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STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE: NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

by

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To God be the glory for without Him, none of this would have been possible.

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Abstract

This study investigated the stakeholder perceptions of engagement strategies affecting service delivery in the North West Province, Mahikeng Local Municipality which falls under the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, using a case study of the Lokaleng village. Lack of service delivery by the local municipalities has been the topic of various studies, and it has precipitated many service delivery protests in various communities. Among the reasons for protests around service delivery is the poor communication between the local municipalities and the communities they serve (CoGTA, 2009:4). Lokaleng village was identified as the case study due to its rural nature and because of the service delivery protests that have been experienced in the past.

Municipalities are mandated by the constitution and other legislations to promote stakeholder engagement in municipal affairs. As such, the communities and the municipalities would be on par with regard to their roles and expectation thereof.

This research was exploratory and qualitative. Semi-structured interviews with five focus groups and four individual interviews were conducted. Four personal interviews were conducted with the municipal representatives, one from the local municipality and the other from the Office of the Premier, as well as two community representatives, namely the Chief and the ward councillor. The findings indicate that the Mahikeng Local Municipality (MLM), which was selected as a sample from the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality (NMMDM) population has inadequate stakeholder engagement structures, which are also not properly utilised. This study therefore recommends that existing mechanisms and systems to promote stakeholder engagement in the MLM be continuously reviewed, enhanced and monitored as part of the on-going stakeholder engagement process.

Keywords

I, Refilwe Bloem, declare that the minor dissertation submitted to the University of Johannesburg for the Master’s degree in Strategic Communication is my original work, that all sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this mini-dissertation was not previously submitted by me or any other person for degree purposes at this or any other University.
# Table of Contents

AFFIDAVIT .................................................................................................................. II  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................................................................. III  
ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................... IV  

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS .................................................................................................................. 1  
1.1. Introduction ............................................................................................................ 1  
1.2. Problem Statement ............................................................................................... 2  
  1.2.1. Main Research Question .................................................................................. 3  
  1.2.2. Research Sub-Questions ................................................................................ 3  
  1.2.3. Research Aims ............................................................................................... 3  
1.3. Summary of Preliminary Literature Review ......................................................... 4  
1.4. Key Constructs and their Definitions .................................................................... 6  
1.5. Research Methodology ......................................................................................... 7  
1.6. Structure of the Study ........................................................................................... 9  
  1.6.1. Chapter 1: Introduction, research question and sub-questions, rationale of the study and theoretical perspective. .............................................................................. 9  
  1.6.2. Chapter 2: Literature review on stakeholder engagement strategies for service delivery ........................................................................................................... 10  
  1.6.3. Chapter 3: Methodology and analysis of the findings ...................................... 10  
  1.6.4. Chapter 4: Discussions and interpretation of the collected data ...................... 10  
  1.6.5. Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations ................................................ 10  

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW ........................................................................... 11  
2.1. Introduction .......................................................................................................... 11  
2.2. Theoretical Framework ......................................................................................... 13  
2.3. Stakeholder Theory and its Application in Government ........................................ 14  
2.4. Participatory Communication ............................................................................... 18  
2.5. Stakeholder Activism ............................................................................................ 20  
2.6. Communication as a vehicle for Stakeholder Engagement ................................... 21  
2.7. Background and Structure of Local Government ............................................... 23  
2.8. Traditional Leadership ......................................................................................... 26  
2.9. Integrated Development Planning ....................................................................... 27  
2.10. Batho Pele’s role in Stakeholder Engagement .................................................... 29  
2.11. Strategic Communication .................................................................................... 30  
2.12. Service Delivery through Public Participation and Stakeholder Engagement ...... 32  
  2.12.1. Public Participation ....................................................................................... 32  
  2.12.2. Stakeholder Engagement ............................................................................. 36  
  2.12.3. Service Delivery .......................................................................................... 38  
2.13. The King III and IV Reports Applied in Public Service ....................................... 39
2.14. Lokaleng Village under Mahikeng Local Municipality (MLM) in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality .............................................................................. 41
2.15. Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 44

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .................................................................. 46
3.1. Introduction ........................................................................................................... 46
3.2. Theoretical Statement ......................................................................................... 46
3.3. Research Question and Sub-Questions ................................................................. 47
   3.3.1. Main Research Question ............................................................................. 47
   3.3.2. Sub Research Questions ............................................................................. 47
   3.3.3. Research Aims .......................................................................................... 48
3.4. Research Approach ............................................................................................. 48
   3.4.1. Qualitative Method .................................................................................... 48
   3.4.2. Research Methodology .............................................................................. 48
3.5. Population and Sampling .................................................................................... 49
   3.5.1. Population .................................................................................................. 49
   3.5.2. Sampling Frame ......................................................................................... 49
   3.5.3. Sampling Method ....................................................................................... 49
   3.5.4. Sampling Size ............................................................................................ 50
3.6. Data Gathering ...................................................................................................... 50
   3.6.1. Methods (Interviews and Focus Groups) ...................................................... 50
   3.6.2. Procedure ................................................................................................ 52
3.7. Data Analysis and Display Report ...................................................................... 53
   3.7.1. Procedure ................................................................................................ 53
3.8. Measures of Quality .......................................................................................... 54
   3.8.1. Trustworthiness and Credibility ................................................................ 54

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS ..................................... 55
4.1. Introduction .......................................................................................................... 55
4.2. Demographics of Participants ........................................................................... 55
4.3. Themes emerging from the interviews ............................................................... 56

CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION ......................... 68
5.1. Introduction .......................................................................................................... 68
5.2. Findings ................................................................................................................ 68
5.3. Overview of the Study ......................................................................................... 71
   5.3.1. Main Research Question ............................................................................ 71
   5.3.2. Research Sub-Questions .......................................................................... 71
5.4. Research Contribution ......................................................................................... 71
5.5. The Findings in the Context of the Research Questions (RQ) ............................... 72
5.6. Discussion of the Findings .................................................................................. 75
5.7. Recommendations for the Local Municipality and the Community .................... 76
5.8. Limitations of the Study ....................................................................................... 78
5.9. Recommendations for future studies ..................................................................... 79
APPENDIXES .......................................................................................................................... 97
APPENDIX A: LETTER TO REQUEST PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH .......... 97
APPENDIX B: REQUEST TO CONDUCT INTERVIEW LETTER TO THE CHIEF ....... 99
APPENDIX C: GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE ......................................................... 101
APPENDIX D: COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE ......................................................... 109
APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP ......................................................................................... 116
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES .................................................................................... 122
LIST OF ANNEXURES ...................................................................................................... 123
Chapter 1. Introduction, Problem Statement and Research Questions

1.1. Introduction

South African government is familiar with service delivery protests by citizens both during the apartheid and post-apartheid years; these service delivery protests have been violent and non-violent. Violent service delivery protests include the barricading of main roads and burning down of public infrastructures such as clinics, libraries, schools and private property (Von Holdt & Kirsten, 2011). Reasons for service delivery protests (violent and non-violent) are similar in all provinces in the country, South Africa; they include (but are not limited to) corrupt councillors, nepotism, and poor basic service delivery (Ndlovu, 2015). It is the primary responsibility of government to take services to the people and, most importantly, to engage with them on matters that affect them. Government has three spheres, namely national, provincial and local. These spheres are interdependent and interrelated, making the local government responsible for the provision of basic service delivery to their immediate communities (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

The South African Police Services released data to Media24, showing that between 2009 and 2012 more than 3 000 service delivery protests were recorded countrywide; it further revealed that protests occurred once in every two days (Saba & Van der Merwe, 2013). During the four years of 2009 to 2012, Mmabatho in North West Province had one of the highest number of service delivery protests, one occurring every 4.7 days (Saba & Van der Merwe, 2013). Data collected by Municipal Data and Intelligence (Municipal IQ, 2015), revealed that from 2004 to 2014 the North West Province’s local municipalities recorded a rate of 12% for all service delivery protests. The percentage remained the same in the first nine months of 2015 and only dropped by 2% between October and December 2015 (Municipal IQ, 2014; 2015). Municipal IQ further revealed that the North West Province experienced 7% of service delivery protests between January 2016 and April 2016 (Municipal IQ, 2016). Moreover, the cost of the service delivery protests was high for both business and government, according to Grant Thornton’s International Business Report for 2016. The protests negatively affected the South African business by 61%, which also increased the cost of water, electricity and tax (inFrastructurene, 2016). Therefore, there is a need to explore the reasons behind such percentages; most importantly, to find out what the affected communities think about municipalities’ engagement strategies.
Effective and efficient communication is an essential element in the process of building and maintaining relationships of all kinds; it is also important for upholding the support and commitment of all stakeholders (Bourne, 2006). Literature on service delivery protests point to a lack of effective and efficient communication between government and its stakeholders, more so those in rural areas. Cele (2015) suggests that “service delivery failures are a consequence of the break-down of relationships and communication between government, citizens, policy makers and service providers.” In addition to insufficient communication Botes, Lenka, Marais & Matebesi (2008) determined that poor governance, individual political struggles and poor strategic planning are among the reasons behind service delivery protests. However, as different as these reasons may be, they all indicate to insufficient and/or poor communication; hence the importance of this study to specifically look into the perceptions that stakeholders have about the engagement strategies that the municipality uses.

1.2. Problem Statement

Strategic communication principles involve, amongst others, collaboration between stakeholders and organisations and, most importantly, incorporation of their needs, ideas and objectives into government policies that affect their existence (Overton-de Klerk & Oelofse, 2010:388); going against such principles has in many instances resulted in service delivery protests. Sebungwawo’s (2011) findings concur with Overton-de Klerk & Oelofse (2010), he stated that some of the reasons communities protest are because of poor communication from local government. Furthermore, communities often feel that government only communicate effectively when they are campaigning for elections. The local government’s communication approaches are often regarded as top-down communication where communities are told what they need, and what they will be given, without really having an engaging dialogue with them first (Sebungwawo, 2011). An example of how government failed to communicate can be seen in Hebron in Cape Town, 2014, when government built a bridge over a main road, which was a good idea; however, what the poor community needed most was clean running water (Mlandu, 2014). This study was necessitated by the limited literature on the role of communication in service delivery protests, and also the perceptions that communities as stakeholders have on how the Mahikeng local municipality engages them on service delivery issues.

As a result of high unemployment levels, Lokaleng village is one of the poor communities in the Mahikeng local municipality which falls under Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality that
lacks basic services from the municipality such as clean and running water, flushing toilets, housing and employment. Nkomo’s findings (2017:13) also suggest that villages are at a great disadvantage when it comes to delivery of basic services.

To date no proper study has been conducted in the North West Province on stakeholder engagement strategies that the local government employs to interact with their stakeholders in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District, Mahikeng local municipality. Managa (2012) identified issues such as lack of public participation as some of the reasons for the prevalence of service delivery protests in the country, and attributes its frequency to a failure to establish open lines of communication between government and its stakeholders. It is against this background that this study aims to investigate stakeholder perception of engagement strategies affecting service delivery in the North West Province: Ngaka Modiri Molema District. To guide the investigation, the following aims and questions have been formulated:

1.2.1. Main Research Question

How are stakeholder engagement strategies used by Mahikeng local municipality to ensure service delivery in the community of Lokaleng?

1.2.2. Research Sub-Questions

- How does Mahikeng Local Municipality engage the community of Lokaleng village?
- How does the Mahikeng Local Municipality implement their stakeholder engagement strategy in relation to the stakeholder theory?
- How does the community of Lokaleng village perceive the stakeholder engagement strategies used by the Mahikeng Local Municipality?

1.2.3. Research Aims

- To determine how Mahikeng Local Municipality engages the community of Lokaleng village.
- To investigate how Mahikeng Local Municipality implements their stakeholder engagement strategies.
- To assess how the community of Lokaleng village perceive the stakeholder engagement strategies used by the Mahikeng Local Municipality.
- To describe how stakeholder engagement strategies are used by Mahikeng local municipality to ensure service delivery in the community of Lokaleng.
1.3. **Summary of Preliminary Literature Review**

Strategic communication came about as a result of the paradigmatic shift from a modern to a postmodern approach, and it requires a holistic approach towards engaging stakeholders (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič, Sriramesh, 2007). Stakeholders are now more than ever exposed to various forms of communication; they know what gratifies them and what doesn’t. However, government is still stuck on informing, consultation forums instead of an actual partnership with communities: co-producing, co-designing, co-deciding, as recommended by strategic communication (Perret & Mercoiret, 2003).

Overton-de Klerk and Verwey (2013:374) outlined the shifts in paradigm as moving from divergence to convergence, monologue to dialogue, and top-down to bottom-up communication. These shifts have emphasised the importance of active inclusion of stakeholders in public issues that affect their livelihood. Studies by Gildenhuys & Knipe (2000), Managa (2012), Ndhlouvu (2015) and Ngidi (2013), have found that lack of communication is one of the contributors towards incidents of unrest in the country. By reviewing these studies, one finds that communication is influential and essential in sustaining and maintaining relationships of all kinds, and that getting feedback from stakeholders is an important aspect in determining future actions. In many instances, the government employs a one-way communication process where they transmit messages to the general public using linear communication channels, such as newspapers, radio and television. Some of the stakeholders may not even receive it at all, due to lack of access to finances and social opportunities (Basara & Jelagat, 2013). Given the limited channels of communication in poor communities, it is important that government makes use of accessible channels to share information, to discuss issues affecting their community, and to improve public participation and deliver needed services.

One of the relevant theories in studying stakeholder engagement is Stakeholder Theory, it states that stakeholders are anyone affected by the decisions of a business or government whether directly or indirectly. When managers make decisions, not only do they affect the business itself, but most importantly, they also affect the very people who make use of their services. Freeman (1984:46) defined stakeholders as “those groups and individuals that can affect or are affected by the accomplishment of organisational purpose”, without the support of these groups organisations cease to exist. Bingham, Nabatchi and O’Leary (2005) suggest that when the Stakeholder Theory is applied in government, citizens must be involved in decision-making since they are the primary stakeholders and users of government services. Application of this theory encourages government to move away from delivering then informing stakeholders to involving and collaborating with them.
The outcome of the 2016 South African elections is an example of what effect lack of service delivery and stakeholder engagement can have. In this instance citizens did not stage a service delivery protest; instead, they let their votes speak for them, thereby shifting power from the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC) to other political parties, resulting in the ANC’s first major election setback since it took power in 1994. People were tired of poor service delivery, poor communication and lack of transparency (Graham-Harrison, 2016). However, the North West Province was one of the provinces where ANC regained its victory particularly in the Mahikeng local municipality (Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2016).

The South African White Paper on Local Government (Republic of South Africa, 1998a) developed the eight Batho Pele principles with the objective of improving the service delivery standard and promoting active participative local government. These principles are an approach to get public servants committed to serving people, and to find ways of improving service delivery (Pietersen, 2014). The principles are about fast-tracking service delivery, and putting people first. The Batho Pele Principles involves creating a framework for the delivery of public services that treats citizens more like customers. They play an important role in curbing service delivery protests by providing a benchmark of how services should be provided in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government. Gildenhuys and Knipe (2000), and Ngidi (2013), agree that the application of these principles will enhance and hopefully guarantee the provision of satisfactory services that are in line with communities’ needs and expectations. Committed application of the principles will also uphold the government’s mandate and promise that access to public services is no longer a privilege to be enjoyed by a few, but the rightful expectation of all citizens regardless of their background (Department of Cooperative Governance, 2010). However, these principles do not really address the issue of engagement outside government offices.

The primary role of local government is to provide basic services, to encourage involvement of communities and organisations in local government matters, promote economic and social development for all South African citizens who are also stakeholders of government (Western Cape Government, 2015). It is therefore important to define what citizens and stakeholders are, since they are both served by government at national, provincial or local level. Citizens are defined as people who stand outside the formal public administration system; they are those people who demand and expect certain services from the government (Meyer, Cupido & Theron, 2002, cited in Van Wyk, B., Van der Molen, K. and Van Rooyen, A. (eds) 2002). Outcomes-based governance: assessing the results. Sandown: Heinemann. Every citizen is equal and has a right to the rights and privileges of being a citizen of South Africa (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Clarkson (1995), defines a stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of
the organisation’s objectives”. Greenwood (2007), defines stakeholder engagement as a process in which organisations involve stakeholders in a positive beneficiary manner in organisational activities. Therefore, community members, as citizens and stakeholders of government, are affected by whatever the government does, be it the formulation laws and policies, the services that they render such as clean water, electricity and infrastructure, communities must be involved from the beginning to enable alignment of demand and supply, co-creation, co-production and knowledge-sharing. Moreover, involving citizens in the processes of governance enhances achievement of transparency, accountability and efficiency in decision-making (Chène, 2008).

Engagements between government and various communities have been characterised by protests for a long time, subjecting the communities to suffering. In order to collect representative data both the community and local municipality were included in the research design for this study. Stakeholders and citizens need a government that is more interactive and collaborative, and encourages public participation – a government that seeks partnership with its stakeholders, in order to resolve complex economic, environmental, political and service delivery challenges in South Africa and the world (Boxerlaar, Paine & Beilin, 2006:113).

1.4. Key Constructs and their Definitions

**Stakeholder engagement** is a process in which organisations involve stakeholders in a positive manner in organisational activities (Greenwood, 2007:315).

**Engagement Strategy** is a plan of actionable activities by an organisation to work collaboratively with, and through, groups of stakeholders to address issues affecting their social well-being. It is a key component within the organisation’s broader social strategy (Fawcett, Paine-Andrews, Francisco, Schultz, Richter, Lewis, Williams, Harris, Berkley, Fisher & Lopez, 1995).

**Perception** is defined as “the process by which an individual receives, selects and interprets stimuli to form a meaningful and coherent picture of the world” (Schiffman, Bednall, Cowley, O’Cass, Watson & Kanuk, 2001:148).

**Service delivery** is defined as the provision of sustainable services by government to the citizens as required by the Constitution of the Republic South Africa, 1996 Chipu (2011). The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997) defines public service delivery as “an ability of any public institution to deliver services to the communities in an efficient and effective manner”.

Chief is defined as “a person who, by virtue of his ancestry, occupies the throne or stool of an area and who has been appointed to it in accordance with the customs and tradition of the area and has traditional authority over the people of that area [,] or any other persons appointed by instrument and order of the government to exercise traditional authority over an area or a tribe” (Mthandeni, 2012).

Local government is the third sphere of government that implements national planning and policies instituted in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), it responds to local needs, interests and expectations of communities. It is further described as the first point of contact between communities and government (Thornhill, 2008:492).

Public participation is defined as the inclusion of the people in problem-solving and decision-making processes that affect them (Bryson & Carroll, 2002).

Strategic Communication is a “stakeholder centred approach to promoting changes in people’s attitudes, knowledge and behaviour to achieve a development objective” (Mcloughlin, Scott & Haider, 2011).

Poverty is defined by Pantazis, Gordon & Levitas (2006), as a state of disadvantage, a state of dispossession which is consequently qualified within a specific context to be associated with lack of income, isolation and vulnerability.

1.5. Research Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature and will be conducted within the parameters of the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretive paradigm is closely aligned with the postmodern approach, which emphasises interaction between the researcher and their participants. Lichtman (2006) suggests that interpretivism requires an inductive approach to the collection of data that specifically focuses on the study and ending in the drawing of conclusion based on the collected data, and supported by literature.

Lokaleng is a village that falls under Mahikeng Local Municipality which was selected as a sample from the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, the village was chosen as a case study for the current study. A case study design is defined as an approach to research that focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of individuals, groups, a particular entity or event at a specific time (Yin, 2003). Creswell (2003) further defined a case study as problem to be studied and solved. This design is appropriate for this research because it aimed to find out “what is happening” or “what has happened?” which formed a holistic understanding of engagement strategies of the local municipality.
and the perceptions of stakeholders thereof (Yin, 2003). In the case of the Lokaleng village, service delivery protests took place as a result of lack of communication and non-delivery of basic services that the community lacked.

North West is one of the nine provinces in South Africa that is mostly populated by Setswana-speaking people. Mining contributes 23% to the province’s economy, and makes up more than a fifth of the South African mining industry as a whole (North West Development Corporation, 2016). The province is divided into four municipal which are then subdivided into local municipalities. The study focused on the Ngaka Modiri Molema district municipality that is divided into five local municipalities, namely Mahikeng, Ramotshere Moiloa, Ratlou, Ditsobotla and Tswaing. For the purpose of the study the researcher focused on the Mahikeng local municipality that encompasses 28 wards. Mafikeng Local Municipality has a 33% of the minimum-level income earners, making it the local municipality with the largest underprivileged population in the North West Province (Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality website, 2016). This Local Municipality further has an unemployment rate of 38% making it the largest unemployment rate in the Municipality, according to the aforementioned website.

Lokaleng village falls under ward 6 of the Mahikeng local municipality. It is a smaller community of about 5 000 people, and it is poor, lacking basic services from the municipality (The Lonely Road Foundation, 2007). The selection of the population of the study location was moreover based on factors such as the living conditions that the communities find themselves in, such as a lack of road infrastructure and clean water. Many community members depend on government for social grants (Statistics SA, 2011).

The researcher used non-probability methods for selecting the sample for study. In a non-probability sample, units are purposefully selected which does not give all the individuals an equal opportunity to be selected and form part of the sample. The sample is not intended to be statistically representative, instead it is based on the subjective judgement of the researcher and the characteristics of the population are used as the basis of selection. It is this feature that makes non-probability samples suited to qualitative studies. Purposive sampling, according to Neuman (1997:206), is used mainly in field research and in exploratory research and researchers uses it to select a unique and informative sample that is representative of the community. The researcher used five focus groups consisting of five to seven members each from Lokaleng village as the case study participants of this study. Participants had to be between the ages of 18 – 25 and 26 – 65, because people in that age category are adults and are either at tertiary institutions or economically active and/or retired. The selected participants had to include individuals that understand their rights, and publicly participate in
community life. The research data was collected through semi-structured focus groups interviews, because this data collection method encourages a two-way communication in which the researcher seeks answers from participants by asking them questions related to the study under investigation (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

The focus group method is useful for exploring people’s knowledge and experiences, what they think and why they think that way (Kitzinger, 1995:299). Semi-structured interviews also provide both the researcher and participants flexibility to ask follow-up questions and in giving answers. Due to the limited number of officials, the researcher conducted individual in-depth interviews with them to determine the strategies they use. This method allowed the researcher to collect more detailed information; however, one of the disadvantages is that respondents tend to be biased in such interviews. Hence it is important that the interviewer implement controls for participant bias (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

Local government officials who deal with stakeholder engagement strategies were interviewed to determine the engagement strategies used by them. However, due to the limited number of staff within the unit, only three middle and senior officials were included in the sample.

Interviews were conducted in Setswana because of the low level of English literacy amongst members of the community. Responses were then translated into English and transcribed for analysis.

Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyse and report patterns (themes) from the collected and transcribed interview data and it was also useful in examining perspectives of different research participants. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this approach will assist in determining broader patterns in the interview answers, allowing for a more detailed analysis.

1.6. Structure of the Study

The study has been structured as follows:

1.6.1. Chapter 1: Introduction, research question and sub-questions, rationale of the study and theoretical perspective.

In Chapter 1 the topic is introduced and the background of the study outlined. The research questions that directed the focus of the study are formulated, and the rationale and theoretical perspective discussed.
1.6.2. **Chapter 2: Literature review on stakeholder engagement strategies for service delivery.**

This chapter focused on reviewing other studies similar to the current study, serving as comparison and points of reference for various aspects addressed in this study.

1.6.3. **Chapter 3: Methodology and analysis of the findings.**

In this chapter the research design, sampling procedure, participant population as well as the methods of data collection used are discussed.

1.6.4. **Chapter 4: Discussions and interpretation of the collected data.**

The focus of this chapter is on interpreting the collected data and analysing it by means of thematic analysis.

1.6.5. **Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations.**

This chapter concludes the study and makes recommendations based on the findings.
Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This literature review seeks to examine the main body of qualitative research on the stakeholder engagement strategies and/or public participation that are used in the public sector. One of the overarching ideas based on the reviewed literature is the essential role that stakeholders play in organisations as well as in government; one may go as far as to say that they are key to the success of both the private and public sector. The early work on strategic communication according to Stenberg (2012) finds its roots in the military history during the war era. Brooks (2011) who wrote a paper on the “Evolution of Strategic Communication and Information operation since 9/11” defined strategic communication as an considerate understanding of issues of stakeholder perception, a response into policy making, planning and operations at all levels as well as the arrangement of actions, images and words in support of policy objectives. While Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič, Sriramesh, (2007) asserts that strategic communication came about as a result of the paradigmatic shift from a modern to a post-modern approach and it requires a holistic approach towards engaging stakeholders. Both definitions commonly show that such communication is receiver focused rather than sender focused hence the greatest strength of governments and organisations are its people. Therefore, the channels used for communication play an important part.

This section will look into the theories that support the notion that successful relationships with stakeholders are essential to an organisation and/or government success. In support of the theories are the prescripts that government have in place to further boost the participation of their various stakeholders.

As communication evolved in democratic countries the necessity to listen to the citizens’ needs and work with them to ensure that services delivered are exactly what is requested or are at least close to their needs is evident (Swart, 2013). Swart’s (2013)utterance is in direct relation to what stakeholder theory advocates for, stakeholder engagement in where citizen say what they need and government work collaboratively to achieve and fulfil such needs. By listening to stakeholder, the municipality will also be able to establish how the community wants to be engaged. South African government is familiar with service delivery protests by citizens from during the apartheid and post-apartheid years; these protests have been violent and also non-violent. Data compiled by the Municipal IQ (2012) indicates that 113 service delivery protests were recorded in 2012, surpassing the 2011 figures of 81 protests (Municipal IQ, 2008). Academic researches on the subject have identified the reasons behind the service delivery protests as corrupt councillors, nepotism, poor basic service delivery and lack of
stakeholder engagement. Atkinson (2007) argues that the lack of skilled management and communication systems are a significant cause of community protests in the country. Effective and efficient communication is an essential element in the process of building and maintaining relationships of all kinds, it is also important for upholding the support and commitment of all stakeholders (Bourne, 2006). However, the literature on service delivery protests show a lack of effective and efficient communication between government and its stakeholders, more so those in rural areas. Cele (2015) suggested that “service delivery failures are a consequence of the break-down of relationship and communication between government, citizens, policy makers and service providers.” In addition to poor or a lack of communication, Botes et al. (2008) identified that poor governance, individual political struggles and poor strategic planning are among the reasons behind service delivery protests. However, as different as these reasons may be, they all alert to the lack of and/or poor communication. Therefore, the current study will specifically look into the perceptions that stakeholders have about the engagement strategy that the municipality use.

Media reports show that the North West Province is amongst the provinces that suffer from service delivery protests. Media reports further depict that the spheres of government communicate when they campaign for elections (Sebungwawo, 2011). Their method of communication is often regarded as top-down where communities are told what they need and what they will be given without really having an engaging dialogue with them first (Sebungwawo, 2011). This study was necessitated by the limited literature on the stakeholder’s perceptions regarding the stakeholder engagement strategies that government uses to engage on matters of service delivery and decisions making that affect them. Therefore, this section reviews some of the literature on stakeholder engagement and strategies that the government uses, with the focus in Lokaleng village in the North West Province in Mahikeng Local Municipality under the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. It further discusses the theoretical framework that guided the study, the background of the local municipalities and stakeholder engagement and/or public participation legislation.

It is worth noting that the seminal sources have been used because of the influence they have on the thinking and overall body of knowledge on the current study.
2.2. Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder theory was made prominent by Freeman, E.R., who is known as the father of stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984). The stakeholder theory encourages and promotes stakeholder engagement between organisations, governments and citizens as it puts more emphasis on prioritisation of stakeholders needs ahead of those of organisations and governments. Freeman (2004) defines stakeholders as “those groups who are vital to the survival and success of the corporation”. While the importance of stakeholder management in public sector remains the same as in the private sector, the pressures and challenges facing public sector are different” (Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, 2009). And it must be taken into consideration that public sector works in a very complex environment, and deals with a wide range of different stakeholders. Some of the challenges that government are faced with are Maphazi, Raga, Taylor, & Manyekiso (2013) argue that even though stakeholder engagement is good for government and its citizen such activity could slow service delivery, as it is a time consuming and often expensive process. Furthermore, it increases transparency, accountability and fosters trust through communication between stakeholders and organisations and/or governments. According to Greenwood (2007:315), stakeholder engagement is a process in which organisations involve stakeholders in organisational activities in a positive manner. Freeman (2004) defines stakeholders as “those groups who are vital to the survival and success of the corporation”. For the purpose of the current study, the following statement should be considered: “Public sector works in a very complex environment, and deals with a wide range of different stakeholders. While the importance of stakeholder management remains the same as in the private sector, the pressures and challenges facing public sector are different” (Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, 2009). Such challenges include dispersed locations of stakeholders, which in most instances makes it difficult for government to provide services accordingly. However, it is important that government constantly engages with its stakeholders, more so those in rural areas because they are more disadvantaged than those in urban areas, such will assist in establishing the appropriate channels of communication, it will also assist in coming up with ways to address challenges collaboratively and provision of the needed services. Within the literature there are disagreements over the stakeholder theory. While Sternberg (1997) argues that the stakeholder theory does not deliver on improvement that it claims it would in relation to the relationship and stakeholder engagement between organisations, governments and stakeholders. And she further contends that the stakeholder theory misguides and will not improve performance of institutions nor their conduct. Freeman, Harrison and Wicks (2007) asserts that stakeholder theory promotes a more practical and normative approach to managing organisations in a highly complex and turbulent environment. Of course where people come together to decide on issues, challenges of disagreements will always be
there, however the stakeholder theory gives organisations and governments an opportunity to put themselves in the shoes of their stakeholders so as they may have an appreciation of the important role that these stakeholders play. Put simply, stakeholders are central to the existence of any organisation and government.

The concept of stakeholder engagement has received considerable attention from academics due to the important role that stakeholders play in the success and/or failure of organisations. Public and private sectors serve different interest groups and given the large scope of the public sector’s stakeholders, it is subject to much greater scrutiny. Rixon (2010) contend that the stakeholders in the public sector hold higher expectations of the service levels they demand, and expect to be consulted or provided with an opportunity to participate in strategic decisions and initiatives of government. Flak and Rose (2005) contend that apart from the profit focus of organisation, there is no essential conceptual mismatch between the objective and mandate of government and the stakeholder theory. The Public sector, unlike the private sector, represents all citizens of all backgrounds who require various services such as proper maintenance of roads, curbing of crime and corruption, water and electricity, and so forth. Therefore government is not only there for the benefit of the poor in rural areas but also for the rich in suburbs; the only difference lies in the kind of services required. However, those in rural areas are the most affected by the lack of effective service delivery, which has often been ascribed to lack of employment and high rate of illiteracy (Nkomo, 2017). In terms of the Republic of South Africa’s Constitution (1996), government must provide services in order to enhance the living standards of citizens; it further has to enforce laws that all South African citizens must abide by. Failure by government to deliver basic services has on many an occasions led to service delivery protests. Such protests also have a negative impact on the economy of a particular province or even the country. These negative outcomes result from damage to public and private properties, like the looting of shops and employees not going to work affect the productivity and economy of the country. Investors also do not want to invest their money in a country that is unstable. According to a report released by Grant Thornton South Africa (2016), 61% of the business executives confirmed that the government’s service delivery protests had negatively affected their business.

2.3. Stakeholder Theory and its Application in Government

The origin of the stakeholder theory is found in the business science literature, its purpose was to ensure that interests of stakeholders are taken into consideration through engagements when taking
strategic business decisions (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholder theory is concerned with the nature of the relationships between organisations and their stakeholders as well as the practices and results thereof of these relationships for both the organisations and their stakeholders (Wiggins & Jones, 2005). Wilcox and Cameron (2009) affirmed that the utilisation of stakeholder theory is a measure of proactivity because a relationship is already built and sustained; therefore in times of crisis the stakeholders have faith in the organisation and / or government. In the public sector the ownership structure and mandate to serve all citizens seem compatible with the normative core of stakeholder theory (Flak & Rose, 2005). Based on the positive results of the theory, public sector employed the theory in their environment with the aim of engaging with their stakeholders on service delivery and other decision-making matters that would, in turn, strengthen the relationship between government and its various stakeholders.

Stakeholder theory puts emphasis on creating value for customers and stakeholders at large; it maintains that each stakeholder group is important to the success of an organisation (Freeman, 2010). Similarly, government’s stakeholders also play an important role in ensuring that services are delivered, for instance the working class pay tax so that government can continue to give free basic services to those who are less fortunate, or those who reside in rural areas with little or no form of income. The increasing population of citizens make it difficult for the government to meet all the demands of services. As a result of non-delivery stakeholders who struggle with getting free basic services from government end up bringing action against management in a form of protests for its failure to provide the required services (Freeman, 2004). Depending on the stakeholder engagement strategies and processes employed, these protests can last long or just for a short while. Previous studies have suggested that lack of communication between stakeholders and government is among the causes of such protests.

Stakeholder theory has three approaches, namely descriptive, instrumental and normative (Freeman, 1984):

- The descriptive approach attempts to determine whether or not organisations consider stakeholders’ interests.
- The instrumental approach is more concerned with the effects of stakeholder management at organisational performance level.
- The normative approach is concerned with reasons why stakeholders’ interests should be considered.

According to Freeman (2001), stakeholder theory encourages management to consult and consider the ideas of stakeholders when developing their strategies, as investing in relationships is essential
for the long-term success of the organisation. The same goes for government: it needs to engage with communities on issues of service delivery, governance and policy developments. This theory postulates that the existence of organisations is dependent on stakeholders’ interest as they are the ones who utilises goods and service of the organisation; as such, the same would apply to government, as it generates capital from the working class to provide good and services to all stakeholders.

Stakeholder theory states that the needs of all stakeholders irrespective of background are to be considered. Arguably the type of improvement that stakeholder theory requires is how the diverse interests of stakeholders could be reconciled (Weiss, 1999).

The normative stakeholder theory suggests that managers must pay attention to stakeholders and that relationships with such stakeholders should be based on moral commitment rather than on maximising profits (Berman, Wicks, Kotha & Jones, 1999). Donaldson and Preston (1995) concur that managers should enter into mutually supportive and beneficial relationships with their stakeholders because it is morally right. The normative stakeholder theory ties in well with the emerging paradigm shift of collaboration to resolving mutual issues between stakeholders and organisations according to De Klerk and Verwey (2013). Overton-de Klerk and Oelofse (2010) identified shifts in strategic communication as moving from top-down to bottom-up, monologue to dialogue, consensus to dissent, control to self-organisation, social responsibility to accountability, activism and integration and co-creation. Strategic communication suggests that management may no longer issue top-down decisions on what the community needs without having had a collaborative engagement with them first. Communication flow within the strategic communication approach is inclusive and collaborative, it promotes participation regardless of one’s position or level. It therefore allows for co-creation in solution generation through bottom-up participation in stakeholder dialogue.

The normative approach is not hypothetical but definite; it states, in effect, ‘Do (don’t do) this because it is the right (wrong) thing to do’. Freeman (1999) argues that the existence of a normative realm, independent from actual human values and beliefs, is a narrative that has long outlived its efficacy.

Eyinna (2013) argues that stakeholder theory is not ethical; he further states that the theory is fundamentally strategic and fortuitously normative. Having said that, the normative approach is more suitable in government because relationships with stakeholders are based on normative, moral commitments rather than on a desire to use those stakeholders solely to make profits.

System theory concurs with stakeholder theory that emphasis is on interactions between organisations and/or government and their various stakeholders and the outcome of those interactions (Blumberg, 2008:21). It is important that knowledge be shared with stakeholders to enable common ground to be
reached on issues of concern. For instance, if a community needs a clinic, and government wants to build a road instead, then government’s reasons behind such a decision must be clearly explained to the community so that they understand. Bertalanffy (2013) suggests that systems are open to, and interact with their environment; it is concerned with the holistic and integrative exploration of phenomena and events. It further focuses on complex interrelationships among citizens (Mele, Pels & Polese, 2010). Moreover, the systems theory leans towards the use of two-way communication. This theory is also applicable in government due to the many existing systems, stakeholders, legislation that must all work together to fulfil the mandate of delivering services to its citizens. According to Ritzer (1992:220) the systems theory sees the society as a big system, composed of a number of interdependent parts.

Grunig & Huang (2000: 31) argue that the systems theory fails to answer the question of how an organisation determines what elements of the environment are important for its success and which are not. Furthermore, it is argued whether the systems theory can actually capture the complexity of engagements and inter-relationships that exists, whether formally or informally Grunig & Huang (2000: 31).

No one system can be holistic on its own, continuous improvement ought to take place, as much as not all stakeholder will agree on certain services and policies, of importance is the prioritisation of what stakeholders need hence the importance of interactions.

The Excellence theory concurs with the Stakeholder and Systems theories; it promotes the flow of communication between stakeholders in a two-way symmetrical communication model. This model submits that for effective and efficient stakeholder engagement to occur there needs to be compromise, negotiation and strategies of stakeholder engagement that bring about change in the attitudes and behaviour of stakeholders (Grunig & Grunig, 2008). In contrast Holtzhausen (2000) debates that the two-way symmetrical concept is imbalanced in relation to power in that it leads to manipulations and control over stakeholders.

Over and above the excellence theory plays an important role in ensuring that relationships between the organisations, government and various stakeholder is of value and contributes positively to the livelihood of those involved.

Accordingly, the Communicative Action theory proposes that the fair, equal, empowering and beneficial participation of stakeholders in policy decision-making and governance-related matters is important and results in having better-informed and involved citizens (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007:4; Habermas, 1984). This theory is relevant in a democratic state such as South Africa, where there is
legislation that advocates for the engagement between state and the people on matters that affect their livelihood. Also embedded in the Communicative Action theory is the assumption that division and conflicts within communities can be resolved, and consensus on policies and services can be reached through communication (Harrison, 2007:219, as cited in Mohamed, 2009). Furthermore, proponents of this theory are encouraged to exercise their constitutional right to voice their opinions through interactive engagements. Moreover, worldviews are shared and discussed through a process of collective deliberation. Communicative action aims to achieve mutual agreement, common understanding of norms, goals, values and to maintain social relationships through formal and informal communication. Application of the communicative action theory would allow stakeholders, more so communities, to take an active role in determining their present and future with regard to the services they need. This theory further advocates that stakeholders have to be involved in governance matters, which is important in planning and resolving conflicts, arguments and misunderstanding, because it will result in improving government performance, thereby increasing stakeholder satisfaction (Miroshnikova, 2014).

Application of these theories in the context of municipality would benefit all stakeholders involved as they encourage and promote flow of communication, such will also assist the municipality in saving cost because they will not provide services that the community will later destroy.

### 2.4. Participatory Communication

Communication plays a fundamental role in participative decision-making. Effective communication, adequate information-sharing and proper communication channels enable the participation of stakeholders in decision-making. Communication structures as mechanisms for participation in organisational decision-making should be critically analysed, and such structures ought to ensure a participative environment that supports, but preferably also encourages stakeholders to become part of the participation (Mefalopulos, 2003).

From the perspective of public relations, corporate communication and strategic communication, communication is seen as a process that evolves along with the changes that take place in the lives of individuals, organisations and governments. It is therefore essential that communication should be studied in relation to the emerging paradigms that take place over time within the various levels of the system.
Participatory communication is a term that represents the theory and practices of communication used to consult and involve people in the decision-making and problem-solving process that may affect them (Mefalopulos, 2003). Although Gumucio (2001) contend that the theory of participatory communication still lacks a definite definition that could add to a better understanding of the concept. The characteristic of participatory communication is the horizontal exchange of information among all stakeholders involved, which is often identified with a dialogical approach where communication moves away from the traditional top-down models. The emphasis is more on a bottom-up communication approach in order to involve people in the decision-making process (Servaes, Jacobson, and White, 1996). Correspondingly, Overton-de Klerk and Verwey, (2013:371) suggest that a bottom-up approach shows the organisational leaders’ ability and willingness to involve stakeholders and listen to them in matters that affect them.

Participatory communication is defined as “an approach based on dialogue, which allows the sharing of information, perceptions and opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitating their empowerment, especially those who are most vulnerable and marginalised” (Mefalopulos & Tufte, 2009:9).

Participatory communication indicates that there is a need for a search of the most appropriate way to communicate and participate according to the culture, situation and/or stakeholders. It further requires an attitude of openness and a strong commitment to work with all people, especially the poorest and most marginalised ones, while also accepting that their empowerment will mean a loss of power for those in authority (Mefalopulos, 2003). Ali (2017) argue that participatory communication continues to be an ambiguous concept that needs to be dealt with or else it will continue to be a vague concept that could be used for any purpose.

Participatory communication is not merely feeding information to the poor, but rather, it is a dialogical and consultative process of exploring and producing new knowledge that address local needs (Servaes, 2005). Participatory Communication is an application that challenges the status quo by empowering the poor who are in most instances marginalised by society and government. Bessette (2004) contend that it is difficult, if not impossible, to use participatory communication for social change in situations where there is an absence of democracy, human rights, and freedom of expression given that such communication would promote transformation and bottom-up communication which would be conflict with dictatorship (absence of democracy) situations. Therefore, cultures that do not accommodate different points of view cannot promote the use of a participatory approach because they fear that practising such an approach would disadvantage them by decreasing their power. Moreover, while participatory communication should be the cornerstone of a democratic government,
the participatory mechanisms put in place such as ward councillors and committees, community meetings, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and most of the participatory forum are not used to their full potential (Mngoma, 2010). For instance, the Lokaleng community shared that the community meetings are not held regularly as they are supposed to be. The community further expressed their dissatisfaction with the IDP process.

Leeuwis (2000) contend that the participatory communication theory is unreasonable approach to addressing the challenges found in society. He further argues that the theory heavily depend on dialogue and society empowerment for the creation of conducive environment to share information and knowledge. Moreover, he stated that dialogue cannot address the socio-economic challenges due to its simple nature. Cooke and Khothari (2001) also argue that priority is given to the powerful members of society to make decisions on behalf of the society.

However, with dialogical communication, it is easy for the stakeholders to investigate development issues, propose solutions for problems, and reach consensus on developmental action. Furthermore, communication is considered to be a key factor for growth, development and success of organisations and governments alike (Mefalopulos, 2000). It should be taken into account that the knowledge and skills of the community members also play an essential role in determining effective participation.

Mefalopulos and Tufte (2009:4) suggest that participation might be regarded as the deployment of people to eradicate unfair hierarchies in economic, political and social systems. In addition, it recognises the contribution of stakeholders in the design and implementation of development initiatives within their various environments. There are however factors that can hinder the participatory approach, which include the geographically dispersed nature of the poor community settlements, the low rate of employment, low living standards, ill health status, illiteracy, lack and/or absence of exposure to local information culminating in ignorance of their right to determine their future with through full engagement in developmental initiatives (Heck, 20003:12).

**2.5. Stakeholder Activism**

Ethically and socially responsible organisations need to engage with multiple stakeholder groups not just for the purpose of compliance, but also as a way to enhance the organisation’s decision-making processes by ensuring that all those affected by decisions are included in all relevant conversations from start to finish. If this does not happen, one of the resulting consequences could be stakeholder activism.
Stakeholder activism is defined as a “social phenomenon that can be related to problem-solving actions by individuals or groups who coalesce around problematic situations created by organisational activities” (Kim & Sriramesh, 2009:81). According to Kim and Sriramesh (2009:81), activists groups start by inviting interested members with a common goal to join voluntarily, then they start fulfilling their purpose through various structures and mechanisms. This is most likely how service delivery protests are created. More often than not, service delivery protests stem from the collective community’s common concerns, where they organise themselves around a certain issue or issues that affect all of them. When these issues remain unresolved after having discussed them with councillors or other government officials, they resort to service delivery protests. This process can be viewed as similar to how activist groups identify a problem of which an organisation is a part; if it remains unresolved after efforts to address the issue, action is taken through formal protest to stop the organisation from continuing to operate in a particular manner. Activism can only be taken when there is enough number of participants who commonly feel strongly about a cause, service or lack thereof. If majority of community members stand together through protests demanding services from government, then government ensures that those services are provided because not providing those services tarnishes the already tarnished reputation of government, it gives the community to destroy the services that were already provided which in turn will cost government a lot of money that it does not have.

2.6. Communication as a vehicle for Stakeholder Engagement

Effective communication is when community involvement is a priority to empower citizens with information that will assist them in the identifying their needs, challenges; it includes intervention plans, and the implementation thereof (Chambers, 2008). Communication process often provides a critical connection among people, ideas and information to improve the success of the outcome. Oosthuizen, Koster, and De La Rey, (1998) contend that effective and efficient communication is neither easy nor simple, it is a rather complicated and poorly understood process, and as such it is results in failure of many engagements. It is important to note that, communication is a two-way process that is supposed to be beneficial to all participants. Hence, open, transparent and accountable government must make use of communication channels that enable a flow of information from the bottom-up. Furthermore, stakeholder engagement strategies cannot work without stakeholder communication. As such reference has been made to the participatory communication as an interactive process of discovering and creating new knowledge, solutions to problems that can address local needs (Servaes, 2008)).
Despite all the emphasis on the importance of communication, there is still lack of effective and efficient communication in government. Such a lack is evident from a review of available literature on the causes of service delivery protests, as they all point to the communication gap between government and its stakeholders, which is more prominent in rural areas. People in rural areas are more dependent on government’s provision of services than those living in urban areas due to lack of employment which makes them unable to provide for themselves (Booysen, 2010). According to Makale’s (2015) research, the majority of the social grant recipients live in rural areas and this places enormous strain on the budget allocations of rural municipalities, because more services are needed with limited funds to go around. These constraints increase pressure on rural municipalities to do more with less financial resources in order to ensure that every citizen has access to basic services. Such pressure has resulted in the many service delivery protests, especially because the municipalities do not communicate such shortcomings. However, a review of local government performance indicates that service delivery has improved in urban areas, thereby resulting in a reduced number of service delivery protests, whereas backlogs in rural areas are attended to at a very slow pace or, in some cases, ignored, resulting in an increased number of service delivery protests (Bogetić & Fedderke, 2006; Department of the National Treasury, 2011). Makale’s (2015) findings revealed that municipalities performing better had a lower unemployment rate, with fewer people living in poverty. This finding refers mainly to urban municipalities, presenting rural municipalities as problem areas within the country.

According to Cele (2015) communication plays an essential role in building and nurturing relations because lack of such has in many instances led to service delivery failures from the municipalities to its respective stakeholders. In addition to poor communication or a lack of it, Botes et al. (2008) found that poor governance, political struggle between individuals and poor strategic planning are among the reasons behind service delivery protests. However, as different as these reasons may be, they all point to insufficient and/or poor communication; hence it is important for this study is to consider how stakeholders see the engagement strategies that are used by local government structures to communicate service delivery matters. The report of the Department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) (2016), on an integrated urban development framework also suggests that the communication gap between government and community stakeholders impedes the realisation of rural development and poverty alleviation. The communication failures further contribute to underdevelopment because people cannot access the information they need to improve their livelihood (Bowes, 1997). Montsho (2013) suggests that strategic internal communication impacts positively on external communication, because it creates a platform for participative decision-making, which enables employee interaction, information-sharing, creativity and
innovation. This also translates to improved service delivery. Knowledgeable employees and citizens are also able to assist stakeholders more efficiently and effectively on matters of government that concern them.

2.7. Background and Structure of Local Government

South Africa is divided into three spheres of government: the national, led by the President and his Ministers; the provincial, led by the Premier and his MECs, and the local, led by Executive Mayors and Mayors (Layman, 2003). This separation of power is to divide functions of the state into three separate divisions to also ensure checks and balances in terms of power, so that no single institution can become too powerful in a democratic country so as to destroy the system (Government Communication and Information Systems [GCIS], 2016). Local Government is the third sphere of government which functions interdependently and interrelated with the other two spheres. Local government is the third sphere of government that implements national planning and policies that are instituted in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. It responds to local needs, interests, expectations and provides overall basic service deliveries to the communities. It is further described as the first point of contact and closest level of engagement with local communities (Thornhill, 2008:492). The local government consists of municipalities at both district and local level, which are headed by mayors and executive mayors that have legislative and executive authority over matters related to their respective communities. The polices of local governments are aligned to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, and the provincial sphere supervises the local sphere of government to ensure that national standards are adhered to and maintained for service delivery and economic unity (Department of Public Service and Administration [DPSA], 2003).

The local government is assigned to make sure that there is participation and involvement of stakeholders on the local government issues such as decision-making, and in identifying services that are needed most and how to go about providing them (Manny, 2012). Service delivery is defined as the provision of sustainable services by the municipal government to communities as required by the Constitution of the Republic South Africa, 1996 (Chipu, 2011). The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997) defines public service delivery as “an ability of any public institution to deliver to the communities in an efficient and effective manner.” According to Section 24 (a)(i) of the Municipal Demarcation Act (1998) the provision of transparent, democratic and accountable government for local communities is essential. Sections 26 (1)(b) and 28 (1) further provide for the
involvement of the public in the demarcation processes. Therefore, it is evident that Municipal Demarcation encourages public engagement and consultation within local government.

The success and reputation of a municipality regarding service delivery is dependent on whether the needs of communities are met or not, and the ways in which the municipality communicates. Therefore, it is local government’s responsibility to be open and transparent to those they serve, and to empower communities through participation and feedback processes. Malefane (2009:469) points out that one such stakeholder engagement arises when government officials hold internal meetings to discuss what communities need, and allocate resources without engaging with stakeholder communities. Only once this is decided do they go out to the communities to tell them what they have planned for them, and how they are going to go about implementing it. Similarly, Perret and Mercoiret (2003) point out that even though information-sharing and consultation are practiced at various government levels, teamwork and actual partnerships with communities are still lacking.

Engagement strategy is a plan of actionable activities by organisations to work collaboratively with, and through groups of stakeholders, to address issues affecting their social well-being. It is a key component within the organisation’s broader social strategy (Fawcett et al., 1995). Similarly, municipalities must develop their own engagement strategies in line with the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), as determined by the Public Service Commission (2008). In the handling of several service delivery protests, municipalities were solely dependent on the IDP; as a result some of the challenges that they faced, could have been avoided had they developed an engagement strategy in time. Ngwane (2017) remarked that there is not enough time to engage stakeholder representatives of both the municipalities and the communities, the capacitation of participants, and the budget.

Section 42 of the Municipal Systems Act (2000) states that through proper mechanisms, processes and procedures municipalities must engage and involve local communities in development, implementations thereby allowing them to take part in setting of performance indicators and targets for their local municipality.

The Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 2000), Chapter 4, further outlines that the development of a culture of community participation and communication of information are essential ingredients in successful participation.

Practices of local government that promote stakeholder engagement/participation (Public Service Commission, 2008), include the following:

- Ward Committees
Among the mentioned engagement platforms identified by government is Izimbizo – that is “an educative forum, participatory advisory panel, participatory problem-solving, participatory democratic governance that aims to create ideal conditions for citizens to form, articulate, and refine opinion about issues through conversations with one another” (Fung, 2003). This platform, illustrated in Figure 1 below, intends to give the traditional leaders an opportunity to be part of the engagements with government, and further participation in discussions that aim to bring development, and socio-economic growth to their villages/communities.

Figure 1. Structure of the Provincial Imbizo (Department of Government Communication and Information System, 2014).
2.8. Traditional Leadership

Chieftaincy is a common form of authority in South Africa, hence traditional leaders play an important role in enforcing participation between communities and government (South African History online, 2016). The institution of traditional leadership has been historically regarded as the main ruling system that is closest to, and most accepted by, people living in rural areas (Bizana-Tutu, 2008). The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (2003), Chapter 2 (Section 4) defines the primary functions of traditional councils as facilitating the involvement of the traditional community (led by Chiefs) in the development of the municipal government’s Integrated Development Plan (IDP), (Public Service Commission, 2008). Traditional leaders provide a mechanism through which conflicts about local issues can be resolved (Baloyi, 2016), they further lead their people in protecting their cultures, traditional ethics and customs. Lokaleng village is among the communities that are headed by a Chief who plays an important role in ensuring that his community receives services, and takes part in stakeholder engagement by government. Effecting proper stakeholder engagement between government, traditional leaders and the communities has its own challenges. These challenges include the differing needs of the community, a lack of knowledge amongst participants, a lack of resources and proper planning (Mphahelele, 2013).

Moreover, Atkinson (2007:58) argues that other reasons for the dissatisfaction of communities are threefold, namely poor service delivery, unresponsive decision-making and conspicuous consumption of government resources by councillors and officials. One of the hindrances to fair and proper service delivery is simply the poor application of the Bath Pele principles. Batho Pele is an initiative requiring public servants to be service-orientated, customer-oriented and to strive for excellence in service delivery, committing to continuous service delivery improvement (Nzimakwe & Mphlehle, 2012:281).

Chapter 12 of the Constitution of Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) recognises the existence, institution, status and role of traditional leadership according to the customary law-section 212 (1), stipulating that “National legislation may provide for leadership as an institution at local level on matters affecting local communities” (Act no.108 of 1996, 126). This provision is, however, not clear or specific on the powers, roles and function of traditional leaders as part of governance in South Africa. One may infer that such uncertainty creates conflict between ward councillors and their traditional leaders.
Cooperation between municipalities and traditional leaders is a challenge (Nekhavhambe, 2014), particularly as traditional leaders regard the provision of services and allocation of land without their consultation as undermining their chieftancy (Baloyi, 2016).

According to Nekhavhambe (2014), traditional leadership should focus on issues relating to traditional customs, as they are the custodians of culture and tradition; however, given the influence that these leaders have in their communities, such a restriction is not possible.

2.9. Integrated Development Planning

The White Paper on the Batho Pele Principles (1997) maintains that all national and provincial departments must, frequently and analytically, consult the citizens not only about services currently provided, but also on the provision of new basic services to those who lack them. Such engagement will influence decisions and foster a more participative and cooperative relationship between government and its citizens.

In supporting local government, the provincial government must implement the following in order to ensure that service delivery is effective (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2009):

- Address the “one size fits all” approach, by enabling municipalities to focus on functions that are suitable to their different sizes and capacity.
- Mobilise greater state involvement in rural development and address the socio-economic and institutional vulnerability of the relevant municipality.
- Improve performance and accountability, including better communication and involvement of municipalities and communities in the planning and execution of the provincial function.

The local government designed the Ward Committees system which acts as a vital link between Ward Councillors, the community and the municipality. Ward committee members allow for members of communities to influence municipal planning and decision-making in a way which best addresses their needs. Ward committees are also important in fostering relations between ward councillors and key stakeholders at ward level, such as traditional councils, business people and community development workers. Moreover, the ward committees are advisory bodies, led by the ward councillor, and elected by the community to assist the ward councillor in carrying out his duties in
being the advocate of his community at the municipal level (Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, 2002).

Furthermore, the establishment of the IDP Representative Forum is to encourage participation of communities and other stakeholders in the discussions. The purpose of the forum is to ensure a proper flow of communication between all stakeholders and government (Ngubane, 2005). It is the obligation of municipal councils to develop, implement and maintain a culture that shifts from representative government to participatory governance, therefore encouraging favourable conditions that allow for such activities to take place (Olivier, 2003).

Theoretically, in a democratic society, municipalities are the best institutions to initiate participation, obtain and understand people’s needs and aspirations. They are ideal to unlock local potential and mobilise resources present in locality, given their proximity to the communities (De Visser, 2009). However, in practice they are falling short of involving citizens in decision-making. Mngoma (2010) concurs that the decision-making process in local government is faced with challenges of unskilled staff and communities that are not well informed about the role that they play when it comes to policy-making and decision-making. Unequal power dynamics where the poor communities are not afforded a chance to raise their views in the way that makes them comfortable is another challenge. It is important that the local government and the two other spheres of government constantly remind themselves that engagement and communication are components of the important glue that holds the relationship between government and the communities together.

Municipalities are responsible for developing communities and ensuring that the quality of life for its citizens is improved. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) enables the municipality to manage the process of fulfilling its developmental duties. It further enables stakeholder engagement between local government and its community regarding the services that are needed in various communities. (Department of Provincial and Local Government [DPLG], 2001a:38). The IDP is a five-year plan which the local government is required to compile to determine the development needs of the municipality and the communities they serve. The projects within the IDP are linked to the municipality’s budget as well as the National Development Plan (NDP) (DPLG, 2001a:38).

The relevance of the IDP to stakeholder management is that it is important and beneficial to all stakeholders because it gives the stakeholder an opportunity to inform the municipality of what their development needs are. It further provides a mechanism through which communication is two-way and it provides a mechanism through which the community can measure and monitor the performance of the councillors and the municipality as a whole.
Government has set out various prescripts that enforce public participation. Among those are the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), and the Municipal Systems Act (2000). The latter requires the active participation of communities in the affairs of municipalities as an essential aspect of modern local government. It emphasises that local communities within a municipal area have to work in partnership with the municipality’s political and administrative structures in order to successfully deliver services (Nelson Mandela Municipality, 2014). One of the principles for public participation in the IDP process is that when encouraging such participation, municipalities must ensure that the conditions for public participation are favourable to all involved, and that the less privileged members of the community take part in the IDP process (DPLG, 2001a:37).

2.10. Batho Pele’s role in Stakeholder Engagement

Good and successful service to the communities does not only depend on the end users, it largely depends on the people that provide the services. Public servant’s attitudes towards their work must positively change to enable good service delivery. The Batho Pele Principles is a guide for public servants to take their job and most importantly their clients serious. Batho Pele “People first” initiative was launched in 1997 by government to improve service delivery. This initiative aimed at getting the public servants to be service delivery focused, to enable and enhance improved, transparent mechanism, which allows citizens to hold public servants accountable for delivery of services or lack thereof. When one walks into government offices, the principles and service standards are pasted where everyone can see them, this in turns assists stakeholders to know the kind of service they will receive, how and when they will receive feedback form government (DPSA, 2013).

Importantly, the Batho Pele White Paper (1997) acknowledges that the development of a service-oriented culture requires the active participation of the stakeholders. Municipalities need constant feedback from service users to enable them to improve their operations. The Public Service Commission’s report on the evaluation of the implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Consultation (2007), explains the importance of involving stakeholders as an “important mechanism for entrenching democracy and for promoting ownership of the policies and programmes of government”. Effective practise of public participation can prevent potential conflict between government and citizens, as well as assist in transforming the Public Service into a service-driven, citizen-centred and accountable institution.

In contrast, the South African government has experienced challenges in its quest to deliver services to its citizens. Communities have protested to show their dissatisfaction with poor service delivery from government. Government introduced the White Paper on Transformation, also known as the
Batho Pele White Paper, in an attempt to address service delivery protests and create an improved method of service delivery in South Africa. Government realised that using old ways of doing business no longer met the demands of complex and inter-connected South African society or expectation of a more globally-linked politically aware citizenry (Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy [PALAMA], 2012).

The Batho Pele ('People First') White Paper, issued by the Minister for Public Service and Administration, provides a useful approach to building a culture and practice of customer service. Batho Pele is based on eight key principles:

Consultation: Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of public service they receive, and, where possible, should be given a choice about the services which are provided.

- Service standards: Citizens should know what standard of service to expect.
- Access: All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled.
- Courtesy: Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.
- Information: Citizens should be given full and accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.
- Openness and transparency: Citizens should know how departments are run, how resources are spent, and who is in charge of particular services.
- Redress: If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.
- Value-for-money: Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value-for-money (DPSA, 2013).

In addition, information provision is a passive one-way process of communication whereby government provides information to communities without receiving immediate feedback. This, in turn, results in citizens complaining that government provides services that are inadequate, inappropriate, and too costly for their hard-earned tax payment (PALAMA, 2012).

2.11. Strategic Communication

Strategic communication is holistic term that describes the activities of disciplines including public relations, marketing, management communication, and advertising. It is further recognised as a
developing subfield within communication (Thorson, 2018). Hallahan, Holtzhausen, Van Ruler, and Verčič (2007), defined strategic communication as purposeful communication by organisations with an intention to attain their mission and fulfil their vision. The early work on strategic communication according to Stenberg (2012) finds its roots in the military history during the war era. Brooks (2011) who wrote a paper on the “Evolution of Strategic Communication and Information operation since 9/11” defined strategic communication as an considerate understanding of issues of stakeholder perception, a response into policy making, planning and operations at all levels as well as the arrangement of actions, images and words in support of policy objectives. While Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič, Sriramesh, (2007) asserts that strategic communication came about as a result of the paradigmatic shift from a modern to a post-modern approach and it requires a holistic approach towards engaging stakeholders. Both definitions commonly show that such communication is receiver focused rather than sender focused hence the greatest strength of governments and organisations are its people. As communication evolved in democratic countries the necessity to listen to the citizens’ needs and work with them to ensure that services delivered are exactly what is requested or are at least close to their needs is evident (Swart, 2013). Strategic communication is mostly applied in the private sector; however it is applicable to any organisation, including government. Moreover, strategic communication is defined differently by different people; some understand it as going beyond the use of radio and newspapers, mostly applied by government, to help develop a strategy of social change informed by close knowledge and an understanding of stakeholders’ needs. Such communication should not be a one-way process where the narrative flows from the core of government to be applied unchallenged by stakeholders. It should be a two-way process, a dialogue between organisations and stakeholders. According to Mcloughlin, Scott & Haider (2011), Strategic communication is the practice of systematically applying the processes, strategies, and principles of communication to bring about positive social change that has been particularly successful in support intervention.

Government departments, state owned entities and municipalities must adhere to many contradicting concerns, demands and expectations because of their political nature given this complex setting, Strategic communication can be a pragmatic and effective way of handling and satisfying these demands (Fredriksson & Pallas, 2015) ultimately contributing to a favourable reputation for a local municipality (Gilad, Maor, Ben-Nun Bloom, 2015).

Strategic communication is a stakeholder-central approach to promoting changes in people’s attitudes, perspective, knowledge and behaviour to achieve development objectives. It therefore ensures the active participation and consideration of stakeholders’ perspectives through communication programmes as a strategic tool. The strength of the approach is its emphasis on
strategy rather than on specific tactics, as well as its focus on communications being understood holistically. Stakeholder engagement through community meetings is one of the strategic communication activities as it brings people with different understanding and knowledge to work together in resolving issues of concern and developing solution.

2.12. **Service Delivery through Public Participation and Stakeholder Engagement**

2.12.1. **Public Participation**

Public participation is defined as a process in which citizens take part in matters of governance and service delivery with the goal of influencing a decisions involving significant choice that will affect their community (André, Martin & Lanmafrankpotin, 2012). The National Policy Framework for Public Participation (2007) defined public participation as an open and accountable process wherein participants within various communities can exchange views, thereby influencing decision-making. This definition is in line with the public participation theory as it presumes that people are rational beings and they understand what their needs and interests are, hence the importance of involving them in matters of government that impact on their lives. It is the democratic right of citizens to be engaged in the development and operation of services that affect their lives. The National Policy Framework for Public Participation (2007) outlines the rights and responsibilities of both citizens and the municipality regarding public participation; these are listed below:

**Municipality:**

- To contribute to the building of capacity of the local community, the local council and staff, to enable them to participate in the affairs of the municipality.
- To establish mechanisms, processes and procedures to receive, process and consider petitions and complaints lodged by the community.
- To establish processes and procedures for consultative sessions and report-back to the community.

**Citizens:**

- To contribute to decision-making and problem-solving through mechanisms created by municipalities.
• To be informed of matters on which community participation is encouraged.
• To get feedback on complaints, grievances and developments in the community.

Kotze and Kellerman (1997:37) argue that “the concept of public participation lies at the core of the people-centred development approach and may refer to aspects such as involvement; communication; a new attitude from government; or a reciprocal influence.” Citizen participation is a process which allows citizens opportunity to take an active, sometimes passive part in public decisions. Citizens choose to participate because they then contribute to the end result and influence the planning process. The South African National Policy Framework for Public Participation states that participation is seen as a process that is transparent and governed by accountability, where a state and citizens meet to exchange ideas on service delivery and policy-making (DPLG, 2007:15).

Albert and Passmore (2008) defined public participation as all activities by which the public contribute to shaping the decisions taken by public organisations. Successful public participation depends on the mutual understanding between government and the community, and collaborative problem-solving. It further hinges on prioritising public service management and the belief that it is a valuable part of service delivery. Participation is about enabling, enhancing and empowering communities to influence life-changing decisions. Enabling participation bridges the gap between the poor in rural areas and government. It further shows that government is for all citizens, not only those who live in suburbs; it enhances skills development and socio-economic growth of the communities and the country at large (Chitambo, Smith & Ehlers, 2002). Boyte (2005) identified a new shift in governance, whereby their participation holds new possibilities for reframing the role of citizens, politicians as well as public servants in building and strengthening democracy. This shift sees citizens as independent and not dependent. However, there are changes regarding public participation, such include amongst others the insufficient investment by government in community capacity building, lack of public participation skills by officials and lack of resources from government (Public Service Commission, 2008). It is therefore important that public participation be a vehicle that develops people to become more resourceful themselves, and ensuring that services and infrastructure delivery is enhanced through community participation. For such involvement to be effective and fruitful the government ought to re-evaluate their methods, to better ensure desirable and fruitful participation that does not only occur in order to comply with legislation.

The basic principles of public participation as outlined by De Villiers (2001:159) are openness through process, access, transparency, inclusiveness, pro-activity, shared responsibility and respect for public inputs. These principles are in concurrence with purpose as identified by Beierle (1998). Beierle (1998) suggests that public participation’s purpose is to educate and inform so as to enable
beneficial engagement that is result-oriented. Masango (2002:60) has identified factors similar to those of Beierle (1998) that could contribute to effective and satisfactory engagement. These include cultivating a culture of participation among community members, public education, proper organizing for participation by informing communities well ahead of time, capacity building for participation and using relevant vehicles of participation. Public participation is a legal requirement at local government level in terms of the Municipal Systems Act (2000), the White Paper on Local Government (1998) and the Municipal Structures Act (1998), which requires all municipalities to engage communities. However, studies such as one by Siphuma (2009), contend that local government has a tendency of advocating for public participation, but then undermining the inputs of the stakeholders, which then results in top-down decision-making instead of a process that is meant to be bottom-up decision-making.

Sanoff (2000:12) and Briand (2007:1) developed characteristics and core values that detail the importance of public participation. They submit that effective and efficient public participation not only informs stakeholders but it is inclusive; both parties jointly work on a problem, brainstorm solutions, reach a consensus and then implement it. This should be the case in all the municipalities, but it seems as though, as Cele’s (2015) findings revealed, active participation has been reduced to informing and consulting the community on what has already been decided by those in leadership positions. People were involved in listing the services they need, however did not get involved in any of the planning, or the implementation of the services provided to them. Furthermore, citizens expect government as well as public servants to treat them with respect, dignity and a certain level of understanding. Collaborating with citizens and across sectors requires a changed style of leadership, a less commanding and controlling style, moving to a more adaptive and accommodating one that encourages co-creation, co-designing and team work (Kippin & Adebowale, 2014).

When people have confidence in themselves and believe that they play an important role in the good changes in their communities and surroundings, they experience active participation. This kind of engagement can change the attitudes of communities to be more independent and active as opposed to being dependent and passive consumers of public services. The success of public participation is dependent on the engagement strategies that are put into place to carry out the communication, such as the information available to all participants, the resources, and the vehicle of such interactions, such as community meetings, newspapers.

Davidson (1998) developed the Wheel of Public Participation that outlines the system to achieve objectives set and encourages participation. This wheel is important as it promotes responsiveness, dialogue and negotiation between partners (government and communities); the wheel further
addresses the challenges faced by communities. The wheel points out four main community participation approaches:

- **Information**

  According to Davidson (1998), information and communication are limited. This stage represents what is called one-way communication, because the public/stakeholders are given information that the government thinks the public needs, and they decide on matters without consulting the stakeholders first, with no lines of immediate feedback.

- **Consultation**

  During the Consultation stage, the public is consulted on matters that need decision-making. Government listens to the opinions and inputs of the public on certain issues that concern them; however, this stage does not necessarily mean that the opinion of the public will be actioned.

- **Participation**

  Participation, according to Davidson (1998), refers to a partnership between government and stakeholders, where problems are collaboratively resolved and the stakeholders take active part in decision-making.

- **Empowerment**

  Empowerment refers to giving communities more control over matters that affect them; for example, if houses need to be built, rather hire the community members build those houses instead of hiring big companies to do the work. In doing so, not only will the government be giving the community skills, but it will also be boosting the economy of that particular community.

Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of citizen engagement remains at the core of many research articles, even after all these years. The ladder sees participation as a citizen power, thereby redistributing power to those who are disadvantaged. Power must be shared between public servants and external stakeholders to enable consensus. Arnstein (1969) argued that “unless citizens have a chance to affect results, participation is mainly concerned with “therapy and manipulation” of participants.” (Quoted by Collins & Ison, 2006).
In 1988, Connor came up with a new ladder of citizen participation. The ladder starts with education: the public must be provided with basic knowledge about issues; it must be checked if they understand the issues and what they have to do in turn. The next step sees negotiation as an essential part, followed by bridge-building activity. The findings of Zafarulla and Huque’s (2006) study on managing development in a globalized world concur with Connor’s steps. Connor believes that this ladder, if used properly, can benefit the participants (citizens and government) by saving time, cutting costs, and facilitating better active communication with the public. Concepts of public participation are not new in government – the abovementioned authors have long advocated for the involvement of citizens – clearly the challenge is in the way in which government goes about exercising such participation, as the literature on this study has indicated.

2.12.2. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a two-way process, involving communication by the organisation to stakeholders and by stakeholders to the organisation. Jones (2012) defined it as the process by which an organisation involves people who may be affected by the decisions it makes, or who can influence the implementation of its decision. The foundation for stakeholder engagement is ensuring that people are able and should be allowed to influence activities that affect them, which also contributes to community empowerment (Maphazi, 2012).

Stakeholder engagement must start during the design of a new service, not in the middle or the end of the process. Such engagement will enable the government to gain a comprehensive understanding of the community and their needs. Stakeholder engagement is about establishing, maintaining and sustaining relationships with stakeholders (Government of Western Australia, Department of Finance, 2015). Moreover, stakeholder engagement and communication are necessary to identify the concerns of stakeholders that allow government to plan accordingly. Koontz and Thomas (2006) supported by Wagenet and Pfeffer (2007) have contended that incorporating stakeholders’ understanding and morals in decision-making circumstances presumably leads to improved governance and accountability. How stakeholders view government is solely based on their evaluation and direct experience of particular spheres of government. Negotiation and respectful dialogue are some of the important elements that add value to public participation. The growth and development of public participation are obvious in theory; however, putting it to practice seems to be the challenge in the public service.

On the other hand research has proven that in South Africa community participation has just been mostly rhetorical and not real, especially in rural areas where most our poorest of the poor live (Buccus, 2004). Friedman (2006) also argues that the participation mechanisms do not enhance
participatory governance, as they are seen as ineffective and inefficient by the participants. This then challenges the extent to which public participation serves citizen expectations, and whether citizen engagement is merely about consultation and compliance or about empowered decision-making. Furthermore, other academics have argued that there are opposing views regarding the value and efficacy of stakeholder engagement (e.g., Koontz and Thomas 2006, Powell and Colin 2008, Allen et al. 2013). While Freeman (1999) and Jones and Wicks (1999) argued that they have acknowledged that the concept of stakeholder engagement itself has gaps theoretically and context-dependent.

Maphazi (2012) outlines three approaches to public participation: the top-bottom, the bottom-up, and the partnership approach. This approach is similar to the approach advocated by Overton-de Klerk and Oelofse (2010) in terms of strategic communication. The application of these approaches is dependent on what, how, where and when participation takes place. When there is consensus within communities about service needs, the bottom-up approach is applicable, because they will tell government exactly what they need, suggest how that can be done and work together with government to achieve the goals. A top-down approach is adopted when government officials go to communities to inform them about what their needs are, and how and when they will provide in those needs. This kind of approach is seemingly the one dominating in all the three spheres of government, more so in some than in others. Partnerships emerge when government and stakeholders co-create, co-design and collaborate.

Walters, Aydelotte and Miller (2000:352) came up with five purposes for citizen engagement. One of the purposes states that “direct citizen participation is educative”, suggesting that the more the engagement activities are participated in, the more citizens learn to work with government, advancing quality service delivery as well as gaining independence. Another of the five purposes states that “direct citizen participation is liberating and integrative”, meaning that the more people participate, the more they develop a deeper commitment to the issues of governance. Members of communities have different needs and expectations from government, thus it is important to engage with them, consult with them, and to collaborate to determine exactly what is required. Therefore, politicians and administrators should not assume that they know what communities need without having had a proper, effective and efficient communication interactions with them. Sustainable processes must be put into place to enable and enhance interaction between government and communities to ensure efficient and effective collaboration in meeting and addressing community needs: “The paradigm shift that must happen within the public service is whether we deliver programmes to clients or we provide service to communities of citizens who have the right to participate in defining the content and quality of such service” (Service Delivery Review, 2001:13).
Government policy documents have repeatedly put stakeholder engagement forward as a compulsory aspect of democracy and rural development, although there has been little implementation. The majority of disadvantaged members of our communities are illiterate and semi-literate, therefore efforts must be made to make sure that people are able to access the basic public services that they need to enable them to make a living and improve their livelihoods.

2.12.3. Service Delivery

Service delivery is defined as “the ability of any public institution to deliver services to communities in an efficient and effective manner” (The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997:15). Moreover, public service delivery is a constitutional right for the South African citizens that aims to satisfy the communities’ basic and important needs that have been identified through active consultation. Government departments are public bodies that owe their existence to serving the public, and they should therefore practice stakeholder engagement with their respective communities, and ensure that open lines of two-way communication is established and used (Craythorne, 1990:84).

The Public Service has strived to deliver services to the South African communities; however, given the growing number of citizens, corrupt councillors, nepotism, and the lack of stakeholder engagement, demands are exceeding the capacity of government to deliver on their mandate, especially in rural areas (Ndhlovu, 2015). Consequently most of the district and local municipalities are faced with service delivery protests. These protests have been both violent and non-violent. While most of the reviewed literature focused on various reasons for service delivery protests, only a few focused solely on the stakeholder engagement practises, reference is made to Shabangu’s (2017) study which found that the level of stakeholder engagement in Bekkersdal local municipality is still on the first level which entails informing stakeholders instead of active engagement. He further revealed that the stakeholder engagement strategy of the municipality had three engagement platforms which are the posters, loud hailing and public meetings. Meanwhile Mahlatji and Ntsala (2016) identified some of the reason of the protests as high rate of unemployment, poor local governance and lack of communication. The researcher is of the view that stakeholder engagement is the only practice that determines the success or failure of organisation and governments. Through strategic engagement of stakeholders reasons for non-delivery of services can be explained, negotiations take place, compromise and agreements are reached. Examples of the nature of such protests include the barricading of main roads and burning down of public infrastructures such as clinics, libraries, schools and private property (Von Holdt & Kirsten, 2011).

The South African Police Services released information to Media24 that indicates that between 2009 and 2012, Mmabatho in North West Province had one of the highest numbers of service delivery
protests, with protests occurring once every 4.7 days (Saba & Van der Merwe, 2013). Information collected by Municipal IQ revealed that from 2004 to 2014 the North West Province’s local municipalities recorded 12% of all service delivery protests in South Africa. The percentage remained the same in the first nine months of 2015 and only dropped by 2% between October and December 2015 (Municipal IQ 2014; 2015). Municipal IQ further revealed that Gauteng experienced 26% of the service delivery protests, with Eastern Cape 24%, KwaZulu-Natal 12%, Western Cape 11%, Mpumalanga 9%, North West Province 7%, Limpopo 6%, Northern Cape 4% and the Free State 1% of service delivery protests between January 2016 and April 2016 (Municipal IQ, 2016). Given the high incidence of service delivery protests, there is a need to explore the reasons behind this high prevalence in the Lokaleng community in the North West province under the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, and to determine how the affected communities experience the engagement strategies used by the municipality.

Commins (2007) noted that service delivery failures are a consequence of poor community engagement, lack of voice, accountability, and the manipulation of processes in order to advance the interests of certain corrupt service delivery agencies. Protests receive more attention from government than other means of engagement. Public servants’ attitudes and beliefs towards citizen participation also directly affect citizen participation. Furthermore, Commins (2007) suggests that the link between community participation and service delivery advances the idea that citizen participation aims to improve the operational effectiveness of service delivery. In addition, it assists in developing a better understanding of how and where the services are to be rendered and in improving, promoting and strengthening accountability for both citizens and government.

2.13. The King III and IV Reports Applied in Public Service

In 2002 The King Committee released a report on Corporate Governance for South Africa called King II, which mainly focused on the corporate sector. Subsequent to King II, the Committee released another report, King III in 2009, which was intended to apply to all entities, including municipalities. In 2016 the King IV report was released, which is similar to King III in that its principles are also applicable to all enterprises and institutions.

The King III report was necessitated by the Companies Act no. 71 of 2008, and it incorporates changes in international governance trends (Engelbrecht, 2009). Moreover, unlike its previous versions, the King III report is applicable to all entities, irrespective of the basis of establishment, and it is used to “apply or explain” the approach to enhance accountability, transparency, monitoring and
evaluation. Similarly, King IV came up with the “apply and explain” approach that encourages organisations to not only aim to comply, but also to provide visible evidence of how these principles are applied. The rationale for the “apply and explain” approach emanates from the tendency of organisations to only adhere to the principles for the sake of compliance. The principles of the report may be applied across different types of organisations, although the selection and application of the recommended practices will depend on the nature of the organisation. King IV further provides sectoral guidelines for municipalities, non-profit organisations, and state owned entities, that aims to provide these entities with direction and guidance on how to apply these principles and recommendations (Price Waterhouse Cooper [PWC], 2016).

Chapter eight of the King III Report offers a focus on “Governing Stakeholder Relationships”, which is important and relevant to this current study because it speaks to how to enable constructive engagement between an organisation and its stakeholders. A pro-active focus on stakeholders and managing the relationships with them can contribute towards transparency and enable them to value their relationship with the organisation, which can then establish a positive reputation for an organisation and/or government institution (Meintjes, 2012).

Similarly government established the Batho Pele values to facilitate effective service delivery and provide mechanisms to enhance stakeholder engagement and participation and feedback in service delivery matters. Stakeholder relationships provide a platform for the government to engage with and resolve the concerns of the institution’s stakeholders in its decision-making, which is a fundamental requirement for an integrated reporting, evaluation and monitoring process.

Similarly, Section 55 (1) (0) of the Municipal Systems Act, No32 of 2000, tasks the municipal manager with the responsibility of developing and maintaining a system that measures the level of community satisfaction with municipal service delivery.

Meintjes (2012:206) identifies six themes by analysing Chapter 8 of the King III Report, establishing that stakeholder relationships are directly linked to the reputation of a department and/or an organisation. Therefore, the management of stakeholders must be proactive and not reactive; stakeholders must be engaged, kept abreast with what is about to happen, what is happening, why and how it will happen. Stakeholder relationship management therefore requires transparent, accountable and effective communication that treats all stakeholders equally. Crisis management is therefore essential, since failure to appropriately manage stakeholder relationships may result in protests.

The King III report provides officials with guidelines for good governance in the engagement between government and its stakeholders, which, if applied properly, will reduce the rate of service delivery
protests. The report further emphasises a stakeholder-inclusive approach to governance, and it recognises that business ethics affect the quality of engagement between an organisation and its stakeholders (Institute of Directors of South Africa [IoDSA], 2009:51). It further “emphasises the use of integrated reporting as a communication vehicle for reporting on an organisation’s corporate governance practice and triple-bottom line performance” (IoDSA, 2009).

It is a prerequisite to assess, align and manage the gap between community experiences, perceptions and the performance of municipalities, since this will assist in enhancing the reputation of the municipalities, more so in case of successful service delivery (PWC, 2010). In the process of participation, municipal managers should be careful not to over-promise and then under-deliver because it alienates the community and gives rise to protests. “Awareness and advantages of good governance in Municipal Councils should be promoted in line with the principles of King III (PWC, 2010).

2.14. Lokaleng Village under Mahikeng Local Municipality (MLM) in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality

Lokaleng village is a small community, with about 5,000 people in the immediate village, surrounded by nine other villages which are just as destitute. Lokaleng is located outside but near Mahikeng. This village falls under the Mahikeng local municipality in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality and it is among some of the poorest villages surrounding Mahikeng town (Ngaka Modiri Molema District, 2016). The town of Mahikeng is filled with beggars and street kids who are mainly from Lokaleng village. This village has the characteristics of a poor village where there is dependency on income generated by agricultural activities and social grants. Makale (2015) highlighted that being poor extends beyond financial measures, as it includes being in poor health, having poor education and poor access to basic services, as well as being subjected to other sources of vulnerability (Makale, 2015). According to Fransman and Yu (2018), rural communities are generally associated with poverty that is traditionally linked to unemployment and illiteracy.

According to Chambers (1988:10), poverty is “a state of want or disadvantage, a state of deprivation which is subsequently qualified within a specific context to be associated with lack of income and assets, physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability and powerlessness, poverty is multi-faceted.” The Parliamentary Bulletin (1996:2) agrees with Chambers (1988:10) that the main cause of poverty is lack of income, and that the main cause of a lack of income is the lack of paid employment which is
also accompanied by school drop-outs, high rate of teenage pregnancy and use of alcohol. Not only is poverty prevalent in rural areas, but the majority of the world’s poorest people are also located in rural areas. Living in a secluded area usually means being isolated from communication, information, market support and opportunities (Chambers, 1995:19).

Rural areas are often poverty-stricken while urban areas are affluent, or at the very least communities in urban areas are members of the working-class. According to a local government review by the National Treasury (2011), provision of service delivery is much better in urban areas, while problems in rural areas are addressed at a slow rate or ignored (National Treasury, 2011). It is this kind of negligence that has given rise to a spate of protests in rural areas. According to Bogetic and Fedderke (2006), in South Africa urban areas are better serviced in terms of basic services such as electricity, water, sanitation and communication technology (ICT) and transportation, while rural communities are still trailing behind in provision of the basic services such as flushing toilets and clean water.

Gaedie (2015) states that dissatisfaction in a community becomes evident when the community does not fully participate in meetings called by their councillor. Gaedie (2015) further suggests that the residents of the Mahikeng Local Municipality (MLM) are the kind of residents who do not participate in decisions made by the council, resulting in decisions about their lives being taken for them by the involved few. Gaedie further states that if there were open lines of communication between government and its stakeholders fewer protests would result.

The functions and powers of districts and local municipalities are regulated by Section 84 of the Municipal Structure Act (1998). The Ngaka Modiri Molema is among the four Municipal Districts in the North West Province of South Africa. Bojanala-Platinum, Dr. Ruth Mompati, and Dr. Kenneth Kaunda are the other three. The Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality comprises of five Local Municipalities (LM), namely Mahikeng, Ratlou, Ramotshere Moiloa, Ditsobotla and Tswaing. The local municipalities are divided into wards: Mahikeng Local Municipality into 28 wards with 102 villages, suburbs and 84 239 households; Ditsobotla LM into 19 wards with 44 500 households; Ramotshere Moiloa LM into 17 wards with 40 740 households; Tswaing LM into 13 wards with 30 634 households and Ratlou LM into 12 wards with 26 889 households. Ngaka Modiri Molema has about 29% of its people living under the minimum wage, thus making it the district with the most underprivileged people in the province. Meanwhile 33% of the minimum level income earners are in the Mahikeng LM, thus making it the LM with the largest underprivileged population (Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, 2016). Table 1 below depicts the population figures of these municipal districts and their local municipalities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District/Local Municipality</th>
<th>Total Population as of 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bojanala-Platinum District Municipality</td>
<td>1 657 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moretele Local Municipality</td>
<td>191 306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madibeng Local Municipality</td>
<td>536 110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rustenburg Local Municipality</td>
<td>626 522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kgetlerivier Local Municipality</td>
<td>59 562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses Kotane Local Municipality</td>
<td>243 648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality</td>
<td>889 108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratlou Local Municipality</td>
<td>106 108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tswaing Local Municipality</td>
<td>314 394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahikeng Local Municipality</td>
<td>181 865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditsobotla Local Municipality</td>
<td>157 690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality</td>
<td>129 052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District Municipality</td>
<td>459 357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naledi Local Municipality</td>
<td>68 803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamusa Local Municipality</td>
<td>34 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Taung Local Municipality</td>
<td>167 827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekwa-Teemane Local Municipality</td>
<td>56 025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kagisano-Molopo Local Municipality</td>
<td>102 703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality</td>
<td>742 821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Matlosana Local Municipality</td>
<td>417 282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Population of the four District Municipalities in the North West Province (Statistics SA, 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Municipality</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maquassi Hills Local Municipality</td>
<td>82 012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JB Marks Local Municipality</td>
<td>243 527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 748 435</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are currently no studies that have been conducted on the stakeholder engagement strategies that government uses in the rural areas of the North West Province, or the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality and Mahikeng local municipality. No studies have been done to determine how important stakeholder communication is for engaging stakeholders about their issues and concerns. Because present stakeholder strategies have not been evaluated, they may potentially result in further unrest and damage to property, not just in the North West Province, but also in other parts of the country where similar unrest is experienced. Studies to determine the reasons for service delivery protests have identified a lack of communication between government and the communities they serve as one of the most important causes. Findings suggest that government uses a top-down communication approach in engaging communities, who are then told what they need and what they will be given, instead of engaging in dialogue with them first (Sebungwawo, 2011). Managa (2012) and Mlandu (2014) confirm that poor stakeholder engagement is the cause of the many protests that have occurred in the past, and of the protests that are still regularly taking place.

It is evident that if communication failures in engaging communities are the main cause of these protests, there is a very real need to investigate how government engages community stakeholders, and how these strategies are experienced by them. Finding solutions and enhancing those already in place would help to prevent costly protest action that often results in damage to property and financial loss to the state. Most importantly though, it will keep the communities informed about issues that affect them and provide them with an opportunity to participate in solving their own problems.

2.15. Conclusion

Stakeholder engagement in service delivery matters is important in today’s stakeholder-dominated society. Transforming the way in which government communicates must start at the top by
transforming the attitudes and manner in which officials perform their functions, as well as the mechanisms used to engage.

Government has put into place policies that enable public participation; however it seems that the challenge is in implementing these policies. The shift in communication emphasises that the heart of any organisation or government lays with its various stakeholders, hence the importance of active stakeholder engagement in and outside government.

Furthermore, the monitoring and evaluation of service delivery and of officials may greatly assist in curbing the challenges that government face. Given the findings of other studies, one can conclude that more needs to be done in promoting communication internally and externally in all government spheres to enable coherence among all involved.
Chapter 3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and the methodology selected for this study. The purpose of the current study is to investigate the stakeholder perception of engagement strategies affecting service delivery in the North West Province, in the Mahikeng local municipality which falls under the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality in a village called Lokaleng, which is located just outside Mahikeng. This study aims to explore, understand and describe phenomena of stakeholder engagement in poor communities that have already been identified but that are still not well understood. A qualitative research approach is therefore regarded as suitable for the purpose of this study. This village is under the chieftaincy of Kgosi Motshegare and is one of the poor rural areas with a small community of about 5 000 people in the immediate village, surrounded by nine other villages that are just as poor and destitute. (Lonely Road Foundation and Mahikeng Local Municipality, 2007). Like in most poor rural areas, there is a lack of basic services such as running water, electricity, and houses in Lokaleng, which also has a high rate of unemployment as well as of school drop-outs.

3.2. Theoretical Statement

The focus of the current study is on the stakeholder engagement strategies of service delivery used by the Mahikeng local municipality in Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. In an attempt to determine the aforementioned focus and to provide more insight into the problem, the researcher selected a qualitative research approach. Henning (2004) defines qualitative research as “research that utilises open or closed ended, semi or structured interviews, observations and group discussions to explore and understand the attitudes, opinions, feelings and behaviour of individual or group of individuals.”

This qualitative approach is undertaken within the parameters of the interpretivist paradigm. According to Burton and Bartlett (2009:21), the interpretivist paradigm argues that reality consists of the experiences and understanding of individuals. For instance the government, the chief, ward councillor and the community at large all have differing views on engagement strategies, and will respond or act according to how they interpret and experience these. It is for this reason this study
adopts the interpretive paradigm, because it is focused on participants’ perceptions of the engagement strategies used by government to find possible solutions to community problems.

The current study followed the stakeholder theory as its foundation in investigating how the Mahikeng Local Municipality under the Ngaka Modiri Molema District municipality uses its stakeholder engagement strategies to ensure that services are delivered to the community of Lokaleng Village. Cooper and Schindler (2011:36) suggest that the main function of a theoretical perspective is to help guide the researcher in understanding a phenomenon. Based on the literature reviewed for this study, research findings suggest that government tends to use top-down communication approach in engaging stakeholders from poor communities (Basara & Jelagat, 2015). Moreover, communication failures in engaging stakeholders are the main cause of service delivery protests (Botes et al., 2008). Similarly, unskilled officials as well as a lack of education regarding government processes among communities contribute to the overall dissatisfaction of the communities (Mngoma, 2010).

3.3. Research Question and Sub-Questions

This study’s focus is to address the perceptions the community has of stakeholder engagement strategies that are used by government to engage the poor communities they serve. This is because research findings indicate that the stakeholder engagement failures often result in service delivery protests, with costly damage to state infrastructure and private businesses.

3.3.1. Main Research Question

How are stakeholder engagement strategies used by Mahikeng local municipality to ensure service delivery in the community of Lokaleng?

3.3.2. Sub Research Questions

- How does Mahikeng Local Municipality engage the community of Lokaleng village?
- How does the Mahikeng Local Municipality implement their stakeholder engagement strategy in relation to the stakeholder theory?
- How does the community of Lokaleng village perceive the stakeholder engagement strategies used by the Mahikeng Local Municipality?
3.3.3. Research Aims

The current study was conducted with the following aims:

- To determine how Mahikeng Local Municipality engages the community of Lokaleng village.
- To investigate how Mahikeng Local Municipality implement their stakeholder engagement strategies.
- To assess how the community of Lokaleng village perceive the stakeholder engagement strategies used by the Mahikeng Local Municipality.
- To describe how stakeholder engagement strategies are used by Mahikeng local municipality to ensure service delivery in the community of Lokaleng.

Before conducting the study, permission to conduct the study was approved by the Office of the Premier, the Mahikeng local municipality and the Chief of Lokaleng village.

3.4. Research Approach

3.4.1. Qualitative Method

Babbie and Mouton (2001:49) defined the qualitative research method as “a method that is used to study human actions from a direct interaction with the subjects, with the aim to develop rapport rather than a mere explanation of human behaviour.” Dzwimbo (1995:17) suggests that the qualitative method is an interpretive model of social science research, given its attempt to understand that people derive meaning from their surroundings, environment, daily interaction and the world as a whole. Therefore this method was in line with what the researcher wanted to explore, namely the engagement practices of the local municipality to communicate and whether such strategies are indeed effective and efficient, and easily accessible to all those who need them.

3.4.2. Research Methodology

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) a research methodology is determined by the nature of the research objective, question and the subject being investigated. Moreover, research methodology refers to the identification and utilisation of the best approach suitable for your study to be followed to address a theoretical or practical problem (Jackson, Drummond & Camara, 2007). In order for this study to address the issues regarding stakeholder engagement strategies of the Mahikeng local
municipality in Ngaka Modiri Molema district municipality, the following research was undertaken, by means of focus group interviews, literature review, and a thematic analysis of the interviews.

Adams, Khan, Raeside and White (2007:26) stipulate that a qualitative research approach utilises the methods of data collection and analysis, and describes reality as experienced by participants.

3.5. Population and Sampling

3.5.1. Population

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:103) the researcher must be specific on what and who she wants to study in order to collect data, and to determine how subjects will be reached. In this study, the target population were the community members living in the municipal village, the government officials and the traditional leaders in the community. The age groups ranged between 18 – 25 which represented the youth who are in tertiary, in school and out of school, and 26 – 65 which represented part of the youth, adults and pensioners who are employed, unemployed, on pension and in tertiary; both females and males were represented.

3.5.2. Sampling Frame

May (2001:93) describes the sampling frame as the list of the population that already exists. For the purpose of the current study participants between the ages of 18 – 65, both male and female, were interviewed.

The sample for this study consisted of 31 community members of Lokaleng village in Mahikeng Local Municipality which was selected from the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality population, 1 Chief, 1 ward councillor, 1 municipal official who deals with public participation/stakeholder engagement, and 1 official from the Office of the Premier who deals with service delivery and the monitoring of municipal performance. The participants for the study were selected because Lokaleng village was the case study for the current study. The participants provided responses to research questions, posed in both focus groups and individual interviews.

3.5.3. Sampling Method

Non-probability sampling was the sampling method used in the selection of the research subjects. According to Strydom and Delport (2011:391) non-probality sampling is the most accepted form of
sampling in a qualitative enquiry. Henning (2004:85) states that sampling is a process of selecting research participants, whereas Fox and Bayat (2007:56) believe that although the non-probability method may not offer a true reflection of the population as a whole, selection of the entire population is seldom possible.

The reason the non-probability method was chosen for this particular study was because the chance of selection for each member of the population is unknown and also because of the small population that resides in the village; instead, the characteristics of the population were used as the basis of selection. Therefore the selected participants represented a sample of the entire community, given that not every member of the community could be interviewed due to time and other constraints beyond the control of the researcher.

3.5.4. **Sampling Size**

The sample size is dependent upon the nature of the population, and the purpose and goals of the study. A total of 36 participants were interviewed. For the purpose of this study, semi-structured focus group interviews were utilised to understand the perceptions and attitudes of the community participants. Due to the limited scope of the study, a total of thirty-one (31) community focus group respondents were interviewed. In addition, two representatives from the Lokaleng village, namely the Chief and the Ward Councillor, as well as the two government officials were also interviewed face-to-face.

3.6. **Data Gathering**

3.6.1. **Methods (Interviews and Focus Groups)**

Deciding on which data collection methods to use is one of the most important aspects of any research study. In order to gain a broad understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations for participation, the researcher adopted qualitative research method tools such as interviewing and focus groups, which provided invaluable practical information.

Data gathering is a process used to obtain information, in order to answer the research questions. For the current study the researcher wrote letters to the Mahikeng local municipality under Ngaka Modiri Molema District municipality, the Office of the Premier and the Chief of Lokaleng seeking permission to conduct the study as part of academic research. The purpose and background of the
research were explained to participants to familiarise them with how the data would be gathered and what they could expect if they were to participate.

Before the sampling process was undertaken, a pilot test was conducted before embarking on the formal study to determine if the participants understood the interview questions, and if the questions were suitable for gathering data the required. This exercise allowed the researcher to establish if the interview questions were easy to understand, and to also check if the data gathered was relevant to the research focus. The pilot study was conducted with one focus group from the Lokaleng village, and one municipal official who deals with stakeholder engagement. Data gathering interviews were conducted in both Lokaleng village and the Mahikeng local municipality offices.

*The reasons for selecting focus groups were the following:*

- Focus group interviews allow the researcher to observe the reactions, attitudes, feelings, experiences and beliefs of the participants.

- Participants feel more at ease when they are surrounded by the people they know and are in a group; they are therefore inclined to express themselves freely.

- It enables the researcher to appreciate the way people see their own reality.

- It allows participants to focus on a specific topic that they will discuss in full detail, more so if they are directly affected.

*The reasons for selecting individual face-to-face interviews with some participants are stated below:*

- There are a limited number of officials that deal with stakeholder participation, and only those who head such units were selected for inclusion in the study.

- The Chief and the ward councillor are the formal representatives of the community, and are legally mandated to act as such.

- Face-to-face interviews allow the researcher an opportunity to clarify unclear questions or responses.
3.6.2. Procedure

After conducting the pilot study the researcher conducted the formal interviews; participants felt that some of the questions were somewhat repetitive. After further clarification they were able to answer. No other negative feedback was given after this clarification.

The participants were given detailed background on the purpose of the study, as well as assurances about the ethical principles that the study adhered to such as confidentiality, and non-disclosure. This was important, because some participants were suspicious of the researcher’s identity and were only willing to participate once the researcher produced her identity document as well as the letter of permission conduct the interviews from the University of Johannesburg. Participants were assured that their participation was voluntary, and that they had the right to withdraw from the process at any time. Participants who consented to participate were given consent forms to sign. Participants were also made aware that the interviews were being recorded, and that these recordings would be transcribed.

The researcher further informed the participants that they would be allowed to respond to questions in Setswana. This was communicated in order to establish rapport, and make it easy for them to respond to questions freely and honestly. Interviews with the focus groups were conducted in Lokaleng and were scheduled and conducted promptly. However, the one-on-one interviews with the government officials and the community representatives took long to schedule due to their busy programmes, and constant postponements. These delays resulted in the interviews being conducted over a period of six months, from January 2017 to June 2017.

During the interviews there were potential participants who refused to participate because they were of the opinion that the researcher was a government representative, despite the assurances provided that the research was being conducted for academic purposes only. Some participants were suspicious of the researcher’s motives for conducting this research, which made it difficult to secure interviews. Despite these challenges the researcher was able to secure enough participants to participate in the community focus groups.

The researcher is an affiliated employee of Office of the Premier, and given the level of mistrust encountered in the community, the researcher did not disclose her affiliation with government in the interest of securing trustworthy data.
The interview schedules were based on a sequence of questions that were posed in the same sequence and the same manner to all research participants, with little flexibility available to the researcher (Edwards & Holland 2013).

The researcher used semi-structured interviews that allowed her to probe responses further, when required. Each interview guide consisted of twenty-five (25) closed- and open-ended interview questions. These questions included the biographical details of participants, and their perceptions of the engagement strategies used by the Mahikeng local municipality to engage the local community on service delivery. The responses provided by the participants were voice-recorded by using a cellphone, then transcribed into English later. Setswana was preferred by the majority of the community participants since they are not fluent in English.

3.7. Data Analysis and Display Report

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2005:333) define data analysis as the method of bringing perspective, order, organisation and meaning to the collected data. Data analysis in qualitative research is done in words, while quantitative analysis is done in numbers. Kreuger and Neuman (2006) describe data analysis as a search for patterns in data such as recurring words, behaviour or knowledge on the subject matter.

The transcription of the interviews was time-consuming because the focus group data had to be translated into English for the purpose of analysis. There were instances where the researcher struggled with accurately transcribing some of the Setswana words; however, it was possible to grasp the intended meaning accurately despite this limitation.

The analysis of the data was conducted by using thematic content analysis, which included identifying patterns and themes from the participants’ responses (Braun and Clarke, 2006). These authors further contend that thematic analysis is flexible, given that data can be identified in one of two ways: either inductively or deductively.

3.7.1. Procedure

With the inductive approach, the collected data is analysed starting with the precise content, moving to broader generalisation, whereas the deductive approach works from the broader data to the specific. Based on the research questions, the researcher looked for themes or codes such as the engagement strategies used, public participation, the frequency of engagement, the perception of respondents of
these strategies, and their experience of these engagements. In coding data the researcher separately analysed the responses of the participants from the focus groups, community representative and the government representative to identify themes from each data-set. From there the similar responses were grouped together to reflect certain thematic content.

3.8. Measures of Quality

3.8.1. Trustworthiness and Credibility

Trustworthiness entails that the study can be replicated later and yield similar, if not improved, results. It further entails that a researcher does not record false information in order to make sure that the study succeeds. The researcher must at all times be objective and report the truth and accurately reflect the participants’ responses.

Holloway and Wheeler (2002) suggest that credibility is the confidence that can be placed in the truth of these research findings. Graneheim and Lundman (2004) further note that “credibility establishes whether or not the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants’ original data, and if there is a correct interpretation of the participants’ original views”. The responses of participants were recorded the later transcribed, in order to make sure that the researcher captured the responses accurately. This allowed the researcher unlimited access to recorded data, and allowed for accuracy checks in transcribing participants responses.

Conducting research requires determination, time management, and focus, hence the following values and principles guided this study during its process:

Prior to engagement with participants in the research process, they were informed of the purpose of the study. The researcher respected all those who were not willing to take part in the focus group interviews and respected the rights of participants and confidentiality of their responses.

The researcher consciously had to avoid bias when transcribing and analysing the responses of the community members, given her employment affiliation.
Chapter 4. Results and Interpretation of Results

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of stakeholders affecting service delivery in the Lokaleng village, in the North West Province, Mahikeng local municipality in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District municipality.

The previous chapter outlined the methodology and the design of the study. This chapter describes the analysis of data, followed by a discussion of the research findings. The findings relate to the research questions that guided the study. The researcher thematically interpreted the summarised data in accordance with the related question of the study. The data was analysed by repeatedly reading the qualitative data gathered through focus groups interviews and individual interviews with two government representatives, one from the Mahikeng local municipality and the other from the Office of the Premier, and the two community representatives, the Chief of the village and the Ward Councillor. The analysis begins with identification of themes emerging from the raw data, as illustrated in figure 2 below.

4.2. Demographics of Participants

The demographics of the participants in the study are illustrated in the graph below.

Figure 2. Demographics of participants.
In total, 31 participants took part in the focus groups, 2 community representatives (Chief and Ward councillor), and 2 government representatives (Office of the Premier and Mahikeng Local Municipality).

Of the 31 participants, the majority were female (19), with 12 male participants. The community and government representatives were all male (4). As regards age, the group participants between the ages of 18 to 25 numbered 12, while 19 participants were between 26 and 65 years of age. Community and government participants all fell in the 26 to 65 category.

At the level of education, the majority of the group participants did not have matric, with 4 in the process of attaining their matric, 8 with matric and 3 in tertiary education. The majority of focus group members are unemployed, others are still in school, while others are school drop-outs, and a few are employed.

### 4.3. Themes emerging from the interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE</th>
<th>COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE</th>
<th>FOCUS GROUPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Engagement focused around Integrated Development Plan (IDP)</td>
<td>According to the government representatives, IDP is the only stakeholder engagement strategy that is legislatively used by all the municipalities. Other accompanying initiatives are Setsokotsane, this is a local initiative that came with the 4th Administration to fast-track service</td>
<td>The only stakeholder engagement strategy that the representative knows is the IDP</td>
<td>The focus group stated that the IDP is the stakeholder engagement strategy that the local municipality uses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
delivery and enhances stakeholder engagement. The other initiative is Villages, Towns, and Small Dorpies (VTSD) such is used to unite, engage and grow businesses in these towns. According to the participants these concepts were initiated in 2015.

| 2 | Engagement vehicles | The municipality uses the local Mahikeng newspaper called the Mafikeng Mail, the community radio station called Mahikeng FM, Setsokotsane (Whirlwind) 10 by 10 campaign, fliers, loud-hailing, IDP and community meetings. These methods are common in government and are in line with public participation as per the prescripts of government. | The Chief and the Ward Councillor indicated that the municipality uses the local newspaper and radio station, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and community meetings. Communication with the community is also carried out through the office of the chief, while in other instances; letters are given to the children at school to give to their parents. | The focus groups stated the following:  
• IDP and community meetings  
• The office of the Chief  
• Local newspaper and radio  
• Ward Councillor and his committee  
• CDW  
• Setsokotsane, Letters given to the children at school |
| 3 | Protest action as reaction by citizens | The municipality and the Office of the Premier are not aware of any protests that took place in 2012 in the Lokaleng village. | According to the community representatives, a service delivery protest was staged by the community members of Lokaleng and Mogosane villages. The issue that the communities were protesting about included the lack of houses, electricity, and a tarred road, between the two villages. | The focus groups stated that service delivery protest is not an ideal action; however, if the government does not respond to the needs and requests, then service delivery is the last resort that will ensure delivery |

| 4 | Communication dependent on information | The government representative confirmed that they communicate either when they want to initiate a development or when an intervention is needed. However, such engagements come after the decision has already been made. Such selective communication has led to service delivery protests on many occasions. | Communication from the local municipality is not consistent; the Ward Councillor stated that in most instances he does not know what to report back to the communities, because the municipality does not share information with them as Ward Councillors. | The focus groups stated that the local municipality only comes to them when the projects are half done and then request their inputs. They further remarked that the visibility of the local municipality was linked to their campaigning for election. The group felt that the municipality communicated only |
occasions in the province and country at large. The representatives further stated that through a few public participation that they took part in, it was clear that the communities were unsatisfied with both service delivery and inconsistent stakeholder engagements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>Frequency of engagements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The community meetings must be held monthly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ward Councillor shared that he was the councillor responsible for six dispersed villages, therefore holding monthly meetings was a challenge. Consequently the meetings were inconsistently held.

The focus groups stated that a semester could pass without having had a community meeting. As a result they felt that the Ward Councillor was inconsistent with his meetings. However, there were other groups that indicated that the Ward Councillor really could not have monthly meetings, given the number of the villages in his ward.

on certain things, instead of communicating on when the services will be delivered and/or if there was a delay on service delivery or budget shortage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>Motivation for meeting attendance/engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The representatives stated that stakeholders vary, depending on the agenda of the meeting. Moreover, the MEC, Premier only attend meetings when an intervention is needed. The local municipality never involves the community at the conceptual part of the project; instead communities are roped in when the project is ready for implementation.</td>
<td>The community representatives stated that the attendance of meetings has slightly improved, although most community members only attend meetings when they know that projects and job opportunities will be discussed. The Ward Councillor further stated that he understood the importance of engagements; however, in most instances he had nothing to communicate to the community. He elaborated that he gets information from the municipality, and on many occasions the local municipality does not give them/him feedback or updates, hence he felt that it was not necessary for the meetings to take place. The Chief holds his meetings on a monthly basis to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Stakeholders influencing engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Continuity and consistency in information transfer and record-keeping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in management and the structure of government. They further stated that such changes could be positive or negative, but they often delay delivery of services. given that the municipality is mostly occupied by politicians. Such changes can affect service delivery either negatively or positively.

| 9 | Flow of communication | Emphasis on improvement on feedback to the stakeholder was made by the government representatives. They further stated that governments need to improve its visibility to the communities to promote the flow of two-way communication and public participation. The representatives emphasised that the local municipality must always keep lines of communication open, and that communication must be two-way. They also highlighted that skilled and qualified staff at the municipality must take preference over that new leaders want to start from scratch by conducting community meetings to find out what the communities’ needs are. They stated that such an exercise might take long and in the end services will not be delivered. They shared that leaders must just continue where the previous ones left off and not start from scratch and waste even more money. The focus groups maintained that consistent communication will improve the relationship between the municipality and the community. They further suggested that feedback is one of the important things that the local
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10</th>
<th>Effectiveness of engagement</th>
<th>The government looks at the services needed and from there prioritises two or three without consulting the community.</th>
<th>The municipality collects information but does not apply what they have learnt.</th>
<th>The focus group stated that for the past four years they have been requesting houses, schools, water and electricity, but nothing has happened. The local municipality only responded on two occasions, i.e. during protests and during election campaigns. According to the participants, the municipality’s reason for non-delivery is due to shortage of funds. However, not all participants share the same sentiments, others are appreciative of what they have.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Perceptions of stakeholders of service delivery</td>
<td>The local municipality official stated that the communities were not happy, because they</td>
<td>The representatives concurred that the community is not satisfied with service delivery in their</td>
<td>The groups are not satisfied and feel that for as long as government does not fulfil its</td>
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Key findings from the themes

- **Key findings theme one:**

  This finding conforms to participatory communication which postulates that communities are to be involved in identifying their developmental needs and come up with solutions to their problems in collaboration with the municipality (Bessette, 2006). Therefore, the finding suggests that IDP is the only stakeholder engagement strategy that all participants know of. IDP is a strategy that is developed to cater for a period of five years; however it is reviewed annually to ensure that it is still in line with the needs of the communities.

  In support of the IDP there needs to be a communication strategy that is used for continuous stakeholder engagement to ensure that the relationship between the municipality and the community is sustained and most importantly to give the communities feedback on the developments of the projects in the IDP.

- **Key finding theme two:**

  Stakeholder theory encourages vehicles of communication to promote two-way communication such as community meetings. Participants mentioned interpersonal communication channels as well as mass media channels and the majority of the participants prefer the former channel because of its provision for two-way communication as encouraged by thr excellence theory.

- **Key finding theme three:**

  The community representatives and the focus groups concurred that a service delivery protest indeed took place five years ago and even though not all services were rendered, at least some were
addressed. However, the government representative did not recall such an event. The response by the government representatives indicates that there is lack of communication between the municipality and the community; it also indicates that there is no proper record keeping, which goes against the Kings report, the stakeholder theory just to name a few that emphasise the importance of accountability, and information management.

- Key finding theme four:

Communication was selective, in that the local municipality communicated only on certain occasions. They did not consult the community at the beginning of a project; instead, they consulted them when the project had already been started. As such the municipality does not conform to the prescripts of government that clearly promotes the involvement of the stakeholders through public participation. The majority of studies on public participation revealed that the municipalities and the ward councillors do not hold up the legislative right of stakeholder as they do not practice public participation. According to studies there are instances where community members no longer attend community meetings due to their inconsistency and empty promises.

- Key finding theme five:

When dealing with communities, more so those in rural areas who are always in need of service delivery, there must be meetings taking place monthly to keep the communities informed about services, developments and feedback. The stakeholder theory affirms the importance of organisations / government to constantly engage with stakeholder so as to be in par with their needs, challenges and possible solution to problems within those communities.

- Key finding theme six:

Communities are not involved in project planning and decision-making. Communities do not attend engagements because they feel that they already know what the meeting will be about, although attendance is high when there are job opportunities to be discussed. Smulovitz (2003) suggested that distrust in local government is a strong force that keeps people away from participating in community meetings. Strategic communication in stakeholder engagement cannot be over-emphasised as it is the only way where all stakeholders will be able to know and understand their roles and participate accordingly thereof.

- Key finding theme seven:

The Chief is important to both the community and government as he is a link between the two. The contribution of chief to rural development is through using his political influence by lobbying the
municipality, provincial and national government and using other institutions. The chief is more passionate about the development of his community. Shembe (2014) indicated that prior the establishment of municipalities, the power of Chiefs although sometimes symbolic was uncontested as they were the only leadership available in these areas. Arguably, it is good that the chief still works tirelessly to ensure that his community is well taken care of, however such need not divide the community in that, the ward councillor has his people and the chief has his own. Instead both leaders ought to lead by example and encourage the community to cooperate and take part in public participation in order to ensure that their voices are head, as supported by system’s theory that all parts of a whole ought to work together.

- Key finding theme eight:

New leadership should continue where the previous one left off; the only changes welcomed would be those that enhance service delivery. Based on the findings it is clear that there needs to be a continuity plan that municipalities put in place to avoid disruption and prioritising the needs of the stakeholders.

- Key findings themes nine:

The participants emphasised the need for effective and efficient communication to enable two-way communication. This finding encompasses the need for both stakeholder theory to be practiced and strategic communication. The participants indicated that the most important things about service delivery are to be informed of what is happening and what is not happening.

- Key finding theme ten:

Non-implementation and insufficient communication are highlighted in the responses of participants. Needs are shared, but nothing is done to implement solutions. Implementation through participatory communication ensures that as much as IDP is developed jointly with all relevant stakeholders, should there be a reason that the projects planned for do not materialise, the municipality will go back to the community and give reasons as to why the delay, the postponement etc.

- Key finding theme eleven:

The community is not satisfied with services and there is nothing that the municipality is doing about it; instead, they hold meetings that yield no results. The community no longer has the urge to protest due to some division amongst members of the community. The focus groups shared that they need a secondary school in their community to prevent children from dropping out of school due to the distance they have to travel to go to school. Most households in the community do not have electricity.
The community members travel long distances with wheelbarrows to get access to water. The community does not have transport to go to town because some roads are still a problem.
Chapter 5. Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the stakeholder engagement strategies that the Mahikeng local municipality in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District municipality employs to interact with the Lokaleng village community, and the perceptions of the community members on the strategies thereof. In the previous chapter, the results of the study were analysed and the findings of the study were discussed. The purpose of this chapter is to summarise and reflect on how the research question and sub-questions that have been posed are answered based on the studies’ findings. This chapter further provides an overview of the study, the conclusions and the resulting recommendations. The limitations encountered in conducting the study are described and possible avenues for future research are mentioned. The chapter concludes with a summary of the value of this research study.

5.2. Findings

The findings found that the Mahikeng local municipality is among the municipalities that have challenges in carrying-out their mandate to deliver basic services to the community due to lack of funds, lack of skilled employees, lack of communication and political interference.

The findings revealed that the Mahikeng Local Municipality in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District municipality uses the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) as an engagement strategy. The development of an IDP is a legislative requirement for all municipalities in South Africa as a strategic plan for the development and management of municipalities and stakeholder engagement. According to the findings the IDP processes uses a top-down approach for stakeholder engagement; proposals are developed by the municipal officials and brought to the community for approval. The community is not included in the development process; instead they are only brought it at the end. The community representatives shared that in most instances the municipality allocates insufficient funds which causes a shortage of resources for public participation such as venues for the meeting and transport for the stakeholders to attend the meeting, inadequate facilities and equipment for effective engagement. In concurrence with the community representative is Mosotho’s (2013) findings, which reveal that although legislation provides a broader policy framework for local government to empower their local communities to enable and enhance effective public participation in various programmes of a municipality such as the IDP process, there are still challenges with regards to
involvement and lack of capacity, and knowledge by the community to effectively participate in municipal affairs. The findings further indicate that the Mahikeng municipality does not have a localised stakeholder engagement strategy; there is no communication strategy that is aligned with each ward’ needs to enable effective and efficient provision of services and stakeholder participation. Arguably this finding is not in line with strategic communication and stakeholder theory which promotes adequate tools and channels of communication when engaging with stakeholders.

The findings revealed that there are several vehicles of communication that the local municipality uses to engage with the community. The majority of these vehicles, such as the use of media, letters and loud-hailing, are in line with the one-way communication approach, which does not give provision for the community to respond and/or raise their issues. The municipality also uses community meetings to engage with the community, which allow for two-way communication, such is aligned with the excellence theory, however its application is alleged to that of one-way communication. The findings further revealed that engagements are inconsistent, with months going by without any engagement between the community and their ward councillor or local municipality. The findings suggest that there is a lack of or poor feedback methods; as such non-delivery of services is a strong motivation for the community’s disengagement and their negative attitude towards stakeholder engagement.

The findings further suggest that a failure to follow through on promises by government was a major factor as perceived by the community members. The focus group participants expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the vehicles of communication and poor delivery of services. The government representatives stated that, in most instances, the municipality takes decisions on behalf of the community to save costs and time of having pointless conflicts between the community and the municipality, as well as among the community on which services to prioritise. It was furthermore found that government goes to the communities when there is a development that it wants to bring to the community, and also during election campaigns. The government representatives shared that it is not often that they give feedback to the stakeholders, and as a result the non-attendance of stakeholders at the community and IDP meetings prevails. Among the vehicles of engagement the participants mentioned is the Setsokotsane 10 by 10; the government representative shared that it is a plan aimed at fast-tracking service delivery and enhancing stakeholder engagement in various wards. This plan starts with planned activities on the 10th of each month. To kick off the activities on day one of the ten days is an engagement between the Mayor, the Ward Councillor and the community members on how the ten days will unfold. Amongst these activities are: the cleaning up of the environment, sports activities, patching of potholes, promotion of agriculture, culture and tourism. However, implementation of the plan is not consistent because, according to the government
representatives, there are months where the mentioned activities do not take place due to shortage of budget and break-down in communication between the Office of the Premier and the municipality.

Of importance is also the role of the Chief in matters of stakeholder engagement and service delivery. The participants concurred that the role of the Chief is important, because he advocates for unity in the community. The role of the traditional leadership in the community is further stipulated in the Constitution of South Africa, under Section 212. The Ward Councillor jointly holds the community meetings. The Chief shared that government has no right to use the land of the Chief or the King; permission must be sought first before any development can take place, which is why collaboration between government and the community is important. Furthermore, the community representative stated that the Premier of the North West Province takes the involvement of the traditional leadership very seriously; he therefore has engagements with them on a quarterly basis to discuss service delivery and developments that will improve the lives of the communities. The community representatives shared that most of the community members attend meetings mainly if it has to do with employment and development issues. Apart from the community meeting, the Chief, as the leader of the village, holds his monthly meetings with his community to discuss domestic issues, developments and to settle disputes. The Chief further revealed that on occasions there are developments that he brings to the village through various stakeholders who buy land directly from him.

The participants shared that change in leadership has led to delays in service delivery because the new leader would want to start his/her own projects from the beginning and not continue where the previous leader had left off. Such changes can either be positive or negative; however they are costly to government in that new service providers have to be hired to carry out developments, which may be expensive. The community representatives and the focus groups further alleged that most tenders for construction or any other major projects are given to the friends of the municipal officials, which results in corruption, combined with work of poor quality.

The participants emphasised the need for consistent and productive stakeholder engagement between the municipality and the community. The municipality needs to re-evaluate its vehicles of communication, and to make use of the two-way communication approach. The findings further suggest that the municipality must give priority to employing skilled and qualified employees in order to effectively and efficiently carry out matters of service delivery.
5.3. Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 of the study introduced the study and provided the background to the study. The chapter further outlined the problem, which undertook to explore the stakeholder perception of engagement strategies affecting service delivery in the Mahikeng local municipality. In an attempt to address the research problem statement, research sub-questions were formulated. The main question and sub-questions are restated:

5.3.1. Main Research Question

How are stakeholder engagement strategies used by Mahikeng local municipality to ensure service delivery in the community of Lokaleng?

5.3.2. Research Sub-Questions

- How does Mahikeng Local Municipality engage the community of Lokaleng village?
- How does the Mahikeng Local Municipality implement their stakeholder engagement strategy in relation to stakeholder theory?
- How does the community of Lokaleng village perceive the stakeholder engagement strategies used by the Mahikeng Local Municipality?

5.4. Research Contribution

The existing mechanisms and systems to promote stakeholder engagement/public participation in the Mahikeng local municipality under the Ngaka Modiri Molema district municipality are inadequate and are not properly structured and utilised; the research intends to urge the municipality to do a full assessment on such matters. The findings indicate that the municipality does not have an engagement strategy; as such the findings of this study are important to the understanding of stakeholder’s perceptions on stakeholder engagement strategies and service delivery. Such information will assist in facilitating more effective and efficient channels of communication to promote stakeholder engagement between the municipality and its communities. The information will further provide a platform for providing needed services that are matched with the stakeholder’s expectations. Better knowledge and understanding of the stakeholder’s perceptions, experiences and expectations the municipality will be better placed to improve engagements along with the quality of their services.
The stakeholder theory advocates for involvement of stakeholders in matters that affect their livelihood. For such engagements to prevail there needs to be plans, strategies, resources and, most importantly, engagement between participants as such the study will contribute in assisting the municipality to identify such necessities.

Moreover, it is intended to motivate the community members to also take an active role in attending and participating in meetings in order to make their contributions on matters that affect them. The research findings will also contribute to the body of literature on stakeholder engagement in the context of local government in a diverse South African context.

The community was pleased that a research is conducted about their community on this particular topic. The community, the Chief, the Ward Councillor and the municipal official requested that the findings of this study be shared with them.

5.5. The Findings in the Context of the Research Questions (RQ)

Research participants revealed that the way the local municipality engages with them is still at the lowest level, where one-way communication is mostly utilised.

What stakeholder engagement strategies does the Mahikeng Local municipality use to engage with the community in Lokaleng village? The purpose of this question was to investigate what the current engagement strategies used by the local municipality to inform, consult, involve and educate the community are.

According to the focus group participants and the government officials, the local municipality uses various platforms to engage the community, as stated in the previous chapter. Some of these channels are meant to give the community an opportunity to raise their concerns and needs. However, the community members feel that these channels are not user-friendly; they alleged that community meetings are the forum that allows the community to raise their concerns. In contrast, the focus groups further suggested that community meetings are held in compliance with the local municipality, they happen so that the municipality can inform the communities. Participants complained that not all these platforms are accessible to them: for instance, the provincial call centre needs resources such as a cell phone, telephone and airtime to call in and lodge a complaint or make an enquiry; radio stations require that community members must have electricity to be able to listen, and some members do not have electricity, while others cannot even afford to buy radio sets for listening.
According to the Constitution of South Africa (1996) Section 152 (1) (e), one of the objectives of local government is to encourage the involvement of community organisations in local government. This objective is further stipulated in the local government Municipal Systems Act, Act 23 of 2000, which requires municipalities to develop a culture of participation by the community and create mechanisms, processes and procedures conducive to such. The municipality must further make sure that engagement of the community is easily accessible to the community.

Vivier, Seabe, Wentzel and Sanchez (2015) argue that in reality most, if not all, of the legislation and theories that encourage stakeholder engagement are not put into practice; the legislation has not proved to be functional or effective. They suggested that the reasons for this are due to challenges because of a lack of the appropriate skills by the officials and resources by the municipality, the limited decision-making power of councillors, and the limited community knowledge of ward committee functions and responsibilities. The current study found that the community members were not clear on the responsibilities of their ward committees because the committees failed to explain such roles to the community. Moreover, the Ward Councillor in some instances failed to explain to the community reasons behind lack of services or development decisions because he himself could not comprehend the technicalities explained by the local municipality. The current study found that, when engagement takes place through meetings, communities do not attend, and when they do attend, their inputs are noted but not considered. Additionally, the current study found that even though there are legislative documents on the importance of stakeholder engagement, there is a lack of localised engagement strategies that are tailored for wards, in line with their needs.

Based on the findings of the current study, the channels of engagement used by the local municipality generally do not provide sufficient and effective channels for either the provision of information on government services or the development of relationships between government and citizens, and/or the municipality does not know how to use these channels to their full advantage. Therefore, the municipality is still characterised by one-way communication instead of the two-way communication as stipulated in the excellence theory.

*How does the Mahikeng Local Municipality implement their stakeholder engagement strategy? The purpose of this question was to find out the ways in which the municipality put their strategy into place.*

The participants felt that government could at least hold community meetings each month, not only to inform them, but to also give feedback. Currently that is not the case; the Ward Councillor holds his meeting once in a quarter and the community is not happy with that arrangement, because it delays consultations and information sharing.
The IDP meetings take place once a year to review whether the previous year’s targets were achieved and to set new ones in accordance with the community’s needs and in alignment with the budget. The community meetings are supposed to take place every month as per the North West Provincial Government initiative to fast-track service delivery; however, according to the Ward Councillor, the villages in ward six are too scattered, which poses a challenge to him. He therefore holds a meeting once a month in one of the villages and rotates them systematically. Similarly, apart from the joint meeting between the Ward Councillor and the Chief, the Chief holds his monthly meetings with the community to discuss what they can do to improve the domestic issues of the village, come with ways to create jobs, and improve the security in the village.

During community meetings the community must be informed on the progress made with the implementation of service delivery projects planned for the ward, and further determine what are other service delivery needs of the community are in order to make recommendations to the municipal council and the local municipality thereof. As it stands, that is not the case which goes against the importance of participatory communication between stakeholders, the theory argues that communication must be effective and efficient in order desired to yield results.

*How does the community of Lokaleng village perceive the stakeholder engagement strategies used by the Mahikeng Local Municipality? The purpose of this question was to find out what the views of the community members regarding the engagement strategies are, and whether they are satisfactory to both parties or not.*

The White Paper on Local Government (1998:47) alludes to the fact that the purpose of IDP is in line with the new paradigm on development planning; it is to provide a framework within which municipalities can understand the various dynamics operating within their areas of jurisdiction, develop a concrete vision for their areas and formulate strategies for financing and realising their visions in partnership with the community. The channels used to engage stakeholder are numerous; however, they are not effective and to a certain extent not efficient because the community do not have access to them, for instance newspapers are bought in town, which means that the community needs transport and money to purchase such. Another example of ineffective engagement was given by the municipal official, who stated that when they convene an IDP and community meetings, they come having already decided what or which service they will bring to the communities without having consulted the community first.

The Chief stated that even though the vehicles for engagement are there, the problem lies in their utilisation; for instance, you cannot use a megaphone to give important information that needs to be discussed in a meeting setting.
Therefore, effective and efficient community engagement mostly depends on choosing and using the appropriate combination of strategies (Theron, 2005, 123-128). The findings show that the participants want to be involved and engaged on key issues of services affecting their community, they are keen to work jointly with the government to resolve issues, and most importantly they are willing to listen to reasons for non-delivery of services. Arguably, this finding is not aligned to the stakeholder theory as it suggests that stakeholders must be well informed to be part of the discussions, negotiations regarding their livelihoods.

5.6. Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the current study show that there is indeed still a long way to go in terms of closing the service delivery gap in the Lokaleng village. There also exists a need for a communication strategy that will guide the Mahikeng Local Municipality on how to engage its communities, such a strategy much be developed in line with the strategic communication principles. If the local municipality had a stakeholder engagement strategy, the strategy would outline mechanisms for capturing issues raised at meetings, how these issues should be dealt with, including the allocation of resources for proper monitoring, the processing, storage, and dissemination thereof.

Babooa (2008) suggests that one of the existing challenges facing government is in enhancing the engagement of stakeholders in the governance processes. The State of Local Government in South Africa Report, (CoGTA, 2009), has also revealed the lack of communication and stakeholder engagement with communities as one of the challenges that local government and government as a whole face.

During the study it emerged that there was limitation in the form of consultation by the municipality with various stakeholders in the Mahikeng Local Municipality. Respondents reported that the only time councillors were seen seriously engaging the communities was mostly when they were seeking their votes for re-election into office.

The stakeholder engagement strategy would have detailed various ways of carrying out consultations, be it through the community meetings, distribution of information through the media, publishing of documents on the Council website for residents to comment, radio, a dedicated hot line for dealing with specific service delivery matters. The challenges posed by the lack of inclusivity and proper consultation processes resulted in instances where communities remained passive recipients of services that the municipality had prioritised for them; some of them stopped attending meetings a
because they felt that the municipality makes decisions without having proper public consultation and participation. The community only attends meetings based on the agenda because they feel that community meetings are a waste of their time. Based on the responses from the focus groups, this community has given up on government; as a result they do not protest anymore nor do they attend meetings, as they are supposed to. Moreover, according to the community members the meetings are not held regularly, thereby delaying delivery of services and feedback.

According to the findings, the community experiences top-down communication, one-way communication from the local municipality, which ultimately excludes them from influencing decisions to be made because they are not actually contributing by means of bottom-up communication as recommended by stakeholder theory as well as participatory communication.

The Mahikeng Local Municipality (MLM) community respondents mentioned lack of confidence in the municipality as a reason for the poor attendance of community meetings. Furthermore, focus group respondents stated that they attend a meeting only when they know that job opportunities and development are on the agenda. Moreover, failure by the municipality to respond to community’s service needs and expectations can also be seen as a contributing factor. From the findings it is evident that the community is not appreciative of the stakeholder engagement practices of the local municipality. The local municipality is not doing its best to make sure that the communities/wards have the necessary resources such as information, and accessible venues to actively participate in IDP, as well as community meetings.

5.7. Recommendations for the Local Municipality and the Community

The Mahikeng local municipality faces challenges in practicing effective stakeholder engagement in the Lokaleng village. It needs to look into their channels of communication and how best they can enhance them.

The aim of a stakeholder engagement strategy is to provide a framework to operate within, to improve the performance of the municipality by engaging with stakeholders and acting upon stakeholder feedback. The Mahikeng local municipality must develop a stakeholder engagement strategy that will outline the channels that they will utilise to engage with the communities, as well as providing the venues for the meetings. Such a strategy will assist in making sure that functions are accounted for, transparent, monitored and evaluated. Engagement processes are central to the success of a
democratic system of government. Stakeholder engagement enhances decision-making as well as legitimising actions that flow from decisions taken.

Given the findings of the study, it is evident that the local municipality is not familiar with strategic communication. Therefore, strategic communication can be explored as an alternative communication approach to better enhance communication between the councillors, the local municipality and the communities they serve. The municipality must ensure that a skills development programme for municipal officials and ward councillors are initiated to better equip them to deal with the issues from the community. The research findings also showed that some of the community members do not always attend the engagements; instead, they only attend depending on what is on the agenda. It is therefore important that community capacity building programmes are also put into place to teach them about the importance of stakeholder engagement/public participation and its benefits, as well as the importance of attending such engagements. Stakeholder engagement leads to outcomes that better reflect the perceptions and needs the community in all its diversity. On the other hand, educating elected officials and community members about their rights, roles and responsibilities has to be a funded mandate for all municipalities, and a proper monitoring and evaluation strategies must be put into place. Such initiatives will also enable the practice of a bottom-up communication approach. Bottom-up communication, along with dialogue, is one of the methods that strategic communication advocates to reach consensus, as it encourages self-organisation, allows for dissent, exercises communication influence rather than communication management; furthermore, it promotes accountability, transparency and collaboration.

Government should engage stakeholders on relatable issues of interest. Stakeholder inclusivity should be enhanced by two-way symmetrical communication. The municipality must also take into account that effective communication must include information distribution, information gathering, information sharing, collaborative discussion and decision-making. Masango (2009:130) concurs that in order to develop and sustain stakeholder engagement, there must be a certain level of education and knowledge amongst members of society. Therefore, the municipality must ensure that information is shared with participants’ prior engagement so as to make effective and meaningful contributions.

To ensure that the municipality delivers its legislative and developmental mandate for effective stakeholder engagement, there is a need implementation of an effective strategy. The Chief and the Ward Councillor must in turn encourage their community to attend engagements and take part in discussions; emphasis must be put on the importance of participation. The Municipality should formulate its IDP in such a way as to make it understandable to all stakeholders and in a language
that the participants fully understand. Of importance also is that service delivery systems must be tightened to ensure that service delivery operations are not affected by instability, either political or administrative.

Feedback from the municipality based on either accepting or rejecting community input is crucial, such will enable the community to sympathise with the municipality or come up with alternative ways to make sure that services are delivered. According to the findings the Mahikeng Local Municipality does not have specific feedback mechanisms in place, therefore the community is not well informed of the services due to them if any, or when they will receive them. It is up to the ward councillor, his committee and the municipality to ensure that feedback mechanisms are encouraged and listened to. Improved communications must be one of the desired improvements in the municipal management project.

The Mahikeng local municipality officials in charge of the IDP, public participation and stakeholder engagement must ensure that there is proper documentation of the results of the planning of the IDP and that time frames are adhered to. The linkages between IDP priorities, engagement strategy and funds must be clearly outlined for the benefit of the community and stakeholders. And if for some reason there delays in the provision of services, such must be communicated to the stakeholders.

An understanding and exploring of the influence of stakeholder engagement on service delivery matters would allow the possibility of improving cost measures, lowering service delivery protests, building a sustainable relationship and saving the time of both stakeholder and the local government.

5.8. Limitations of the Study

As in any research study, there is a possibility of flaws in the design, data and interpretation. This study’s aim was to investigate stakeholder perception of engagement strategies affecting service delivery in the Mahikeng Local Municipality, under Ngaka Modiri Molema district municipality in the North West Province, therefore the following limitations may be found:

- Lokaleng village is only one village in a ward of six villages, therefore the findings do not represent the whole ward.

- In focus group interviews, participants have the tendency to influence each other’s responses to the questions, resulting in individual perceptions of certain participants dominating the group.
5.9. **Recommendations for future studies**

- Conduct research on the stakeholder engagement strategies used by the local municipality in an urban area. The current research was conducted in Lokaleng village, which is a rural area, and the results were that the community is not satisfied with the strategies that the local municipality uses. Conducting a similar research in an urban area would assist in finding out the stakeholder engagement strategies that the municipality uses and the perceptions of the communities on such strategies.

- Satisfied employees result in satisfied stakeholders in most instances, therefore an investigation into the internal stakeholder engagement strategy would assist in establishing the level at which engagement and service delivery are impacted by internal affairs.

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**APPENDIXES**

**Appendix A: Letter to Request permission to conduct research**

Dr. KL Sebego

Director-General

North West Provincial Government
Dear Dr. K.L Sebego

REQUEST PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PROVINCIAL FOR THE FULFILMENT OF MY MASTERS DEGREE

Dr. Sebego, I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Refilwe Bloem, a student at the University of Johannesburg, Kingsway campus. I am currently doing my Master’s degree in Strategic Communication. As part of this degree I am conducting research on the “Stakeholder Perception of Engagement Strategies Affecting Service Delivery in the North West Province: Ngaka Modiri Molema Local Municipality”.

Therefore, I humbly request permission from your office to conduct the study in the below-mentioned departments and local municipality. It would be much appreciated to be assisted with a letter of permission; the purpose of such is to attach it to the application of ethical clearance which seeks to ethically conduct the study without consequences / bias on the part of the respondents and, possibly, officials (based on their availability).

The primary focus in terms of departments and institutions are as follows:

- **Office of the Premier** (Stakeholder engagement officials).
- **Department of Local Government and Human Settlement** (Stakeholder engagement officials).
- **Mahikeng Local Municipality** (Stakeholder engagement officials).

Upon completion of the study the research report and its findings will be made available to your office upon request. Your assistance in this regard is highly appreciated.

I hope that my request is in order.

Kind regards

Ms R. Bloem
Appendix B: Request to conduct interview letter to the Chief

Unit 13
Motswetswejane Crescent
Mmabatho

Kgosi P. Motshegare
Chief of Lokaleng Village
Lokaleng Village
P.O.BOX 1970
Mmabatho
2735
December 2016

Dear Kgosi Motshegare

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Refilwe Bloem, and I am a student in Strategic Communication at the University of Johannesburg. The research I wish to conduct for my Master’s degree mini-dissertation involves interviewing members of your community. The topic for my research is “Stakeholder Perception of Engagement Strategies Affecting Service Delivery in the North West Province: Ngaka Modiri Molema Local Municipality”. The project will be conducted under the supervision of Mrs. Dalien René Benecke.

I am hereby seeking your consent to approach a number of clinics, shops, taverns, schools, households and people on the street for the purpose of this research. I hereto attach a copy of my proposal which includes copies of the consent forms to be used in the research process.

Upon completion of the study, I will provide your community with a copy of the full research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 072 462 0000. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely

Ms R. Bloem

University of Johannesburg

072 462 0000, refilwebloem@ymail.com
### Appendix C: Government Representative

#### MOTHUPI INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT

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<th>Statement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>State your Gender and ethnic group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Black Male.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>State your age group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>36 years old.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Level of education? In which field?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Honours degree in Public Administration.</em></td>
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<td>Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>In which municipality/department are you employed?</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>What is your job title?</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Under which directorate do you work?</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>How long have you been in this directorate?</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Does Lokaleng village fall under your municipality?</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>How do you engage (interact/communicate) with the community?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Who attends these sessions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Has the Lokaleng community engaged in any service delivery protest?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>How do you know which services communities need?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Question 13
What happens in a case whereby the community does not agree on which services to prioritise?

*Our role is to guide, so when we go to the community we already have an idea of what their priorities are. Therefore when we get there we tell them that in terms of the information that we gathered previously and our experience these are your priorities can your confirm if indeed these are your priorities. We engage with them until they agree that yes these are their priorities. In our local municipalities we have never had a situation whereby a contact session ends without reaching an agreement.*

### Question 14
Which channels of communication does your department/municipality use to disseminate information to communities?

*We use local newspapers; develop our own flyers, local radio station, loud hailing, and consultative sessions.*

### Question 15
Does your municipality/department have stakeholder engagement strategies (plans)?

*Legislatively IDP is the only strategy that municipalities use to implement service delivery. Even if we had a Local Economic Development strategy they all talk to the IDP. Setsokotsane also talks to the IDP it just tells us to speed up service delivery; it says that we have done a lot of planning now it is time to implement. The municipality as well as other government departments take part in the Setsokotsane. Setsokotsane unlocks a lot of things, for an example if there is outage of water in unit 6, Setsokotsane makes sure that water tanks are taken to unit 6 to give people water. Setsokotsane makes use of the available resources immediately it does not wait for a PowerPoint presentation to enable the release of the water tanks. And the other good thing about it is that it encourages the community to take part, if there is a cleaning campaign, communities are part of that campaign. Setsokotsane is similar to vukuzenzele (wake up and do it yourself). Setsokotsane is the most important concrete as it mobilises both human and capital resources.*

### Question 16
How do people access the services provided by Setsokotsane?
Setsokotsane is ward-based, therefore a central place within a ward is identified to enable access to all. They have another campaign called the 10 by 10 campaign, the municipality and the provincial departments identify 10 activities that must be done, within 10 days throughout Mahikeng in every ward. The transport problem in Lokaleng is as a result of the road, the Department of Public Works and Roads has appointed a consultant to pave a 35 kilometre road in Lokaleng to enable accessibility of transport. The consultant has been introduced to the community, the contractor will be appointed around July/August. The good thing about this project is that the plant to manufacture bricks will be built in Lokaleng; therefore there are good projects that will be done in Lokaleng.

The bricks plant will not only be for this project, the government will sign a legal service agreement with the community members of Lokaleng so that all the contractors appointed by government must buy bricks from Lokaleng, therefore it is a huge project.

**17** Ward 6 is made up of a few villages, when you are budgeting how do you go about it? Do you allocate for each village?

When we do IDP consultation we do it village by village because needs are not the same. Legislation has changed that you must not put anything on the IDP that you know that you will not do, therefore it will be difficult for a municipality consisting of six villages of ward 6 to budget for each village in a financial year. What happens is that the municipality holds consultations with each village, from there they evaluate and decide which village is more deprived, then prioritise from there. However it must be taken into consideration that a local municipality cannot really provide a lot of service in terms of its powers and functions. Water and sanitation provision is a district municipality function, we do not have electricity licence like other municipalities therefore it is Eskom’s function.

**18** How do you measure the effectiveness and efficiency of your strategies (plans)?

At the beginning of the financial year the municipality sets its own targets, on a quarterly basis the municipality does assessments, they also do a half yearly assessment that is per legislation. Municipalities are compelled by the legislature (MFMA) to report to council that shows that for the past six months this is what the municipality has done and what it has done for what reasons, and come up with a way
of addressing the unaddressed needs that had been planned for. In January 
municipalities go to adjustment budget when they do mid-year assessment. These 
reports are sent to COGTA and National Treasury. One thing that I am sure our 
municipality is not doing, and that is a legislative requirement, is to make the mid-year 
assessment public.

You are in the highest office in the local municipality, why are you not doing something 
about it?

Cultures are very difficult to break in a work environment, all I can do is advise, it is 
up to the key people to implement. The reason why this mid-year assessment must be 
made public is for the public to criticise and make inputs

How do you get feedback from the community?

Through consultations, we have never done a citizen satisfaction survey. The only 
survey we did was an employee satisfaction survey

Based on feedback from the community what are the perceptions of the stakeholders 
about your strategies and service delivery?

They are not satisfied; they tell us in the meetings

Is there nothing that can be done about their dissatisfaction?

The community feels that after 23 years the government cannot be still saying that there 
is neither money nor resources, they want the service now. Though like you said earlier, 
sometimes it is our fault, for example there was a multimillion water project in 
Lokaleng in 2014/15 financial year; the contractor that was appointed was 
incompetent, lacking capacity, which delays the project. Such things are the ones that 
angers communities. It is not the responsibility of the local municipality to appoint such 
contractors, instead it the district municipality’s responsibility. So we have to keep 
going to the district to say, they must improve their service, however the district has 
bigger problems as it oversees and offers services to more than 3 districts. So when I 
attend community meetings I hear the same complaints over and over and there is 
nothing we can, we do not build houses, our accreditation has long been taken away
from us. We do not provide water and electricity; we depend on other departments to do so.

| 23  | Because you know that most services must come from the district municipality, what role do you play in making sure that services are indeed provided? The community does not go to the district for answers instead it goes to you, so what do you do? |
|     | We end doing unfunded mandate, we end hiring water tanks to deliver water to the people and buy the big green tanks to give to the community. We do this because we are at the door step of the community. We signed the SLA, it’s called Section 78, process with the district municipality; the challenge is that the district is not honouring that Service Level Agreement because the Ngaka Modiri Molema has a lot of challenges compared to other districts in the province. |

| 24  | Is the district municipality under administration? |
|     | It is under administration, under section 139, their problem is financial mismanagement, corruption. The then Municipal Manager employed a lot of people who were not in the structure and who were not budgeted for, he gave them car allowances. |

| 25  | When you have community engagements who attends specifically? |
|     | The Speaker, the Mayor and Chief Whip attend when there is a need for intervention. |

| 26  | Which form of communication do you use, top-down or bottom-up? |
|     | It uses top-down because remember what I said, I said when we go to the communities we already have an idea of what their needs are, we tell them what their needs are then persuade them to agree with what we say. |

| 27  | What do you think can be done to improve service delivery in Lokaleng village? |
|     | We need proper stakeholder management. Provincial departments, state owned entities and the district municipality must effectively play their role in delivering services. Improve communication effectively and efficiently, uproot corruption in municipalities, monitoring, a need to improve leadership both politically and administratively. The AG’s reports from 2013/14 and 2015/16 to date point out that there is no proper
<p>| | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>political and administrative leadership. Consequence management is needed, accountability.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td>How does your strategy impact service delivery in Lokaleng Village?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services are delivered according to the IDP; however when budget runs out for some reason, then other services are abandoned.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td>Which other government departments’ do you collaborate with and their role in stakeholder engagement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the provincial departments, national, state owned entities as well as the district municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td>How do you notify communities about meetings or any engagement with them (frequency)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Newspaper, develop their own fliers, local radio stations, loud hailing (send out their own staff), ward councillor and the chief’s office.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td>Who attends such engagements from your municipality/department and the set-up thereof?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mayor, speaker, chief whip, head of department of Local Government and Human Settlement, MEC for Local Government and Human Settlement; however they only attend when there is a need for intervention.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td>What do you think can be done to improve service delivery in Lokaleng village?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the flow of communication is essential; we need to explain to the people that not all their needs will be catered for all at once because there are other wards that need services too. Monthly meetings where concerns are raised and feedback is given.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td>Does change in political leadership affect service delivery?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes it does a lot; every new leader wants to bring their own approaches. Though the sad part in all these changes is that the communities suffer due to political indifference.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td>Does the municipality educate the people about the processes of the municipality?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Yes we do, but when you are hungry you don’t even want to listen to reasons.

35 What role does traditional authority (Chief) play with regard to communities’ engagement with government; and the relationship between the chief and the ward councillor?

They play an important role, they are in most instances, our link to the community and the developments of their various villages. For instance if government wants to bring a certain development to a particular village, it is up to the chief to give permission or not. A chief may give permission for government to build malls, schools and other things that he feels his community needs and in the same breath, a chief may refuse to give permission for mining if he feels that his community will not benefit.

The Premier of the North West works very closely with all the chiefs in the province, he holds monthly meetings with them to discuss service delivery, developments and challenges.

36 Is there effective communication between the municipality and the community?

There is no such thing, we communicate only when we want to either bring a development or campaign, really. During ordinary days we communicate, but not effectively.

37 What do you think can be done to improve the way government engages with the community?

Conduct a citizen satisfactory survey, hold monthly meetings with the community and have open lines of communication.
### SEGWE INTERVIEW QUESTION FOR GOVERNMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State your Gender and ethnic group.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Black Male.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>State your age group</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 years old.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Level of education? In which field?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>N5 in Electrical Engineering. I am busy completing my diploma in Human Resource Management.</em></td>
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<td>Question</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Why are doing a qualification in HR when you are a councillor, should you not be doing something along the lines of political?</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Under which municipality/department are you employed?</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>What is your job title?</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>How long have you been a ward councillor?</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>From which village do you come from?</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>How long after de elections does it take for you to be introduced to the community?</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>What is you role as a ward councillor with regard to service delivery?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Do you have any other job other than being a ward councillor?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Does Lokaleng village fall under your municipality?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Yes it does, it also falls under ward 6.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td>How do you engage (interact/communicate) with the community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>They use the ward councillor to communicate and he uses his ward committee members to disseminate information</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td>Is it constant or effective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I do not think that our communication is effective because we rely on cell phones; cellphones cannot reach certain people as the villages are vast.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td>Has the Lokaleng community engaged in any service delivery protest?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>They tried, I really wouldn’t call it a serious protest, however the serious protest was in Mogosane 5 or 6 years ago. Both villages were protesting for the road.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td>Which services were they protesting for?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>For the road.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td>How effective is service delivery in your ward/ Lokaleng?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>There is service delivery, RDP houses have been built, electricity installed. It does not come as people expect it to, but it is there. A multi-purpose centre was built early this [word missing] in one of the villages in the ward.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td>How do you know which services communities need?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>During our consultative sessions we ask them which services they need most, if they mention 3 services the municipality evaluates which service can be prioritised for that particular financial year.</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td>Which channels of communication does your department/municipality use to disseminate information to communities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local radio station, local newspaper, loud hailer, pamphlets, letters.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td>Does your municipality/department have stakeholder engagement strategies (plans)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The only plan that there is is the Integrated Development Plan, Setsokotsane. Otherwise we have our monthly meetings with the communities. However the thing with Setsokotsane is that the idea is good, the problem is the people who are supposed to implement are the problem, they do not assess beforehand nor do they evaluate after.

21. When do you have your IDP meetings?

We have them just before the new financial year starts.

22. Where do your IDP meetings take place?

It is usually moves around the six villages, however for this year it was held in the Civic Centre due to the financial constraints of the municipality.

23. Does each ward have a scheduled day of attendance or do all the wards attend at the same time?

All wards attended this time given the budget constraints; however they normally host 2 to 3 wards.

24. Is there implementation from the discussions you have at the IDP? Which other strategy do you know that is being used for service delivery?

For now we are using IDP, but I personally put the blame on the officials, they promise the communities various services without explaining to them the budget constraints. The priorities for this year were internal roads, the municipality agreed that they will address those needs. However my observation tells me that this project will need more than 40million alone and if they do not address them the community might protest. The municipality must just be clear to the people to say that for this financial year we are going to address this issue and then for the next we are going to address this one, instead of just promising a bunch of things only to address only one of them.

25. How do you measure the effectiveness and efficiency of your strategies (plans)?

The decreased rate of service delivery protests and the number of people who attend meetings.

26. How do you get feedback from the community?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QNo.</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Based on feedback from the community what do are the perceptions of the stakeholders about your strategies and service delivery?</td>
<td>The community is not happy because they say that we promise but do not deliver. During an IDP consultative session the municipality asks the community about priorities in terms of needs and make it seem that they will deliver all of them. The community is reluctant to trust government, but they say because they do not really have many options they must just have faith and patience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Are you satisfied service delivery in Lokaleng Village?</td>
<td>Thus far I cannot really complain. However we have requested for internal and main roads to be build. I think that is the only concern for me currently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>How is the rate of employment?</td>
<td>The rate of unemployment is very high, but it is due to school-leaving. The reason the rate is high is because there is no high school in these villages, both Lokaleng and Mogosane, therefore they have to travel to Mahikeng. When they arrive the challenge then is they get mixed up with children who are well-off, who get R100.00 for pocket money while they, on the other hand, do not get nothing. They get demoralised. Usually they drop out of school after ¾ months of their grade 10 year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>So what does government say about the issue, because they already know the cause of children dropping out of school?</td>
<td>The government promised to build a high school, however it is still having financial challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>When the budget is allocated I assume that they allocate it according to wards, how then do you divide in among all the villages in ward 6?</td>
<td>No, they do not allocate budget for a ward, they give it to the municipality, then the municipality allocates the budget according to the needs of a particular ward. The</td>
</tr>
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114

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>32</th>
<th>How do you notify communities about meetings or any engagement with them (frequency)?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We give school kids notification to give to their parents, as well as pamphlets.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>33</th>
<th>As a ward councillor, how many meetings must you convene or rather how often?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I must have monthly meetings though my challenge is that ward 6 is different from</td>
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<td></td>
<td>other wards because it has many scattered villages. Therefore I cannot call a ward</td>
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<td>meeting and expect all villages to attend. I do not necessarily hold meetings in all</td>
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<td>the villages within a month; it takes me three months to cover all the villages</td>
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<td></td>
<td>thereby resulting in me probably holding meetings quarterly instead of monthly.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>However every month I hold meetings.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>34</th>
<th>Who attends such engagements from your municipality/department and the set-up</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I facilitate the meeting with my ward committee members and the Chief. The Mayor,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Speaker and the MEC only attend when there is a crisis, with an intent to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>intervene.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The community attends more especially if there is some kind of development</td>
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<td>coming, employment opportunity, but if you call an ordinary meeting then they</td>
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<td></td>
<td>do not attend.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>35</th>
<th>During your meetings, does the community agree on the services they need?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They always argue because priorities are different. Others need water</td>
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<td></td>
<td>because they already have houses, others electricity and others houses.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Needs vary.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>36</th>
<th>Does the local government listen to the community’s views?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They do listen, it is just that the government has inherited challenges</td>
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<td>from 1994, so they have been trying. They are in the process of building</td>
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<td>a road, a consultant was appointed last month, May 2017. He has been</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>introduced to the community as a consultant who will be building roads.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>These things take time, it is a process.</td>
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<tr>
<th>37</th>
<th>What do you think can be done to improve service delivery in Lokaleng</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>village?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
If they could hire people with experience, more so on the political side, they must have a background of whatever job title they hold. Having [word missing] without qualification and experience is one of the biggest challenges in the country.

38 Does change in political leadership affect service delivery?

Yes, because new leadership brings with it its own loyal support structure and that structure makes changes as it sees fit; now whether those changes interfere with plans in place for service delivery is not really their problem.

39 What role does traditional authority (Chief) play with regard to communities’ engagement with government; and the relationship between the chief and the ward councillor?

When my term started we had a meeting with the Chief and agreed that we work jointly. Meaning that the Chief doesn’t not call his own meeting separate from mine. When he calls a meeting we both add agenda items and conduct the meeting jointly.

40 Is there effective communication between the municipality and the community?

We have a council meeting every month and in that meeting there are other meetings that do not talk about my ward and there are those that do.

41 What do you think can be done to improve the way government engages with the community?

I think that once in two months the mayor must attend our community meetings or send people to attend because the community feels reassured when they see them, but more than anything we need to have accurate feedback for our people. Communities must be sensitised about prioritising services and must understand that there are turns in terms of delivery.
Appendix E: Focus Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender and ethnic group.</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 African Male</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6 African Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male A – 55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female A - 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female B - 45</td>
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<td>Female C - 57</td>
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<td>Female D - 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female E – 50</td>
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<td>Female F – 32</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male A – <em>I did not finish school because I had to work to take care of my family, so ended up in grade 8, but do not be fooled, I am educated.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female A – <em>I am in Matric.</em></td>
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<th>4</th>
<th>Do you intend to further your studies?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent? – <em>Yes, I have already started looking for bursaries. Luckily I am the only one in my family who has reached matric and I want make them proud and get a job.</em></td>
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<td>Female B – <em>I ended up in grade 6 because I got married at an early age.</em></td>
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<td>Female C – <em>I ended up in grade 2 because I did not like school.</em></td>
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<td>Female D – <em>I ended up in grade 11 because I fell pregnant, so after delivering the baby I was just too lazy to go back to school, however I wish did.</em></td>
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<th>5</th>
<th>It is possible to get your matric even at you age you know. You can go to Abet.</th>
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<td>Respondent? – <em>I wish, now I really can’t because I have a family to take care of.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<td>female E – I ended up in grade 3. Back then our parents believed in getting married and bearing children.</td>
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<td>female F – I ended up in grade 1 because I got very ill, so my parents believed that I was bewitched.</td>
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<td>6  Which district do you fall under</td>
<td>All – Ngaka Modiri Molema.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7  Which local municipality and ward?</td>
<td>All – Mahikeng Local Municipality and ward 6,</td>
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<tr>
<td>8  How long have you been staying here?</td>
<td>Respondent? – More than a year, we were born and raised here.</td>
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<td>9  Are you employed?</td>
<td>Male A: Unemployed</td>
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<td>Female A: Schooling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female B: Unemployed</td>
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<td>Female C: Cleaner</td>
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<td>Female D: EPWP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female E: Unemployed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female F: Unemployed</td>
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<td>We depend on piece jobs and the social grants that the government provide. Though we really wish that government could create jobs for us, because grants money is not enough, things are expensive now.</td>
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<td>10 How does government communicate with your community?</td>
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<td>Question</td>
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<td>Male A: They send whatever message to the office of the Chief, especially notification of meetings, then the chief disseminates the message to us.</td>
<td><strong>Others:</strong> Honestly, they mostly communicate when they want our help with votes. They communicate when it is time to draw up the IDP is, and even then we voice our concerns, our needs but they do not get implemented.</td>
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<td>What are your experiences on how local government communicates?</td>
<td><strong>Male:</strong> Our experience is that they only communicate when it suits them. <strong>Female A:</strong> When government communicates, they ask what our needs are but never really get around to addressing them. We have communicated the same thing over and over, year in year out but with no tangible results really. They now have a thing called Setsokotsane, apparently different departments gather in a certain location in a particular municipality, so we as the public must go there to raise our concerns and tell them our needs. It is a good initiative, it’s a pity that it does not really benefit some of us. <strong>Female C:</strong> Aye, these people are full of empty promises. If I recall correctly, the last time we received services was four or five years back when they built RDP houses. Beyond that, they come to us when they feel like it just to talk, I think they are probably bored, these people.</td>
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<td>Do you have a functional ward councillor?</td>
<td><strong>Participants:</strong> We are not sure because since he was elected he has not convened a ward or community meeting. But we have elected a ward councillor, he resides in Mogosane, our neighbouring village.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When is the ward councillor supposed to be introduced to you the community?</td>
<td><strong>Female B:</strong> We do not know, is it not after a month after the results? <strong>Female A:</strong> No, it must be after 14 days after the results.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the role of your councillor in service delivery in your ward?</td>
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<td>Page</td>
<td>Question</td>
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| 15   | Does your ward councillor have regular meetings? | Participants: *Where? That man has not convened a single meeting since he was elected.*

Female B: *Apparently he went to the Chief’s office to enquire how he should go about having a meeting. But you see the problem with our ward is that it has 6 communities under it, of the six communities 2 are rich. People form unit 3 and 6 live in suburbs with big houses and cars. So the councillors listen to them more than they listen to us.*

| 16   | How do you get notification of meetings or any engagement with government? | Participants: *we get notifications from the office of the Chief, he sends his assistants to spread the word using a loud hailer.*

Female C: *Sometimes they give our children letters at school to give to us.*

Female D: *Sometimes the councillor and his other committee members go door to door to give us notification. This happened often when there is an election coming up.*

| 17   | Do you attend such engagements? | Participants: *Hae...we do sometimes. We are tired of hearing the same lies over and over, that is why we no longer protest. These politicians are very good at influencing us to vote for them, they over-promise and under-deliver or not deliver at all.*

Female B: *I do, because I want to be informed and know the plans they have for our ward/community. Our main concern is really job creation, we need jobs.*

| 18   | How effective is service delivery in your ward? | Male A: *You can see for yourself right? It is not effective at all.*
**Female B:** We do not have running water in our homes, we only have 2 taps in the community that we have to share, and that runs out of water. We then have to travel long distances to collect water with wheelbarrows.

**Female F:** We do not have a crèche, our kids must wait until they reach 6 years so that they can go to school to start grade R.

**Female A:** Schools are far, I walk to varsity every day. You can imagine the young kids walking for about 20 kilometers just to get an education. We only have one bus that passes on the main road, which is also a bit far. We really suffer with transport.

**Female C:** Guys, do not forget electricity. Most houses do not have electricity, only a few have.

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<td>19  Are you satisfied with service delivery in your wards?</td>
<td>We are not because we still need a lot of things that we just mentioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20  Has your community engaged in any service delivery protest?</td>
<td>Male A: Ag, it was a long time ago.</td>
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<td>21  Which services were you protesting for?</td>
<td>For a tarred road and houses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22  Does change in political leadership affect service delivery?</td>
<td>No, they are all the same. Only come to us when they want our votes and for compliance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23  What role does your traditional authority (Chief) play with regard to your communities’ engagement with government? (Elaborate)</td>
<td>Male A: He calls meetings on behalf of the ward councillor by sending his assistants to the community to inform us of the meeting. However, the Chief also has his own meetings that focus on what we can do as a community to better our lives. One of the things that we came up with is recycling plastic. So we collect plastic containers then</td>
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take them to the recycling centre. This is done by individuals within the community, but the idea came about at one of the Chief’s meetings.

Female D: He also encouraged us to have little garden in our backyards, but due to scarcity of water our gardens do not last.

Interviewer: Is there effective communication between the municipality and the community?

Female A: What do you mean by effective?

Interviewer: does the delegates form the municipality, you ward councillor and other staff from the municipality communicate with you clearly in a way that you understand? Do you know the processes and procedure of delivery a service?

Female E: Not really. One day the councillor came with people from the municipality and the tried to explain to us how government works, but it was not really clear.

Female A: No, communication is not effective because we do not have monthly meetings, nor do we have quarterly meetings or any other communication for that matter. These people do not do their work. The Premier only focuses on selected communities, especially those close to where he comes from.

What do you think can be done to improve service delivery in your ward/municipality?

Female A: The ward councillor together with the mayor could have ward/community meetings monthly to keep us updated on developments of our community. They must also bring Setsokotsane to our village, more so because we do not have transport to go to government offices.

Male A: they must implement, that is all, implement.

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**List of figures and tables**

Figure 1: Structure of the Provincial Imbizo
Table 1: Population of the four districts municipalities in the North West Province

Figure 2: Demographics of participants

List of Annexures

Annexure A: Request for permission to conduct interviews – Office of the Premier

Annexure B: Approval to conduct interviews – Office of the Premier

Annexure C: Request for permission to conduct research – Mahikeng Local Municipality

Annexure D: Approval to conduct interviews – Mahikeng Local Municipality

Annexure E: Consent form