, such organized structures bring with them knowledge of their social environment and process to the regional government agenda in a way that no other structure can. Thirdly, participation will generally foster self-reliance- an attitudinal quality likely to engender solidarity, caring and the sharing of a collective identity. Fourthly, participation can strengthen women's positions, providing for articulation of their points of view and, thereby, spearheading progress in gender relations towards equality as assessed by women themselves (Mhone and Edigheji, 2003:225).



8.2 Overviews of the workshops and meetings

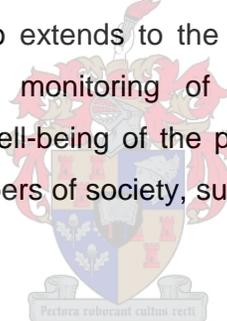
The government of Namibia launched the Decentralization Policy in 1998. Devolution of functions as prescribed therein is aimed at enhancing democratic participation at regional and local levels (National Planning Commission, 2002:5). Decentralization implies a major restructuring of the public sector, as functions and staff are transferred to the regions.

Despite the fact that Namibia is regarded as a “low-middle income” country, poverty is still pervasive, and remains one of the most profound challenges that the Government of the Republic of Namibia must address (Hofmeyr & Caplain, 2005:3). To this end, the Cabinet adopted a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in 1998 in order to set the

direction for poverty reduction in Namibia. The Poverty Reduction Strategy rests on three main pillars, namely:

- Fostering a more equitable and efficient delivery of public services (in the context of decentralization) for poverty reduction;
- Accelerating equitable agricultural expansion, including consideration of food security and other crop development options;
- Exploring options for non-agricultural economic empowerment, with emphasis on the informal sector and self-employment options (Hofmeyr and Caplain, 2005:3).

Therefore, a holistic approach to addressing poverty demands that the concept of poverty be defined and measured in its entirety. It is for this reason that the PRS acknowledges the importance of the participation of the poor and vulnerable communities in the analysis of poverty through the mechanism of Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs). Such participation also extends to the design and implementation of programmes, and to monitoring of the impact of policies and programmes on the well-being of the population, especially poor and other vulnerable members of society, such as women and people living with disabilities.



Equally important, some of the region's development objectives are *inter alia*:

- To encourage communities to participate in their own development and to increase awareness on the role of women in development.
- To enhance the participation of the informal sector in the implementation of SMEs programmes for economic development, and to provide small entrepreneurs with access to financial instruments and services.
- To support and promote economic growth and development through the provision of cost-effective energy, the promotion of energy-efficient technology and the need for energy conservation.
- To promote the development of sustainable, accessible, safe and affordable water sources (National Planning Commission, 2002:79).

In section nine, the focus will be on the meeting project appraisal in the Council. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare and the Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing have decided as per decentralization policy to transfer some of the functions and staff to the Khomas Regional Council. The Division of Community and Early Childhood Development which was tasked with the community projects and projects appraisal was transferred to the Council for efficiency and effective administration and management. Section ten will deal with the Planning workshop for the Directorate of Community and Integrated Early Childhood Development. Section 11 will tackle the workshop on Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA).

Section 12 and 13 will pay particular attention to the following meetings/gathering: the 9th Ordinary Khomas Regional Council, and the Celebration of the World Habitat Day. In Section 14 and 15, the launching of the Sustainable Energy Society for Namibia and Khomas Regional Council Training Workshop for Surveyors in Public Participation will be undertaken.

The celebration of World Habitat Day at Dordabis was vital, because the Community Development Committees existed in most suburbs of Windhoek and liase with the municipality and the Regional Council, but many people do not know their leaders or neighbours and community bonds are very weak. The lack of community cohesion increases the vulnerability of the weak (National Planning Commission, 2002:78). To this end, the World Habitat Day at Windhoek Rural Constituency was witnessed by the fact that rural development activities in the region aim at improving the quality of life for rural community were absent. It therefore urges the provision of basic services, such as access to water, energy, housing, healthcare and education, the need for food security through own production and through raising income to buy food, the need for housing the empowerment of Women and Children and Community-based organizations to reach their full potential and thereby contribute fully to society. According to the National Planning

Commission (2001:78), the rural part of the region contains what can be described as rural slums, comprising of landless people living between commercial farms where levels of poverty are often found to be higher than in communal areas.

Moreover, the launching of the policy '*Sustainable Energy Society for Namibia*' was of paramount important to the researcher for paving the way for community participation. Similarly, the development of a Sustainable energy society for Namibia is a brainchild of the Ministry of Mines and Energy project called Namibia Renewable Energy Programme (NAMREP). The development objective of the *NAMREP* project is to increase affordable access to sustainable energy services through the further development of a market for Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs) in Namibia that contribute to climate stabilization by reducing CO₂ emissions through the removal of technical, financial, social, institutional, capacity, public awareness and social acceptability barriers (Ministry of Mines and Energy, 2005).

9. Projects appraisal Meeting

The Division of Community Development is part and parcel of Directorate of Planning and Development Services; therefore an Early Child Development Section is established in order to oversee the implementation of Early Child Development projects as well as community related projects. The main objective of the community related projects is to develop and promote self-reliance among the community; to enhance food security; to alleviate poverty and to generate income through creation of employment and initiating of self-help projects.

It is against this background that during my stay at the Council, I had an opportunity to attend the project appraisal committee meeting. The Early Child Development Project Committee meeting comprises members from different constituencies in the region and staff from the Directorate of Planning and Development Services. The task of the Constituencies Committee is to

encourage community members to initiate community-related projects as well as screening and make recommendations so that the project proposals should be submitted to the Regional Council for approval.

It is important to note that the purpose of the meeting was to screen, evaluate and assess each project proposal per constituency for funding from the Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development. There are procedures to be followed when one is evaluating the community-related projects. Moreover, guidelines to support income generating activities should be followed when the Committee is evaluating and recommending projects to be financed. The project site must be visited by committee members so as to see whether projects are viable and sustainable. Although, some members are encountering difficulties and delay when they are visiting, due to the fact that some project coordinators/managers does not avail them for sites inspections.

Furthermore, some project proposals do not meet the Council's requirements for approval because the project managers do not follow the right procedures for submission of project to the Council.

The ministry has laid down certain procedures for submission of projects proposal:

- Project proposal
- Contact person/address
- Quotations should be included
- Income figures
- Saving account
- Recommendations from Constituency Committee Member

Equally, suffice to say that projects recommendations were normally based on the project motivation, presentation and site visit. Again, the level of citizen participation is low, in the sense that only selected few project managers were visited. The meeting was attended only by members of Constituency Development Committees (CDCs), but not by other stakeholders such as NGOs, political parties' leaders, community leaders, ward and zone leaders,

municipal officials and traditional leaders. And only those with technical know-how of designing project proposals and who completed the application forms qualified for the grants. Lack of mobilization and dissemination of information concerning project proposals could be a stumbling block for citizen participation. In a participatory process, persons/groups share knowledge, ideas, opinions, votes, materials, labour, and finances in order to reach a common agreement or reach joint decisions in a transparent way (Participatory Attitudes and Key Principles of Applying Participatory Methods/Tools, 2005). Stein and Castillo (2005:55) argue that as different projects around the world show, participation through mutual aid and self-help methods increases the affordability of low-income housing to the urban poor in two ways. First, it eliminates the cash down-payment that formal financial housing institutions usually require. Second, incremental development by self-help methods costs less than formal housing construction. In order to ensure participatory processes, a technical assistance should be provided to families and communities to help them manage their loans, grants, and the technical and construction aspects of the shelter improvements and new self-help projects. Most programmes supported by the ministry conceive of participation as a means of mobilizing resources, increasing community capacities and empowering families. The creation of enabling environments and of processes and institutions that improve the capacity of the poor to access viable social, technical and financial solutions and resources is a key factor in the success of the ministerial-supported projects and programmes (Stein and Castillo, 2005:63).

Moreover, the direct involvement/engagement of ordinary people in the design, implementation and evaluation of planning, governance and overall development programmes at local or grassroots level has become an integral part of democratic practice in recent years (Williams, 2005:19). Yet, it would seem that most community participation exercises in post-colonial Namibia are largely spectator politics, where ordinary people have mostly become endorsees of pre-designed planning programmes, often the objects of administrative manipulation, whilst State functionaries of both the pre- and post-colonial eras ensconce themselves as bureaucratic experts summoned to “ensure a better life for all” (Williams, 2005:19). It is against this background

that informed discussions and rational debates on the merits and demerits of specific planning programmes are literally non-existence, even though “community participation” features as a key component of planning programmes at regional level. In nutshell, it would seem that the bureaucratic elites of officials and councillors are determined to impose their own truncated version and understanding of “community participation” on particular communities (Williams, 2005:19). In Khomas region, indeed, often community participation is managed by a host of consulting agencies on behalf of pre-designed, party-directed planning programmes and is quite clearly not fostered to empower local communities.

10. Planning workshop for the Directorate of Community and Integrated Early Childhood Development

During the internship programme, the intern attended the workshop of the Division Community and Integrated Early Childhood Development. The workshop took place at Harmony Seminar Centre, which is situated about 22 kilometres south of Windhoek. The purpose of the workshop was to map out and formulate the annual work plan for 2006. The gathering was attended by the Deputy-Director of Integrated Early Childhood Development. The Deputy-Director covers 7 political regions, which are under the sponsorship of UNICEF. The workshop also mapped out achievements and challenges of the Directorate. The following programmes of the Directorate is carried out and implemented at the regional level:

1. Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD)
2. Community mobilisation and Organisation
3. Capacity Building
4. Income generating activities (IGAs)

Furthermore, under the IECD, the main objective is to sensitise families/communities, especially men to contribute towards development of children from the early stage of development, by equipping them with knowledge and skills. The emphasis on community mobilisation and organisation is on the creation of an enabling environment which will

ultimately allow communities to own any developmental activities and programmes. The focus will be on the enhancement of communities' abilities to confidentially tackle matters that affect them socially, economically and ensuring access and quality care to children.

In addition, The Income Generating Activities (IGAs) programme enables all Namibians Citizens who cannot access bank loans due to lack of collateral to be granted financial assistance for their projects. Citizens normally qualify for IGA with the aim of developing their entrepreneurial skills and increase their income with the view to reduce poverty. The IGA will also benefit women living with disabilities and HIV/AIDS who can engage in business activities.

The Income Generating Activities (IGAs) main objectives are:

- To support Small Businesses activities in the communities in order to improve their income.
- To promote small medium entrepreneurs in uplifting their social and economic standard.

The directorate faces some challenges, because some activities and projects are not fully implemented. There are regions without regional income generating committees, which hamper the proposed income generating projects. Most of the activities were planned, but not implemented due to the fact that there is inadequate finance.

The intern have perceived that the planning workshop was an exclusive one, because generally speaking, participation is a collective action aimed at achieving a common objective; it means "taking part" and "getting involved". The main task of the facilitator/outside agent is therefore to encourage and involve people in processes/activity (Participatory Attitudes and Key Principles of Applying Participatory Methods/Tools, 2005). Although, the workshop was meant for government officials in the ministry, there was an urgent need for community involvement due to the nature of the work involved. It is my view that people from civil society organisations, the municipality, regional councillors, educational institutions and private sectors could have to attend the workshop for more citizen participation and inclusive purposes. Against this background, with participatory attitudes, every idea counts/everybody's

view counts. A simple fact, neglected by many people, is to recognize that different individuals and groups have- according to their perspective background-different perceptions and thus assess situations differently, which then leads them to different actions (Participatory Attitudes and Key Principles of Applying Participatory Methods/Tools, 2005). In addition, participation characteristics assure that:

- The views of minorities are taken into account.
- The voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making.
- Participation by both men and women happens.
- Participation could either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives.
- Participation also means freedom of association and expression on the one hand and an organized civil society on the other hand (Good Governance, 2005).



11. Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) Workshop

During my internship the official launching of a PPA took place in the remaining 10 Regions and the Start-up Workshop for Khomas Region. This was a two days workshop and funded by the National Planning Commission (NPC). The workshop was presented by a consortium of companies/institutions such as the University of Namibia; and Nara Training Centre.

Participatory Poverty Assessment refers to a tool for involving poor people and their institutions in defining and analysing poverty from their own perspective (Hofmeyr and Caplain, 2005: 11). PPA contributes to greater understanding of the processes by which people fall into and get out of poverty and coping and survival strategies adopted by the poor. It also provides insight in the priorities of the poor to bring about positive change and in solutions (Hofmeyr and Caplain, 2005:11).

In order to make the Start-Up Workshop and the PPA a successful event, a number of officials, including technical, managerial and political representatives were invited to the workshop.

Participants should have included:

- All Regional Councillors and the Chief Regional Officer
- Director and Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services
- Regional Planners, Rural Development Planner and Regional Aids Coordinator
- All members of the RDCC, in particular Managers and Directors
- Representatives of CDC
- Technical staff (Planners/Coordinators from line ministries such as health; education; literacy programmes; Agriculture and Forestry; Labour; Rural Water Supply; Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation; Environment; Works, Transport and Communication
- Directors/ Managers/ Coordinators from Non-State Actors, CSOs; NGOs and CBOs operating in the region
- Representatives of donor agencies (in cooperation with NPCs)
- Community representatives
- Traditional leaders
- Local Authority's councillors
- Ward leaders
- Business representatives/community

The aim of the Namibia Participatory Poverty Assessment is to use the PPA results to complement household survey information and develop a comprehensive regional poverty profile that depicts the extent and characteristics of poverty in each region and identifies priority areas for action. These profiles will in turn guide the formulation of national and regional development plans (RDP & NDP) and the allocation of resources for poverty reduction programmes in the regions.

Moreover, the purpose of the workshop is to provide background information on the PPA in Namibia and introduce the PPA tools; the types of information they generate; the objectives and motivations for using the tools; and the procedures to be followed; to formulate the PPA and establish regional poverty profiles; to share relevant information on PPA; to discuss and explain PPA; to formulate research agenda; selection of research locations/sections/constituencies; to link to regional planning; and policy and institutional framework of PPA and to familiarise stakeholders with the expected outcomes of the PPA and Poverty Monitor(Hofmeyr and Caplain, 2005:11).

It is against this background that the workshop was attended by various stakeholders from various government ministries and departments, Constituency Development Committees (CDCs), and the UN agencies in Namibia, NGOs and other development actors in Windhoek, to discuss and agree among other things on the approaches to measure poverty reduction in Namibia. This workshop is an on-going process for the remaining 12 regions, and the outcomes of the actual exercise will be presented in June 2006.

In this regard, the workshop participants were introduced to two main conceptual models of poverty: **physiological deprivation model** (the income/consumption poverty approach) which classifies households as poor if they lack access to resources to acquire commodities that satisfy basic material needs, and the **social deprivation model** which goes beyond the money metric measurement of poverty and includes other dimensions such as human capabilities, social exclusion, participation and access to services. The following eight main research themes were studied:

- Understanding resources in the village context.
- The concepts of vulnerability, well-being and poverty.
- Livelihood systems and food security.
- HIV and AIDS.
- The importance of institutions supporting communities: access to services and the perceived quality of service delivery; decentralisation and governance.
- Crime, violence and substance abuse.

- Gender dimensions of poverty.
- Priorities of poor and vulnerable people (Hofmeyr & Caplain, 2005:5).

Furthermore, in order to effectively monitor poverty, there has to be a general understanding of what constitutes poverty. Participants also discussed at length relative and absolute poverty lines as measures of physiological poverty. After long discussions, it was recommended that the absolute poverty line be used for a money-metric measure of poverty in Namibia.

In contrast, disagreements and conflict arose from the workshop, because participants felt that there is a low level of participation. As a result, participants demanded that a cross-section of members of the community; covering population sub-groups (males and females, young and elderly people, different language groups and all segments of the community should be represented.

There has been a strong emergence of smaller community based organisations (CBOs) in the region that are less formal in their structure and organisation, less resourced and located more at the level of communities. Williams (2005:6) argues that these CBOs serve constituencies that face extreme forms of poverty on a day-to-day basis. Most of the CBOs have little or no resources and access to key information that would allow them to engage in policy intervention as a form of public participation. Hence, they are largely left out of this process (Williams, 2005:6).

12. The 9th Ordinary Khomas Regional Council Meeting

In terms of section 21 of the Regional Council Act No. 22 of 1992, a notice should be given that the Ordinary Council Meeting will be held. This is a monthly Council meeting. The Khomas Regional Council is constituted by 10 Councillors representing 10 Constituencies. During the internship programme at the Khomas Regional Council, the intern had an opportunity to witness the proceedings of the Ordinary Council meetings. The Council meeting was held at the Council Chamber at Council Head Quarters, on 28 October 2005 and 9th December 2005. During the proceedings, the meetings were attended by 9

Regional Councillors (be it from ruling or opposition party), Directors and Deputy-Directors. In terms of the Regional Council Act, the Ordinary Council Meeting should be chaired by the Regional Governor of the region.

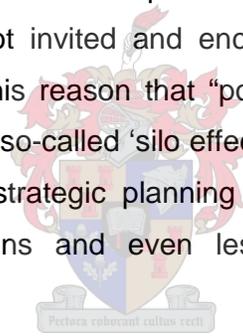
Equally important, the primary task of the Ordinary Council Meeting is to provide policy guidelines in such an unambiguous and informed way that the implementing agency has little or no problem in implementing the objectives of the region. "Such policy guidelines are planned and formulated collectively by all Councillors irrespective of political affiliation during the monthly Council Meetings" (Khomas Regional Council, 2005b:14).

The Ordinary Council Meeting was also attended by the Chief Executive Officer of National Housing Enterprise, who presented his company's mission and vision to the Regional Councillors. The purpose of his deputation was to share information on capital projects, namely, construction of Constituency Offices; construction of services at Groot Aub; Aris and Kapps Farms Town Planning Scheme; staff housing at Groot Aub, and socio-economic survey on the Aris and Kapps Farm Project, just to mention but a few. Secondly the purpose was to plan for housing development projects with the Regional Councillors and to familiarize himself with the Regional Development Plan (RDP). He also further argued that his company will embark on servicing of plots and ervens for housing development projects in the country.

In addition, Mr Munjengua, Deputy-Director, Directorate of Rural Development in the Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development also attended and presented his deputation on the forthcoming survey on Windhoek informal settlement for Food Security and Nutrition Programme. The purpose of his mission was to brief and inform the Councillors about the project. Munjengua mentioned that the main objective of the survey is to assess the involvement of Rural Development Directorate in the rural areas in order to assist the poor through rural projects. He stated that the objective of the Directorate Rural Development is to support a sustainable improvement in the living conditions of the rural population with special emphasis on the participation of the poor and women empowerment.

In terms of evaluation, the meeting was conducted in a good atmosphere and many questions were generated by councillors and handled in appropriate manner through the chairperson. Housing improvements and new housing construction by incremental methods require the participation of different actors in the provision and delivery of critical inputs, including access to land and land tenure legalization, management and mitigation of environmental risks and natural disaster hazards, introduction and maintenance of basic services, and improvement of household conditions and living space (Stein and Castillo, 2005:55). To this end, the intern had noticed that there is a lack of commitment from line ministries, agencies, and offices in terms of attending the Council Meeting, because of poor attendance of the council meeting from other stakeholders.

In spite of formalised structure for public participation in the Council, community members are not invited and encouraged to participate in the Council's affairs. It is for this reason that "poor public participation" in the community often relates to a so-called 'silo effect' in the way officials plan and co-ordinate without proper strategic planning co-ordination and integration between departments/sections and even less with stakeholders in the community.



Furthermore, both deputations were just informing the Council what their respective Directorate and Enterprise are intending to do, but did not advocate the importance of community participation in the envisage projects. To me this was not community participation, because the participation process, even in political and management perspectives, is an umbrella term including different means for the public directly participate in political, economical or management decisions (Good Governance, 2005). It is also the view of Arnstein (1969:217) that the two deputations belong to the two bottom rungs on a ladder of citizen participation. The bottom rungs of the ladder are (1) *Manipulation* and (2) *Therapy*. These two rungs describe the level of "non-participation" that has been engineered by some to substitute for genuine participation. These two rungs' real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programmes, but to enable power

holders to “educate” or “cure” the participants (Arnstein, 1969:217). The mechanisms by which the citizens can participate in the management of the Council are very limited. However, the laws make provision for regional information mechanisms so as to allow the local populations to follow the trend of local affairs (Nach, 2005:18). In another words, their presence in the Council’s meeting was just a type of participation in information giving, rather than information sharing and community participation. It is a well-known fact that informing citizens of their rights, responsibilities, and options can be the paramount first step toward legitimate citizen participation. However, too frequently the emphasis is placed on a one-way flow of information- from officials to citizens- with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation (Arnstein, 1969: 219). Thus, meetings can also be turned into vehicles for one-way communication by the simple device of providing superficial information, discouraging questions, or giving irrelevant answers (Arnstein, 1969:219). The non-attendance of the Council’s meeting by community members attribute to passive participation, rather than active participation. The absence of traditional and community leaders in the council meeting is a clear testimony to a lack of citizen participation. Citizen participation process can be defined as “the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future” (Arnstein, 1969:220). In Khomas region, the presence or absence of community organisations at grassroots level or in some constituencies that determines the nature and impact of community participation on regional government development programmes, but whether or not their ideas and proposals with regard to development strategies are taken seriously by the council and incorporated into their specific Regional Development Plan (RDP). For example, in the case of Khomas region, there are community organisations, in the form of Constituency Development Committees (CDCs), Village Development Committees (VDCs) as well as Settlement Development Committees (SDCs) are well organised in some constituencies, but not in Windhoek rural constituency. This does not mean that their development proposals enjoy the necessary consideration by the directorate of planning and development services in the region.

Equally important, the researcher observed that in Khomas region, there are no real institutional structures to co-ordinate, evaluate and monitor community participation in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the Regional Development Plan and National Development Plans (NDPs). The researcher further concurs with MacKay's research (2004:60-108) that there are institutional conflicts (in the case of Khomas region and the Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development) that seems to exist in Khomas region in relation to community participation. For example, the researcher perceived that the council's office claims responsibilities and accountabilities for community participation, yet it lacks the requisite Facilitation or co-ordination infrastructure and skills to execute this statutory task. In fact the two development planners are unskilled, lacking the required training and knowledge base in development planning and management methodologies to function optimally.

13. World Habitat Day



The World Habitat Day is set aside by the United Nations to be commemorated on the 1st Monday of October annually.

The theme for the 2006 World Habitat Day was: “**Keep the Promise! Millennium Development Goals and Urban Centres**”. As part of the assignment, the intern was a member of the delegation from the Khomas Region who was assigned to go and attend the ceremony. The event was celebrated at Windhoek Rural Constituency, Dordabis. Dordabis is a settlement situated on the east of Windhoek about 90 Kilometres away.

It is a customary practice that this crucial event should be attended by people with a high profile in the country such as the Honourable Governor of the Region. In her keynote address, she urged that there is an urgent need to secure tenure for women to acquire land for accommodation. She also stressed the fact that the plight of homelessness and slum dwellers in

Namibia should be improved through the provision of highly subsidised housing for the lower and middle-income employees. Kok and Gelderbloem (1994:58) argue that homeless poor, especially those living in backyard shacks, are relatively powerless. Empowerment therefore should entail the removal of powerlessness, but the emphasis should be on self-reliance. At Dordabis settlement, the researcher concluded that the community powerlessness is reflected in their insecurity of tenure, the makeshift shelters and lack of services. It is understandable that the people at the lower levels of the income spectrum have benefited from the “Building Together” Programme, but require ongoing assistance from private sectors and community themselves through self-help projects. In the same vein, she emphasised the issue of empowering the poorest of the poor and to forge a public-private partnership which is a foundation for sustainable development. Arnstein (1969: 221) states that partnership can work most effectively when there is an organized power-base in the community to which the citizen leaders are accountable; when the citizen groups have the financial resources to pay its leaders reasonable honoraria for their time-consuming efforts; when the group has the resources to hire (and fire) its own technicians, lawyers, and community organisers.

Furthermore, the ceremony was also attended by a UNDP member. A message from UNDP Country Representative was delivered and read by UN Habitat Programme Manager: Mr George Kozonguizi, who highlighted the living conditions of the World poor, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and outlined an overview of World population who lives in the cities. It is interesting to note that UN Habitat Vision 2020 for dealing with urban dwellers in the world is to attain the target of MDGs and Cities without slums; and to upgrade settlements.

Equally important, the event was significant, because of a UN-Habitat representative. UN-Habitat is the United Nations agency for human settlements. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to improve socially and environmentally sustainable communities, towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. The presence of UN-habitat member was eminent, because he witnessed the housing condition of the community and how the community at Dordabis settlement lives in slums; hence, it impressed

upon him the need to initiate the projects which enhance capacity to formulate human settlements related policies and strategies with a primary focus on poverty alleviation and sustainable development and to develop corresponding programmes and projects at Windhoek Rural Constituency. In addition, the celebration was attended by some residents of Dordabis, most of them are farm workers together with their families. Naturally, the researcher observed that the council fails in one way or another to implement the “Global Plan of Action-Habitat II: The second United Nations Conference on Human Settlement”. Sustainable human settlements development requires the engagement of civil society organisations, as well as the broader participation of all people.

Moreover, communities attended these supposedly participatory meetings as ill-informed or non-informed spectators. The researcher observed that there is a notable decrease in attendance by communities at public participation meetings. The reasons behind poor attendance that the researcher got from some community members of Dordabis and Mix settlement are that, they do not trust the council and constituency’s councillor, as well as government officials. For example, in the case of Mix settlement and Groot Aub, serious questions were raised about land ownerships, scrapping of rent arrears, problems pertaining to service payments, lack of communication between community leaders and councillor, nepotism, non-existence of Constituency Development Committees, and urban basic service delivery. Yet questions were not answered by the Planning and Development services, Office of the Governor, and City of Windhoek: Finance Department. Also, feedback is seldom, if at all given to communities after the celebration.

It is, therefore, necessary that communities organise themselves into civic bodies that can represent their interests at local government level. Midgley (1981:5) defines community participation as the direct involvement of ordinary people in the local affairs. More importantly, perhaps, in historically marginalised sections of society, communities should revisit their richly-textured experiences of organisation and mobilisation against the apartheid state, and adapt such strategic forms of engagement and dialogue to empower citizens at grassroots level (Williams, 2005:23).

Williams (2005:24-25) further argues that communities can make a very important contribution to effective community participation by the following practical steps:

- Acquire the requisite skills and knowledge of public participation, civil society, local government;
- Promote education and literacy skills in historically neglected communities;
- Understand community views on participation;
- Ensure that the public's contribution will influence planning decisions;
- Ensure equal opportunities for participation;
- Seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected;
- Communicate to participants how their input affected the decision;
- Provide participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way (Williams, 2005:24).

14. A Sustainable Energy Society for Namibia

Through the Energy White Paper, the government of the Republic of Namibia has committed itself to the introduction of renewable energy sources: *“Government will promote the use of economically viable renewable energy technologies, as a compliment to grid electrification, to improve energy provisions to rural areas”* (Ministry of Mines and Energy, 2005:1). In addition to conventional and hydro power, the Ministry together with UNDP is actively promoting the use of new energy sources, namely:

- Solar electricity production
- Solar water heaters
- Wind energy
- Small scale biomass energy production
- Large scale biomass production
- Wave power (Ministry of Mines and Energy, 2005:1).

On a daily basis, multiple briefings and open talks on participatory democracy, renewable energy and environmental management issues were offered around Windhoek, and most were open to anyone. The events or public discussions were organised by the Ministry of Mines and Energy, Renewable energy consultants, The Power Utility (NamPower), Electricity Control Board (ECB) and mostly by the Sustainable Energy Society for Namibia (SENSE). The researcher learned at various lunches and briefings about participatory democracy and public participation. Some of these were incredibly informative, while others served as more of a guide-for-the-future on how to implement Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs), Second National Development Plan (NDP2) with the view to achieve the national goal, Vision 2030.

The Ministry of Mines and Energy is embarking on the project called “Barrier Removal to Namibian Renewable Energy Programme” (NAMREP). The development objective of the project is to increase affordable access to sustainable energy services through the further development of a market for Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs) in Namibia that contribute to climate stabilisation by reducing CO₂ emissions through the removal of:

- 
- Technical
 - Financial
 - Social
 - Institutional
 - Capacity building
 - Public awareness and social acceptability barriers.

During the researcher's internship at Khomas Regional Council, the researcher attended the official launching of Sustainable Energy Society for Namibia. The event was organised by the Habitat Research and Development Centre (HRDC). This centre is the focal point for research and development of the Namibian housing sector aimed at promoting sustainable human settlements. Moreover, the goals of the Habitat Research and Development Centre are:

- Promoting the production and usage of local building materials through appropriate technologies and design;

- Advocate, promote and facilitate ecological sanitation, water conservation, renewable energy and biodiversity
- Support communities, local and regional authorities in capacity building related to housing issues;
- Disseminate information to stakeholders; and
- Contribute to policy formulation on housing, environment and resources management.

Economists' predict that the energy crisis looming in the Southern Africa Region could impact the Namibia economy adversely. One response to the energy crisis being considered by NamPower, the Electricity Control Board and the Ministry of Mines and Energy is energy efficiency (Emcon Consulting Group, 2005).

Thus, Namibia presently imports about 50% of energy from South Africa, which has said it will run out of surplus supply capacity by 2007. The Sustainable Energy Society will work closely with the Ministry of Mines and Energy, NGOs, and Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) so as to develop market and promote the use of renewable energy in the country. At the discussion, which was organised by the Hanns Seidel Foundation recently, Conrad Roedern (expert in solar and wind energy) spoke on the role of renewable energies in Namibia; he said that if all electrical water geysers were replaced by solar water heaters, the country could save 75 megawatt (MW). He further proposed that farmers could harvest the invader bush on their farms and establish small wood-fired power plants. They could feed the excess electricity generated in this way into the national electricity grid. "This will serve a twofold purpose- bush encroachment will be reduced and some 25 megawatt of electricity could be generated if 500 farmers would feed 50 kilovolt of electricity from their farms into the grid" (Weidlich, 2006).

More so, the Ministry of Mines and Energy signed a Memorandum of Understanding with one of the local commercial bank (Bank Windhoek) to provide credit and loans facilities for Small Micro-Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) that would venture into renewable energy business in the country. The agreement between the MME and Bank Windhoek is for a scheme to

provide funding to emerging small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and end users in the renewable- energy segment. Further on, the agreement will make it easier for SMEs in the renewable-energy sector to do business, especially those in the rural areas, and at the same time contribute towards rural development. SMEs active in the renewable- energy sector will be able to get start-up loans from Bank Windhoek at an interest rate of prime minus three per cent.

Guidelines for electricity and energy efficient buildings will be drawn up while the establishment of small and medium enterprises for charcoal and briquette production and for the manufacturing of solar water heaters form part of the master plan. In order for the MME to honour its commitment to sustainable energy and clean energy technologies, some 80 “energy shops” will be set up country wide over the next 20 years at the rate of nine shops per year. They will stock and sell solar panels, solar batteries, light bulbs and solar and wood efficient stoves and provide technical information on the various off-grid energy solutions to customers (Weidlich, B, 2006).

In addition, the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) plans to spend an average of N\$9 million a year over the next 15 years to accelerate its drive to promote the use of renewable energy sources. Recently, experts met in Windhoek to discuss the implementation of a newly drafted strategic action plan for renewable energy policies based on the White Paper on Energy of 1998. The MME representative said that five million dollars will be spent on the Off-grid Master Plan each year until 2020, while N\$2, 5 million a year will go to a revolving fund from which citizens can borrow money to acquire solar home systems and solar water heaters. The MME, further on will allocate N\$1 million each year to the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Institute (REEFI) which is housed at the Polytechnic of Namibia.

During the deliberations, most guest speakers emphasised that Namibia is among the best countries in terms of solar energy. The researcher observed that, wind energy technologies are used in Namibia at the Gobabeb research centre (Namib Desert) in Erongo region. The researcher also learnt that Solar

Water Heaters (SWH) is a proven, effective and economical means to reduce energy demand and consumption and provide cost savings to the consumer (Emcon Consulting Group, 2005).

Equally important, a demonstration on bio diesel made from renewable oil source was also done at the function. The way forward is to create more and more SMEs dealing with solar energy and to invest in renewable energy sector in order to create employment, reduce poverty and to generate income, especially for the rural poor.

15. Khomas Regional Council training workshop for surveyors in public participation

The survey on the perception of public participation took place in the context of Chapter 11, Article 95 of the Namibian Constitution which stipulates that: “The State shall actively promote and maintain the welfare of the people by adopting, *inter alia*, policies aimed at the following:

- enactment of legislation to ensure equality of opportunity for women, to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of Namibian society; in particular, the Government shall ensure the implementation of the principle of non-discrimination in remuneration of men and women; further, the Government shall seek, through appropriate legislation, to provide maternity and related benefits to women;
- Ensurance that every citizen has a right to fair and reasonable access to public facilities and services in accordance with the law;
- Encouragement of the mass of the population through education and other activities and through their organisations to influence Government policy by debating its decisions” (Republic of Namibia, 1990).

To achieve the above, the Khomas Regional Council has initiated the Regional Survey on the perception of public participation. The survey is aimed at the creation and strengthening of participatory democracy mechanisms and tools for enhancing public participation, especially in governance, planning, decision-making and implementation, including development project planning and management.

The Khomas Region, like Namibia's other 12 regions faces a severe lack of capacitated manpower in a multitude of local and regional development-related areas, including participatory regional development planning, development as well as local democratic participation in the day-to-day administration of the affairs of the region (Khomas Regional Council, 2005b:1). It was within this context that the Council decided to conduct the Regional Survey on public participation to replicate, share, interpret, and expand on the successful outcome of the Seminar on "promoting Participatory Democracy and Public Participation through decentralisation at sub-national levels", held at Safari Conference Centre from 1st to 3rd June 2005 (Khomas Regional Council, 2005b:1).

It was an experiential and practical exercise for the researcher to be engaged in the 3 days training workshop for surveyors in public participation in the region. Surveyors were drawn from each constituency, two per constituency. They are members of Constituency Development Committees (CDCs). Most of them are unemployed school leavers and self-employed youth. The training workshop was made possible by the Ministry of Regional and Local government, Housing and Rural Development and the French Embassy in Namibia: French Support to the Namibia Decentralization Process. The training workshop was conducted by Integrated Training Consultancy.

Furthermore, the objective and purpose of the survey is to **"Understand Inhabitants' Expectations for Being Involved in Public Affairs at Regional Level and Constraints Facing Public Participation"**. During the training workshop, 22 surveyors were trained in order to be able to interview 30 individuals per constituency (300 in total and 5 focus groups per constituency (50 in total x 20 people = 1,000 x 10 = 10,000 people). Individual and focus group interviews will be conducted at households and institutions

such as shops, clinics, hospitals, schools, firms, banks, police stations, courts, churches and other offices.

In addition, the specific objectives of the survey are therefore:

- Training 20 surveyors in participatory methodologies such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA);
- Collecting qualitative data through questionnaires (2 types of the one for individuals and another for focus group discussions);
- Organising, analysing and interpreting data and identifying key findings;
- Presenting the outcomes of the survey to decision-makers for planning appropriate interventions for public participation.

The survey further intends to concentrate on the focus areas and problems to be addressed. In terms of focus groups, the survey is centred around and intends to generate answers in the following aspects:

- People's knowledge about decentralization;
- Role of regional councils' local authorities and other stakeholders involved;
- The way Khomas Region inhabitants are involved today at local and regional levels their satisfaction level;
- In which area citizens want to be involved in, for example in planning and projects design, projects implementation, projects evaluation, decision making on development issues, budgeting, people's needs assessment;
- How citizens would like to get involved (public meetings, radio information, communication letters, constituency meetings, council meetings as observers).

It is important to note that during the actual and field work. The researcher was assigned as one of the co-supervisors. His role was to oversee and coordinate the survey, and to ensure that the process is running smoothly and to liaise with the fieldworkers in the constituencies. The researcher was also involved in facilitation and conducting of focus group discussions

at Windhoek Rural Constituency. The focus group discussion was focused on the decentralisation process as well as the level of public participation in the public affairs. In terms of land rights, most people in the Windhoek Rural are settled on private land. They are landless farm workers. In some settlements there are no proper housing, education and health facilities. For the survey to be successful and complete as scheduled, surveyors were equipped with all the necessary materials such as questionnaires, attendance registers and on action plan.

Furthermore, the key finding of the survey from individual interviews and focus groups shows that a large majority of people ask for the right to play a role in public life Most of them do not know really how they can participate, referring to the lack of visibility of the roles and activities carried out by the Regional Council and the absence of information regarding the public participation process. The survey revealed that people expected regional and local councillors to be a link between communities and the authorities, “fulfil political decisions and ensure there is no corruption” and allow communities to take part in decision-making. People had a fairly negative view of the Khomas Regional Councillors. They view them as poor leaders whom they only saw when elections were coming up, who made empty promises and did not show interest in community issues. A few people were truly disheartened about the inefficiency and rudeness of reception services at the entrance of Khomas Regional Council, which discouraged people to participate or even ask for information.

In respect of factors hindering public participation, the survey identified 10 factors as key reasons for hampering public participation and discouraging people to act as citizens through active public participation:

1. Regional Councillors and Constituency Development Committees (CDCs) lack professionalism in organising and conducting meetings. The under mentioned, are some of the responses or phrases from the community.

- “Communities are not well informed about meetings”

- "Poor attendance to meetings"- "People ignore invitations"
- "people attending meetings do not differentiate between personal and community issues"
- "meetings are conducted while people are at work"
- "Meetings: night and long shift"
- "People do not know in advance what to be discussed"
- "Councillors take too long to give feedback on problems raised" "this discourages many people"
- "Information is given too late"
- "Group meetings do not allow everybody to participate"
- "Confusion with political meetings"
- "Only friends and people from the same language as the councillors go to public meetings"
- "No meetings facilities- "No community hall"
- "No transport facilities to attend meetings"
- "Never informed"
- "Not all people have access to all types of communications channels because some of them can be too expensive"
- "Message arrive late and 75% of invitation messages are wrongly conveyed"
- "Minutes of meetings are not shared between community members, CDC members and Councillors" (Khomas Regional Council, 2005b:14-15).

- 2. Lack of minimum information provided to the citizens to allow participation and building citizenship.**
- 3. Lack of a clear participatory planning and project management approach at regional level.**
- 4. Unequal commitment and capacities from Regional Councillors.**
- 5. Lack of confidence.**
- 6. Lack of mobilization from the youth.**
- 7. Alcohol abuse.**

8. **Lack of cooperation between development partners and within communities**
9. **Lack of CDCs capacities and resources**
10. **Limited/lack of basic services and development activities (Khomas Regional Council, 2005b:17-18).**

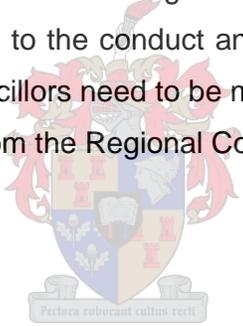
In conclusion, the Regional Survey on public participation was a success, because three strategies were developed by consultants with key possible activities to be implemented by the Council. Three main areas of participation have been identified by the people surveyed:

- **Information and communication:** People expressed strong expectation regarding civic education: *“What are my rights and duties as a citizen?”*, *“How can I be involved as a citizen in public affairs at regional and local levels?”*; *“What are the existing platforms for public participation?”* People asked to diversify the communication channels to be used:
 - *Media- newspapers, Television, radio, letters in water bills for everyone to read, Door to door, Meetings and announcements at gatherings, messages send through Head Office, Telephone/cell phones, loudspeakers”*
 - *“E-mails and internet, Computers, Telegram”*
 - *“Billboards, churches, Health Promoters pass on information from newspapers”*
 - *“Every 20 houses there is a leader who informs community members of the problems and issues”*
- **Regional development policies and projects planning, implementation and monitoring:** People argued that if some people are aware of the role of Constituency Development Committees as planning bodies, they claim for an empowerment of civil society so that to play a more significant contribution to development planning at constituency level.
 - *“ The CDCs should be well known from all the people in the community and membership to be more transparent”*

- “ We are the ones who know what projects should be implemented to address the needs of the community”
- “To come together and identify and plan the good projects for the community”
- “We want to build our own things, not to them to do it for us- they will never know what we want”
- “To get youth active in project’s formulation”
- “To be involved in planning and budget”

- **Proximity relationship with Regional Councillors and Regional Council’s staff.**

The Regional Councillors and Khomas People: People ask for a more respectful, “closer” and professional relationship with their regional councillors. Therefore, public meetings are to be improved from the organisation of the venue, to the conduct and formulation and distribution of minutes. Regional councillors need to be more present on the ground as well as through support from the Regional Council and CDC members.



The ways forward

1. To share and discuss the diagnosis with the management and councillors and agree on the strategy to implement for enhancing public participation and improving relationship between Khomas Regional Council and its inhabitants;
2. To set up workgroups per activity with the aim of defining the objectives, outputs expected and formulate a work plan and schedule;
3. To implement the activities in line with the strategy on public participation.

This survey was the first of its kind in Namibia. A first assessment survey was conducted in the Khomas region to define the modalities for the rest of the country.

16. Analysis of Internship

During my stay in the Khomas Regional Council, I participated in a variety of activities that encompassed a whole myriad of issues: These included: Attending the Council Meetings; Regional Development Coordination Committee meeting; and training workshops; Researched legislations for information on scope of practice issues and analysed current bills in the National Assembly and National Council to compare and contrast differences pertaining to participatory democracy and public participation. The intern must admit that enormous experience has been attained from the internship programme. The Internship programme enabled the intern to achieve the expected goals, more specially, the functions of Directorate of Planning and Development Services and the roles and functions of the Development Planners in the region. The intern thought that the duties of Development Planners are to facilitate, identify, coordinate, and implement plans, projects and programmes in the region.

Since the internship was the first of its kind in the Khomas Regional Council, I encountered some difficulties. It is for this reason that the internship was different from what the intern had anticipated, in the sense that there were no pre-planned and prepared activities for the intern.

In the same vein, the Khomas Regional Council through the Directorate of Planning and Development Services is entrusted and mandated with the facilitation, selection and coordination of decentralized structures, namely Regional Development Coordination Committee (RDCC), Constituency Development Coordinating Committees (CDCCs), and Village Development Committees (VDCs). However, it was rumoured that in some constituencies, these structures are dormant and passive. Moreover, in Windhoek Rural Constituency, the community members argued that "*in community dynamics*, certain body, for example Constituency Development Committee (CDC), *can be snubbed*". It has been rumoured that CDCs have not been successfully elected in Windhoek Rural Constituency, because it has been rumoured that the Constituency Councillor has been instrumental in influencing the election

of CDC members. The sensitive nature of this information precludes me from mentioning its sources, however, it can be concluded that the question of political manoeuvring does warrant further investigation. The absence of public participation policy and legislation makes it difficult for Councillors to implement the public participation process in the region.

Moreover, it is striking to learn that some community members do not understand the concepts of public participation and participatory democracy. Neither do they know about the decentralization structures. It is disappointing to learn that Regional councillors are not attending the training workshops and do not make time for them, although some of them were available during the workshop. This is because some have other important commitments and others argued that they have other meetings at the same day. The training workshop was an eye opener for all staff involved in the decentralization process in the region.

Similarly, in terms of basic services provision to the population, the regional council does not really directly involve people, because the City of Windhoek is entrusted with the responsibility of providing urban basic services, namely water, electricity, road infrastructure, sanitation and waste management. Besides that, the region together with line ministry and power utilities (Nampower & Namwater) is supplying water and electricity to the rural areas.

It is for this reason that the researcher concluded that citizens have faith in the decentralisation process, because of its promise to perform better than the former system of centralisation with regard to the provision of basic community services. It is both a painstaking and costly exercise for the region to supply better quality, affordable and accessible services to a larger number of people, especially the less privileged part of the population.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to improve the daily life of the citizens through the provision of the following essential services, namely drinkable water, waste management and sanitation, urban transport, primary health care and education, street lighting and energy.

The intern learned and gained a lot during the internship programme. It is against this background that the literature review that the intern undertook at the University indicated that community development and sustainable development concepts are accentuated in the region. The three months internship in Khomas Regional Council Office not only provided the intern with a unique insight into the structure and the function of the Directorate of Planning and Development Services, but also offered the chance to go beyond the textbook understanding of the Namibian government. The key finding is that there is a poor involvement and little influential role of the lobbying organisations and other interest groups in regional development planning. Against this background, the researcher wishes to see the local NGOs and voluntary development organisations and their partners to participate fully and develop and or strengthen institutional structures at the regional level with the view to bringing them together. In addition, the researcher would like to see that planners need to know their “public” and its interests first hand. This will require, among other things, communication in plain language, cutting out planning jargon, thus allowing more people to contribute to the planning and participation process.

Furthermore, what the intern has noted and observed in the region is that there is a lack of information sharing among the residents. Community members should be made aware of any development projects in the region/constituency. Community members should be educated and informed on how to initiate their community and self-help projects. There is urgently a need to cement the coordination and relationship between stakeholders in the region for better planning and implementation of the development projects.

17. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, it is acknowledged that there are shortcomings with this research due to the lack of a wider range of interviewees from all Constituencies. However, the responses received in the Khomas Regional Survey largely support the assumptions made in the theory part of this document. It is evident that community participation is a complex matter and that communities themselves are complex entities. It is apparent that there are many internal and external influences that are brought to bear on the mediation of community participation that takes place in communities. In Khomas Region, community participation is mediated by the influence of the Regional Councillors, Council's staff and the community leaders.

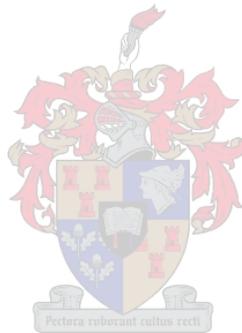
Moreover, in order to enhance community participation at the regional level, political officer-bearers and other community leaders should strive to increase the degree of their compliance to the necessary conditions for effective community/ public participation.

During the internship programme, the intern assisted with some of the minute taking and writing of the speeches. In addition to the major lessons and events outlined in the discussion, the intern learned about the role of the Regional Councillors and the significance of the Ordinary Council meeting in the region. This experience has proven priceless and has truly increased the researcher's understanding of the decentralisation process and the significance of community participation in the region.

The intern therefore recommends this to anyone thinking about doing internship at Khomas Regional Council. While every day in the office may not be completely exciting, it is still a very positive experience where one could learn a lot.

The most important insights can never be found in textbooks, journals or classrooms. Only by working within the decentralisation policy system can one understand how community leaders and politicians in the region think, and in doing so burst through the walls of the development planning labyrinth. The following specific recommendations, among others, should also be considered in the efforts to strengthen community participation:

- Create an atmosphere of citizens' advisory boards.
- Forge a constant consultation and collaboration between the Regional Council and citizens.
- Establish mechanisms through which citizens can initiate voluntary and interested groups to facilitate their participation in regional affairs.
- Create forums for meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences to discuss and debate pertinent issues and problems.
- Obtain a thorough analysis from a balanced group of community representatives.
- Strengthen the capacity of Regional Development Coordinating Committee (RDCC), Constituency Development Coordinating Committees (CDCs), Village Development Committees (VDCs), and Settlement Development Committees (SDCs).



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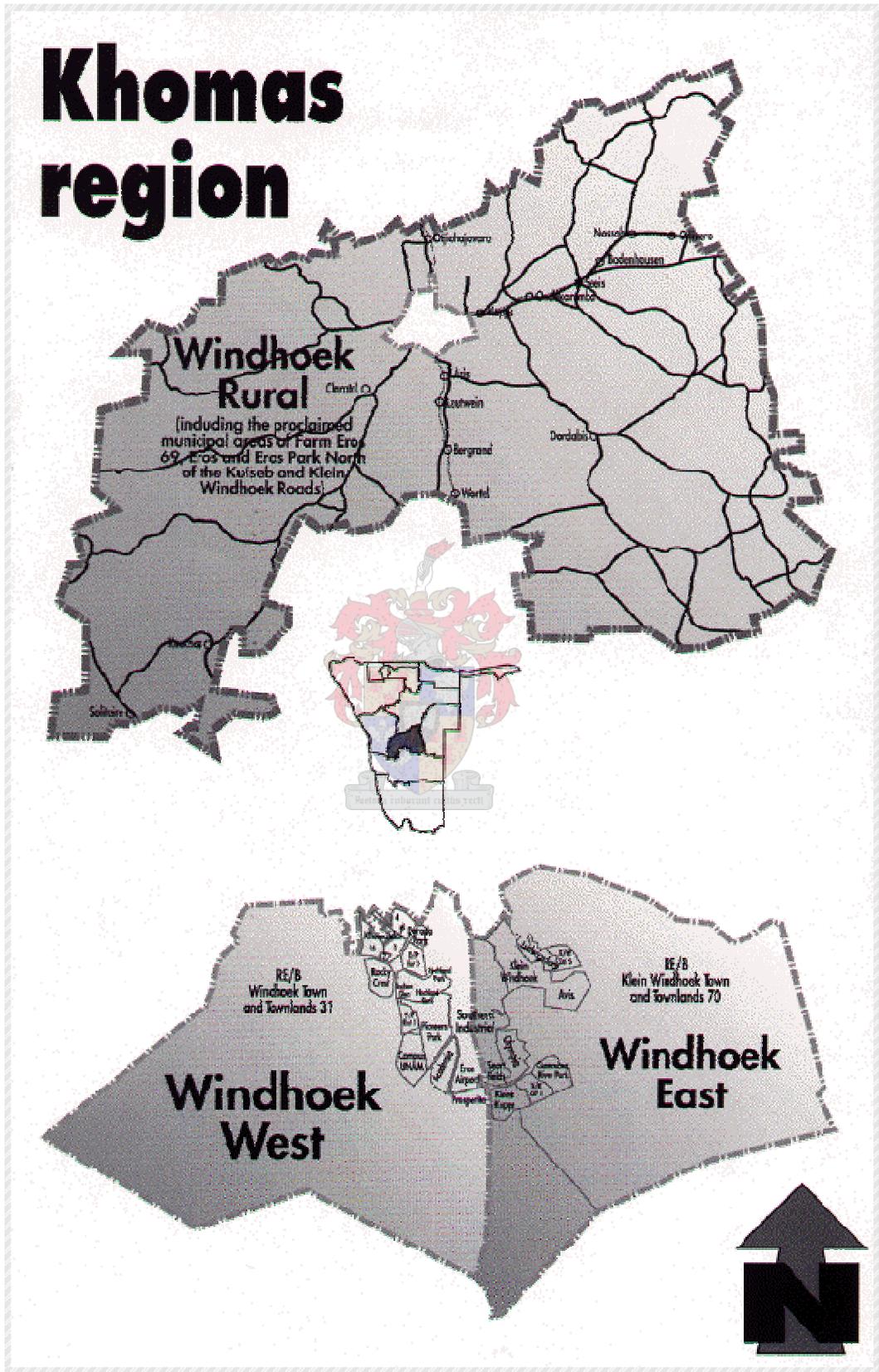
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19. Appendix



Khomas region (cont)

