

Towards people-centred development:

A review of local government efforts
to mainstream crosscutting issues
(gender, youth development, children's rights,
the rights of the elderly, disability and HIV/AIDS)

Input paper for the dplg review of local government

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October 2007

*Note: This paper was commissioned by the dplg.
It does not necessarily reflect the views of the dplg.*

Towards people-centred development: A review of local government efforts to mainstream crosscutting issues (gender, youth development, children's rights, the rights of the elderly, disability and HIV/AIDS)

Mirjam van Donk, Isandla Institute¹

1. Introduction

The South African Constitution entrenches the rights of everyone, regardless of race, sex, age and disability, or other factors. This commitment is further expressed in a host of government policy and legislation and is meant to be promoted and safeguarded by a range of institutions, such as the Human Rights Commission, the Office on the Status of Women and the Commission on Gender Equality, the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons and the National Youth Commission. Yet, national policies and programmes are not necessarily implemented at local level, nor are the intended outcomes (equality, empowerment and development) always achieved.

The White Paper on Local Government (1998) provided the vision for a democratic system of local government. It locates the mandate for developmental local government in the constitutional provisions to promote, safeguard and protect equality. It celebrates the fact that local government is the sphere of government closest to the people, with the potential to transform the lives of local residents, contribute to their empowerment and bring about equitable development. This seems to have informed a rather optimistic view that municipalities would almost organically achieve these developmental outcomes. In reality, local government has not made as much progress in realising the rights of women, children, youth, the elderly, persons with disability and people living with or directly affected by HIV/AIDS as one would have hoped. There are many factors that may have contributed to this, including ongoing institutional reform, capacity and financial challenges, the overwhelming scale of service needs, and weak social mobilisation on these issues. In addition, the progressive ideals of the White Paper have not (yet) been sufficiently translated into clear programmes and assigned responsibilities that can be implemented by municipalities of varying sizes, with clear indicators for monitoring progress and enforcement.

This paper seeks to provide an overview of how local government has responded to gender, youth development, children's rights, the rights of the elderly, disability and HIV/AIDS in its efforts to promote inclusive local governance and development. The focus of the paper is broader than the dplg's emphasis on gender, youth, disability and HIV/AIDS as the crosscutting issues that need to be mainstreamed into (provincial and) local government. One particular issue that is not explicitly considered here relates to sexual orientation. This is an area that has not sufficiently been recognised as a crosscutting issue with implications for local governance and development. It seems this issue (as well as the plight of refugees) warrants attention in future.

The next section will briefly define key concepts and definitions. This serves to clarify how these concepts are used in this paper and to provide a common starting point on how to understand and approach crosscutting issues. This is followed by a review of whether and how the White Paper on Local Government makes provision for municipalities to take cognisance of these issues in all aspects of municipal functioning, local governance and development (section 3). Section 4 outlines the national policy and institutional context for municipalities to respond to gender, disability, youth development, the rights of children and the elderly, and HIV/AIDS. Section 5 provides an assessment of municipal experiences in 'mainstreaming' crosscutting issues. This section by no means presents an accurate account of all efforts and initiatives at municipal level, as it was beyond the scope of the work to document and analyse all these instances. One of the main challenges in providing the overview is that there is currently no central collection point or database of municipal examples in responding to crosscutting

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issues. As a result, this paper will undoubtedly miss out on some valuable experiences and lessons from municipal practice in this regard. Section 5 is structured around a set of statements of what mainstreaming is not, and what some of the key ingredients of effective mainstreaming efforts are. To illustrate some of the points made, the section will highlight examples of mainstreaming efforts by municipalities, mainly in relation to gender, HIV/AIDS and youth development. The final section will present some concluding points and issues for consideration.

2. Concepts and definitions

It is important to be clear about what we mean when we use certain terms or concepts and to have a common understanding. This common understanding is important to inform action and to determine the outcomes we expect to see and how these outcomes will be measured - without a shared understanding of terms like 'mainstreaming', 'gender' or 'disability', we are likely to propose different approaches or sets of interventions which will lead to very different outcomes. How we measure 'success' or 'failure' in achieving certain outcomes therefore also depends in part on what we understand key concepts to mean. While some of the concepts may seem obvious, for example the definition of 'children', it is still useful to define them and to see whether they are indeed clear and indisputable.

Crosscutting issues refer to the political, economic and social imperatives that need to be taken into account when planning, designing and implementing development policy and programmes. These issues or concepts are not limited to one sector or one specific area of specialisation, but impact on all sectors and require a multi-sectoral response. Which issues are considered 'crosscutting' depends on the project or programme: more often than not, this includes issues such as gender, sustainability and HIV/AIDS. Other examples of issues that could be considered crosscutting issues are poverty reduction, good governance, capacity building or human resource development. A crosscutting issue is defined in relation to impacts and outcomes, rather than outputs. The crosscutting issues discussed here are gender, youth development, children's rights, the rights of the elderly, disability and HIV/AIDS.

Mainstreaming is a process that brings what can be seen as marginal into the core business and main decision-making process of an institution.² While there are many definitions of mainstreaming, here we define it simply as *a process towards the achievement of transformation and development goals, more specifically equity, empowerment and representivity*. In other words, mainstreaming is not just about a focus on youth, children, women, the elderly, people with disabilities or people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, but about making sure that issues that are of critical importance to their rights, well being and active participation as citizens are an integral part of planning, implementing and monitoring development interventions.³ In the words of Minister Essop Pahad, 'mainstreaming is a strategy for advancing equality and achieving equal access and treatment in the implementation of programmes.'⁴

Gender refers to the social roles allocated respectively to women and men in particular societies and at particular times. Such roles, and the differences between them, are conditioned by a variety of political, economic, ideological and cultural factors and are characterised in most societies by unequal power relations. Gender is distinguished from sex, which is biologically determined. *Gender equity*, then, refers to the fair and just distribution of all means of opportunities and resources between women and men.⁵

² Definition in the Public Service Commission's report *Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives in the Public Sector* (2006), taken from UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework for 2002-2007.

³ Adapted from Bentley, K, Cherry, C and Maphunye, K (2004), "Guidelines to enhance the representation and participation of women in local government in South Africa". HSRC report commissioned by SALGA.

⁴ Address by Dr EG Pahad, Minister in The Presidency, to the Women's Parliament on 29 August 2007, Cape Town.

⁵ Definitions taken from South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, prepared by The Office on the Status of Women, 2003.

Children are those between the ages of 0-18 years old, with 18 being the legal age definition. Like other social groups (women, youth, etc), it is clear that children of different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds and health status have different opportunities and life experiences and, as a result, different needs and interests. From the point of view of strategy development and programme design, it would therefore be necessary to distinguish different age categories. It is also worth noting that there is an overlap between the age definition of children and youth, which may lead to confusion when formulating policies and programmes.

Youth can be a rather confusing category, as there are many different definitions in South Africa. For example, the National Youth Commission Act (1996) refers to young people as those between the ages of 14 and 35, while the White Paper on Social Welfare uses the 16-30 age definition. Correctional Services defines young offenders as those between the ages of 14-25, while the National Health Policy Guidelines focus on the adolescent and youth as all those between 10 and 24. The National Youth Development Framework for 2002-2007 defines youth as those between the ages of 15 and 28, although it recognises that it might be necessary to look at age categories within this broad definition (e.g. 15-19 focusing on education and training, 20-24 focusing on the transition from school to work, and 25-28 focusing on training, learnerships and employment). According to this framework, the aim of *youth development* is to ensure that young people and their organisations not only enjoy and contribute to their full potential in the social, economic and political spheres of life, but also recognise and develop their responsibilities to develop a better life for all.

Elderly persons, or older persons, according to the Older Persons Act (2006), means in the case of a woman someone who is 60 years of age or older and, in the case of a man, someone who is 65 years of age or older.

Disability is the result of a dynamic interaction between personal factors (impairment) and environmental factors (obstacles) that restrict a person's quality of life and standard of living.⁶ Disability is often seen as a medical and welfare issue, something to be cured or rehabilitated by medical specialists with support channelled through welfare institutions. As a result, the emphasis of the response is on dependence and the nature of the impairment, rather than the person and the barriers in the social, economic and physical environment that prevent people with disability from participating in society. The Integrated National Disability Strategy (2007) emphasises an understanding of disability as a human rights and development issue, which recognises that people with disabilities are equal citizens and should therefore enjoy equal rights and responsibilities.

HIV/AIDS refers to more than just a medical condition, whereby a particular virus (HIV) causes a set of health-related symptoms (AIDS) that will ultimately (given the absence of a cure) result in death. HIV/AIDS, not unlike disability, is a human rights and development issue. Understanding HIV/AIDS in this way means recognising that vulnerability to HIV infection is not just the result of individual action and behaviour, but may be determined by a variety of biological, behavioural, social, cultural and economic factors that influence people's ability to make rational choices about their sexual health. A focus on HIV/AIDS as a crosscutting issue is not only concerned with the rights, well being and empowerment of people living with HIV/AIDS, but also those in their immediate context (family, friends, caregivers, dependents) and those most vulnerable to the epidemic and its consequences. Moreover, it recognises the potentially undermining impacts and implications of HIV/AIDS on systems, structures and institutions in society.

One of the issues to consider is that these categories (women, youth, disability, and so on) are themselves 'crosscutting': there are young women, women with disability, older women, girls, a disabled person infected with or directly affected by HIV/AIDS, a child who has been

⁶ Adapted from Patrick Fougeyrollas, et al., quoted in a CMRA/VNG Feasibility Study for a Pilot Project in Buffalo City Municipality on Disability and HIV/AIDS, May 2007.

orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS, and so on. Not only does this imply that these categories are not homogenous and therefore require differentiated responses, but also that municipalities (as other spheres of government and actors in society) have to recognise experiences of multiple disadvantage. Unless this is understood, those who are more capacitated benefit more from equality and empowerment measures while those most disadvantaged do not.⁷

3. Reviewing the White Paper

The White Paper on Local Government expresses a strong commitment to people-centred development and takes the constitutional provisions for equality and social justice as its starting point. This is clearly expressed in three of the four characteristics of developmental local government, as articulated in the White Paper, namely: exercising municipal powers and functions in a manner which maximises their impact on social development and economic growth; democratising development; and building social capital through providing community leadership and vision, and seeking to empower marginalised and excluded groups within the community.⁸

The White Paper recognises that historically certain groups in society have been, consciously or unconsciously, marginalised and excluded from 'the mainstream' and have not benefited equally from development processes and outcomes. Not surprisingly, therefore, developmental local government has to pay particular attention to marginalised groups and ensure that the rights of everyone are affirmed, protected and realised. This includes the right of people to express their needs and to actively participate in decision-making processes that will affect their lives. While the White Paper does not explicitly use the term 'mainstreaming', it is clear that in its developmental and rights-based orientation it conforms to the definition of mainstreaming presented earlier. The White Paper specifically mentions marginalisation on the basis of class, race, gender, location (e.g. rural) and, to a lesser extent, disability or sexual orientation. Equally, only occasional reference is made to youth involvement in development projects. In contrast, the White Paper remains silent on HIV/AIDS and children's rights.

One of the main reasons why the White Paper reflects certain crosscutting issues in a more in-depth manner than others⁹ is largely because there has been greater political and social pressure on these issues. For example, at the time of the White Paper process there was a concerted effort from gender and women's organisations to influence the system of local government. This external pressure served to reinforce internal pressures within Parliament and especially within the ruling party aimed at ensuring that all post-apartheid policy and legislation would enhance women's rights, including women's participation. There was also significant political and social pressure to ensure that the historical neglect of people living in rural areas was addressed and to avoid a perceived 'urban bias' in the design of the local government system. In contrast, there was very little mobilisation around HIV/AIDS at the time, let alone recognition that HIV/AIDS is indeed a local governance and development issue, rather than exclusively a biomedical concern.

In sum, while the White Paper reflects an inclusive vision and a set of guiding principles that predispose local government towards the needs and rights of marginalised groups, the fact that there is no consistent and explicit reference to specific experiences of marginalisation and exclusion by particular social groups (that local government needs to address in particular ways) means that the vision is not sufficiently concretised for municipalities to act on. In other words, the White Paper opens the door for a progressive and proactive engagement by municipalities with crosscutting issues like gender, youth development, disability and so on, but it does not give municipalities clear guidance on how to interpret the vision and guiding principles in this respect. Instead, whether and how these issues are addressed depends on the interpretation by (actors within) municipalities and/or local actors (who may mobilise around

⁷ This observation is made in relation to gender equality measures in the dplg's *Gender Policy Framework for Local Government* (September 2006).

⁸ Taken from the Executive Summary of the White Paper on Local Government.

⁹ This does not mean that the White Paper addresses these issues consistently and satisfactorily, in the way described under 'mainstreaming' in the previous section.

the needs and rights of particular social groups) of the vision and guiding principles embedded in the White Paper.

Of course, the White Paper is a strategic policy document and is not meant to provide specific detail on appropriate action. It is therefore useful to reflect on how the vision and principles embedded in the White Paper have been further concretised in subsequent legislation and other guiding frameworks and programmes (discussed in the next section).

Municipal Structures Act and Municipal Systems Act

Given the concerted mobilisation around women's rights and gender equality in the White Paper process, it is perhaps not surprising that issues related to women's representation, women's participation, gender representivity and gender equity feature quite prominently in both the Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998) and the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) (see Box 1). The Municipal Structures Act makes no reference to the representation of social groups other than women, such as youth or people with disabilities.

The Municipal Systems Act includes two provisions that reflect a more inclusive perspective: 'The municipality must in the exercise of its executive and legislative authority respect the rights of citizens and those of other persons protected by the Bill of Rights' and in relation to participatory mechanisms, processes and procedures 'The municipality must take into account the special needs of people who cannot read or write, people with disabilities, women and other disadvantaged groups'. As in the case of the White Paper, the more inclusive reference to 'citizens and other persons protected by the Bill of Rights' and 'disadvantaged groups' provides scope for interpretation, which is essentially positive (by allowing for a comprehensive interpretation of which groups are disadvantaged and on what basis), but it can also lead to a literal and rather minimalist reading of the provisions in the Act.

Box 1. Gender equity concerns in municipal legislation

The Municipal Structures Act makes provision for women to be represented as Councillors, by recommending that the party lists are drawn up in such a way that every alternate candidate is a woman, and to be equitably represented on ward committees.

The Municipal Systems Act requires municipalities to: promote gender equity in the exercise of the municipality's executive and legislative authority; ensure gender representivity of advisory committees or consultative forums, if it chooses to establish such committees or forums; and, take account of the special needs of women in relation to participatory mechanisms, processes and procedures.

4. National policy frameworks and institutional context for crosscutting issues

The White Paper on Local Government and subsequent legislation are not the only policy and legislative frameworks impacting on municipalities. Table 1 summarises the key policies and legislation that encourage and/or compel municipalities to integrate crosscutting issues. The list is by no means comprehensive, as a significant proportion of sector-specific policy since 1994 makes provision in some or other way for the rights of certain marginalised groups to be addressed. In addition, the South African government has ratified a host of international instruments that serve to guide its policies and programmes on the rights of women, children, youth and people with disabilities, which are not reflected here. Table 1 also highlights the main institutions and structures provided for by the state at national and provincial level to drive, implement and/or monitor progress.

What Table 1 clearly illustrates is that there is a progressive policy and institutional environment at both national and provincial level for crosscutting issues to be addressed and for the promotion of equity, empowerment and representivity. However, most of the policies and legislative frameworks fail to clarify *how* these outcomes are meant to be achieved and specifically what municipalities can or ought to do to help bring about these outcomes. With respect to HIV/AIDS, for example, it has been argued that national programmes are not well integrated with local government decentralisation programmes and that sector programmes

are out of touch with the real difficulties of working in local government.¹⁰ While the lack of detailed specification about expected municipal roles, responsibilities and local outcomes may have positive aspects, in that this allows for local responses and local creativity to emerge, the flipside of it is that municipalities may not know how best to bring about the desired outcomes or where to start.

Table 1. Policy, legislative and institutional context for municipalities to respond to and integrate crosscutting issues

	Policy, legislation & other frameworks	Institutions & structures (national/provincial)
<i>Overarching</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) • Employment Equity Act, 1999 • Labour Relations Act (1995) • Social Assistance Act • Skills Development Act & National Skills Development Strategy • Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000) • Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (2000) • White Paper on Local Government (1998) • Municipal Structures Act (1998) • Municipal Systems Act (2000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South African Human Rights Commission • Constitutional Court • Commission for Employment Equity • Labour Court • Public Service Commission
<i>Gender</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (2002) • Gender Policy Framework for Local Government (2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office on the Status of Women (national / provincial) • Commission for Gender Equality • Joint Monitoring Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Women • Women's Empowerment Unit • Gender Focal Points/gender units (national, provincial sector departments)
<i>Youth</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Youth Commission Act (1996) • National Youth Policy (1997) • National Youth Development Policy Framework 2002-2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Youth Commission • Provincial Youth Commissions • Youth Directorate (Presidency) • Provincial Youth Directorates/units • Joint Monitoring Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Children, Youth and Disabled Persons
<i>Children</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Act (2005) • National Plan of Action on the Implementation of the Rights of the Child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office on the Rights of the Child • Joint Monitoring Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Children, Youth and Disabled Persons
<i>Elderly</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Persons Act (2006) 	
<i>Disability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Standards Act (1997) • White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997) • White Paper on Special Needs Education (2001) • A Guide for Municipalities in the Implementation of Policies, Plans, Programmes and Actions that Protect and Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (OSDP, 2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office on the Status of Disabled Persons (national / provincial) • Joint Monitoring Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Children, Youth and Disabled Persons • Disability desks/units in national/provincial sector departments

¹⁰ Kelly, K (2004), "Supporting Local Government Responses to HIV/AIDS: Positions, Priorities, Possibilities", Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Education (CADRE), Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS 2007-2011 • DPLG Framework for an Integrated Local Government Response to HIV/AIDS (2007) • SALGA Country Plan for Local Government on HIV/AIDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) • Provincial AIDS Councils
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The second set of observations relates to the structures and institutions set up to drive, guide or support the implementation of policy frameworks aimed at the empowerment of particular social groups, such as the National Youth Development Policy Framework, and/or to monitor the implementation of government policy in this regard. The overall functioning of these structures is vital in ensuring that policy ideals translate into developmental outcomes at local level. The first issue to note is that the extent to which official structures exist varies per crosscutting issue or social group. For example, a fairly elaborate set of structures exists in relation to gender issues (referred to as the National Gender Machinery) at executive, legislative and administrative levels in government and outside of government (e.g. the Commission for Gender Equality as a statutory body). Yet, significantly fewer dedicated structures exist to promote and protect the rights of children, for example. Secondly, the mere existence of structures does not mean that they function optimally. Again, the case of the national gender machinery is instructive. Various assessments have found that the national structures are not always clear on their roles and responsibilities (which can create confusion and tensions between organisations such as the CGE and the OSW) and do not have the institutional capacity to deliver on their mandates.¹¹ Similarly, those charged with the responsibility to drive gender mainstreaming initiatives in national and provincial sector departments (gender focal persons - GFPs) often do not understand their role or lack the authority, capacity and resources to implement their responsibilities (see Box 2).

Box 2. Assessments of institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming

In 2006, the OSW conducted an audit of gender mainstreaming initiatives in 32 national departments. The main findings are:

- 31 departments indicated that personnel for gender issues were appointed;
- 9 out of 30 departments have gender focal points (GFPs) that are solely responsible for gender related issues while 21 have responsibilities that include other issues, such as disability, child rights, HIV/AIDS, youth, elderly, employment equity, employee assistance programme, or human resource matters in various combinations;
- 6 of the 9 departments have GFPs appointed at Director level, 1 at Chief Director level and 2 at Deputy Director level;
- No GFP in any of the 30 departments reports directly to the Director-General. Most of the 9 GFPs dedicated exclusively to gender issues report to a Chief Director in the DG's office.

Also in 2006, the Public Service Commission undertook a review of the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the public service, which covered two departments per province and six national departments. The PSC review highlights the following key findings:

- In most departments the GFP was appointed at Assistant Director level, meaning that they had little authority or influence and decision-making powers;
- In many instances, the GFP was a Special Projects Officer that included having multi-faceted roles with responsibility for children, youth, disability, HIV/AIDS and the Employee Assistance Programme;
- In most cases, all the GFP was responsible for was to organise activities around events such as National Women's Day and the Sixteen Days of Activism;
- GFPs often worked alone or with minimal support and had little to no budget to work with;
- The majority of GFPs did not understand their role or how to carry out their responsibilities.

¹¹ See, for example, Gouws, A (2006), "The state of the national gender machinery: structural problems and personalised politics", in Buhlungu, S, Daniel, J, Southall, R and Lutchman, J (eds), *State of the Nation: South Africa 2005-2006*, Cape Town: HSRC Press, and the Public Service Commission (2006), *Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives in the Public Service*, November 2006.

Thirdly, and importantly, these structures do not necessarily have the mandate, capacity or resources to work on and with local government. One of the factors that seems to have influenced this relates to the fact that local government is not yet incorporated into a single public service. For structures that are already under-capacitated and overstretched in effectively executing their mandate at national and provincial government level, the focus on local government has not been a priority. The relevant structures in the Office of the President (OSDP, OSW, ORC and the more recent Youth Directorate) have recently started to engage more directly and coherently with municipalities. The OSPD has prepared a working document titled *A Guide for Municipalities in the Implementation of Policies, Plans, Programmes and Actions that Protect and Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in 2006, but its ability to provide technical support to government structures is limited because of budget and capacity constraints.

National structures are often emulated at provincial level, with structures similar to those in the Presidency (OSW, OSDP, ORC and Youth Directorate) located in the Office of the Premier, or with a designated political champion. A cursory scan of relevant units responsible for crosscutting issues in the nine Offices of the Premier found that the extent to which these structures engage with municipalities differs between provinces. Whereas some have little to no direct engagement with municipalities, others do engage with municipalities. More often than not, this happens in relation to planning or organising events (e.g. Youth Day or Women's Day), but not necessarily with regard to strategic support, capacity building or monitoring. In most instances, the provincial structures interact with district municipalities, rather than local municipalities. In some instances it is expected that the provincial department for local government should take the lead in engaging with municipalities on crosscutting issues. When asked to provide specific examples of municipalities that could be considered good examples on how to integrate crosscutting issues, the respondents could only give between one to four examples per province. These good examples could not necessarily be attributed to the role played by and support given by these provincial structures, though.¹²

Finally, there are some concerns about the low level of seniority and the key competencies required of those tasked with the responsibility to guide mainstreaming efforts in government. While low levels of seniority mean little authority to influence strategic planning and decision-making processes, the issue of competence and requisite competencies is critical in ensuring that crosscutting issues are addressed in a strategic and comprehensive manner. Clearly, these are indicative of structural, rather than personal, limitations and constraints related to the policy and institutional context for crosscutting issues at national and provincial levels.

To sum up, there is a progressive national and provincial institutional context for crosscutting issues to be addressed. At the same time, this context can be rather daunting and confusing for municipalities, given the proliferation of structures and policies to promote equity, empowerment and representivity and the lack of coordination between them. In essence, municipalities have not been given much policy and programmatic guidance on what its role and responsibilities are and how best to navigate the various policy priorities and approaches aimed at promoting equity, empowerment and representivity. In particular, insufficient attention has been given to the development of appropriate indicators and measurements of change that put progress towards transformative outcomes at the heart of municipal functioning. Indicators are important, because what gets measured is more likely to be addressed. In the same vein, what gets monitored and rewarded (especially by provincial and national government structures) is more likely to be taken seriously.

Fortunately, recent initiatives have started to address this gap. *A Guide for Municipalities in the Implementation of Policies, Plans, Programmes and Actions that Protect and Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, released by the OSDP in 2006, is one such initiative. The aim of the Guide is to provide guidance to municipalities on how to implement policies, plans,

¹² This is based on a telephonic interview with representatives from the relevant structures in the Offices of the Premier. Six out of nine provinces participated in this process.

programmes and actions that protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities. It starts from the premise that ‘municipalities must to ensure that they address obstacles and attitudes within the environment which causes barriers that hinder full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society on equal opportunities with others.’ The Guide outlines key policy and programmatic areas aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and incorporates a set of indicators in this regard (see Table 2).

Table 2. The OSDP’s disability rights delivery guide for municipalities

<i>Guiding key elements of social, economic and cultural rights of persons with disabilities for delivery</i>	<i>Disability specific indicators</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing disability related legislation and policies and mainstreaming disability in all legislation while closely consulting INDS and actively involving DPO’S. • Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs. • Establishing focal points at municipality government level for matters relating to the implementation of the social, economic and cultural rights • Combating stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities, including those based on sex and age, in all areas of life; • Creating enabling situations in the event of voting, elections and public referendums, ensuring that persons with disability enjoy the right to stand for elections, to effectively hold office and to perform all public functions at municipality level. • Guaranteeing the free expression of the will of persons with disabilities as electors and where necessary, at their request, allowing assistance in voting. • Promoting actively an environment in which persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in the conduct of public affairs and political parties, without discrimination • Guiding Key elements of Social, Economic and cultural rights of persons with disabilities for delivery • Implementing disability related legislation and policies and mainstreaming disability in all legislation while closely consulting INDS and actively involving DPO’S. • Undertaking to collect appropriate information, while ensuring confidentiality regarding statistical and research data, to enable municipalities to formulate and implement policies in compliance legislation on data protection, • Establishing focal points at municipality government level for matters relating to research population numbers and available resources to implement and monitor local government plans • Encouraging barrier free environment in buildings, roads, transportation and all venues for negotiations with the different stakeholders are accessible for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive and multi-faceted policies and strategies for integrating disability work in the Strategic Plan of the Department formulated and implemented by March 2008. • All district and 60% of local municipalities have disability specific programmes included in their Integrated Development Plans (IDP) by March 2008. • Tender policy and procedures specifically target and benefit people with disabilities by March 2008. • Facilitate disability specific units within all municipalities & local authorities by March 2008 • Awareness of disability issues, policies and legislation for the Department personnel and members of internal disability co-ordinating structure created by March 2008. Special commemorative days and human rights organised and implemented each year. • At least 4% of the department’s available staff positions allocated to people with disabilities with adequate provisions for reasonable accommodation, all-round accessibility, and skill enhancement opportunities by 2009. • All districts guarantee full participation of persons with disabilities as electors/stand for elections and where necessary, at their request, allowing assistance in voting.

<p>persons with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities are encouraging communities to include persons with disabilities when establishing structures to ensure they are skilled for all work required for running these structures. • Municipalities to practise the tender preferential procurement Policy Framework Act (PPPFA) to benefit businesses owned by women with disabilities in particular. 	
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In April 2007, the dplg published a *Framework for an Integrated Local Response to HIV and*

Box 3. Frameworks for HIV/AIDS mainstreaming by local government

The dplg's Framework is an important initiative aimed at guiding municipal officials and Councillors on how to respond to HIV/AIDS. It makes a coherent argument for municipalities to recognise and respond to HIV/AIDS as a local governance and development issue and explains in significant detail what the implications of HIV/AIDS are for municipal planning and service delivery and for the workplace. It specifies roles and responsibilities of each sphere of government and of municipal officials and politicians with regard to the implementation of development and governance responses to HIV/AIDS. It also highlights ways in which HIV/AIDS mainstreaming can be embedded and entrenched within the municipality, focusing on the role of key structures, the IDP process and performance indicators.

SALGA's *Country Plan for Local Government* similarly seeks to provide clarity on what the implications of the HIV/AIDS epidemic are for local government. Its goals are:

- To promote an effective leadership response for HIV and AIDS
- To enhance local government input into policy development and support
- To increase local capacity for an effective internal and external response
- To promote effective partnerships
- To ensure monitoring, sustainability and integration

In relation to each of these goals, the Country Plan provides some background to the current situation and suggestions on what municipalities can do.

One of the shortcomings of both frameworks is that they are often not nuanced enough in their approach to recognise the different dynamics and complexities faced by different municipalities and what is needed in different settings and contexts. There is a tendency to slip into prescriptive or directive mode without recognising that municipalities are not uniform and without allowing scope for other possibilities. More specifically, there is an assumption about a standard level of capacity at local level, without taking into account the needs of small and under-resourced municipalities.

AIDS (see Box 3), followed by a *Gender Policy Framework for Local Government* in September 2007 (see Box 4). In the period 2007/08, the dplg is meant to develop a framework and implementation plan for Youth Development, Disability and Children respectively. SALGA released *A Country Plan for Local Government on HIV/AIDS* in July 2007 (see Box 3). SALGA is also developing a Social Development Policy Framework Strategy, which refers to all the special programmes (i.e. those covering crosscutting issues) because delivery on those have both developmental and socio-economic implications, and is in the final stages of preparing a Youth Development Strategy for Local Government. Because most of these initiatives are recent or not yet fully developed, it is not possible to consider the value and impact of these guiding frameworks and associated action plans.

While there has clearly been a lack of guidance and coherent, ongoing support for municipalities in mainstreaming crosscutting issues, this is not to say that municipalities have not recognised their role and responsibilities in promoting equity, empowerment and representivity of disadvantaged social groups. The next section will therefore focus on what municipalities have done and what some of the lessons are in this regard.

5. Lessons from municipal efforts to mainstream crosscutting issues

The following brief assessment of municipal experiences in mainstreaming crosscutting issues is, as noted earlier, by no means an accurate account of all efforts and initiatives at municipal level. Without a central database of municipal initiatives many of these efforts remain hidden to those not directly involved in or affected by it. There are also cases where such processes and initiatives are not properly documented and therefore it is difficult to draw lessons for other municipalities.¹³ In light of this, this paper is likely to leave out valuable experiences and lessons from municipal practice in this regard. An obvious recommendation that follows from this is that mainstreaming initiatives at municipal level need to be documented and collected in a central database. Perhaps this can be tied in with the need for municipalities to report on progress in realising transformative outcomes based on a set of key performance areas and indicators.

Box 4. Gender policy framework for local government
The dplg's Gender Policy Framework provides for gender mainstreaming in relation to the five key priority areas of local government, namely:

- Municipal transformation and organisational development
- Basic service delivery
- Local economic development (LED)
- Municipal financial viability and management
- Good governance and public participation

It follows the National Gender Framework in proposing institutional arrangements for gender mainstreaming, such as gender focal points and gender forums. It sets fairly ambitious targets for municipalities to adopt relevant policies and structures, without actually reflecting current municipal initiatives in this regard. One of the concerns with the framework is that it advocates a generic response for all municipalities to follow, without considering whether these options are feasible or even desired for all

This section is structured around a set of statements of what mainstreaming (i.e. a process towards the achievement of transformation and development goals, more specifically equity, empowerment and representivity) is not, and what some of the key ingredients of effective mainstreaming efforts are. To illustrate some of the points made, the section will highlight examples of mainstreaming efforts by municipalities in relation to gender, HIV/AIDS and youth development. This is not to suggest that these issues are more important than, say, the rights of children, the elderly or disabled persons. Rather, this is what municipal practice has concentrated on - to the extent that crosscutting issues have been taken into account. First, a quick generalised overview will be presented (to the extent that that is possible) of mainstreaming initiatives with respect to HIV/AIDS, gender and youth development by municipalities.

According to the dplg's own assessment, the extent to which municipalities have sought to mainstream crosscutting issues has been uneven at best. With respect to **HIV/AIDS**, the *Framework for an Integrated Local Response to HIV and AIDS* recognises that 'many municipalities have acknowledged their mandate to play an active role in local responses to HIV and AIDS and have initiated a range of strategies to address the spread of HIV and mitigate the impact of AIDS on their communities.'¹⁴ It further notes that while there have been improvements in municipal responses to HIV/AIDS between 2001 and 2004, at the same time it was clear that few municipalities were able to effectively and proactively integrate the implications of HIV/AIDS into their core mandate of developmental local government. A more recent scan of municipal initiatives led to the following key findings:

- Not all municipalities were institutionally ready to perform their traditional local government roles, such as water and sanitation services, let alone take on developmental local governance roles;

¹³ The case of the City of Cape Town's strategy to mainstream HIV/AIDS illustrates this point. While the City has a relatively established coordinated response to HIV/AIDS, with the formation of a City HIV/AIDS/TB Coordinating Committee in 2001, there was very little public documentation on its functioning and on lessons learned in the past five years that could add value to other municipalities' work in this regard. It was only with the help of an external organisation (Isandla Institute) that the process, practical experiences and lessons were documented in 2006 and disseminated.

¹⁴ The dplg (2007), *Framework for an Integrated Local Response to HIV and AIDS*, p. 2-3.

- The development agenda of IDPs was often technocratic and sector-led, and did not adequately respond to development issues such as gender, HIV and AIDS or poverty alleviation;
- Planning activities were symptoms-focused and did not sufficiently engage with the underlying causes of issues;
- Municipal HIV and AIDS plans or programmes were often undertaken separately from the IDP process and did not evenly cover both the internal and external dimensions of municipal responses to HIV and AIDS;
- Processes of community participation did not adequately accommodate vulnerable groups, such as people living with, and those affected by HIV and AIDS;
- National and provincial government sector departments did not systematically respond to development issues such as HIV and AIDS or gender as a broad-based development and governance issue in their policies, programmes and projects;
- An understanding of HIV and AIDS as a development and governance issue remained limited among government and development role-players and stakeholders;
- HIV and AIDS stigma and denial remained evident, despite HIV and AIDS awareness raising initiatives;
- An absence of locality-specific information on HIV and AIDS and the implications of this information for development priorities led to an over-reliance on national or provincial-wide data alone as a means to consider HIV and AIDS issues in municipal planning and implementation;
- Municipal HIV and AIDS coordinators, where they had been appointed, often held junior positions and did not generally have sufficient development and municipal planning expertise to effectively facilitate development and governance responses to HIV and AIDS.¹⁵

It is against this background that the dplg has developed the *Framework for an Integrated Local Response to HIV and AIDS*, aimed at providing municipalities clearer guidance and support in their efforts to mainstream HIV/AIDS. The Framework is supported by an *Implementation Plan for supporting effective development and governance responses to HIV and AIDS*, which outlines the institutional arrangements and budget for implementation. One of the issues of concern here is that, while the implementation of the framework has been costed, no funds have as yet been secured or allocated for its effective implementation.

There appears to be little information on how many municipalities have adopted **gender** mainstreaming initiatives (e.g. gender policy or gender focal persons), let alone a qualitative assessment of whether these initiatives and structures are functioning optimally to help bring about gender equity, empowerment of women and greater gender representivity.¹⁶ But it seems plausible that the experiences and concerns are not dissimilar from those at national and provincial level, as highlighted earlier, or other efforts at mainstreaming crosscutting issues (e.g. HIV/AIDS) at municipal level.

With respect to existing municipal initiatives to promote **youth development**, recent (2006) research by the National Youth Commission found that 81% of local municipalities, 65% of district municipalities and 17% of metropolitan municipalities (i.e. one of out six) do not have a youth policy or a policy on youth development in place. It further found that six out of ten local municipalities have designated councillors for youth development, compared to 42% of district municipalities and 50% of metropolitan municipalities. Across the three categories of municipalities, the majority of employees tasked with the responsibility to drive youth development were relatively new to local government and had been in office for less than three years.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid, p.3.

¹⁶ The dplg's *Gender Policy Framework for Local Government* does not reflect any information on the current status quo at municipal level. However, this point stands to be corrected, depending on outstanding information from SALGA and The Presidency (OSW).

¹⁷ Sedebi PQ (2006), 'Youth issues fall off the municipal agenda', in *Delivery*, No 9, November/January 2007

The following statements pick up on these key findings and relate it to the broader government (national/provincial/local) experiences with mainstreaming efforts.

1. Mainstreaming is not a 'luxury' or an 'add on'

It is not unusual for crosscutting issues to be perceived as 'luxuries', 'add-ons' or 'unfunded mandates', especially where municipalities are struggling to deliver the basics and/or perform the gamut of roles and responsibilities assigned to them by national or provincial government. This was a key finding of a review of municipal gender mainstreaming initiatives in KwaZulu-Natal, which found that officials expressed frustration in having to deal with gender issues when the whole municipality is under strain over service delivery needs.¹⁸ By

recognising that the crosscutting issues identified here are about the rights, well being and active participation as citizens of marginalised groups, it should be obvious that taking these issues into account is by no means a 'luxury'. Part of the problem seems to be that municipalities are under a lot of pressure to perform in relation to a range of sector-based targets. In this process, and because there are as yet few indicators to measure change with respect to equity, empowerment and representivity of marginalised groups and other transformative goals, it is easy to perceive of issues that are not quantified and measured as 'add-on' responsibilities. In addition, without additional/external financial support for structures and processes geared towards effective mainstreaming of gender, youth development, the rights of children and the elderly, disability and HIV/AIDS, this can easily be perceived as yet another 'unfunded mandate'. This seems to be particularly pertinent for smaller and/or under-resourced municipalities that cannot afford to create another position or structure in the organisation (see Box 5). It is instructive that many programmes and structures for mainstreaming have been funded by external (mainly donor) agencies. While such support is clearly vital (and is often accompanied with technical support), especially to help kick-start mainstreaming efforts and processes in a municipality, it does raise questions about the long term sustainability of these initiatives.

2. Mainstreaming is not the same as achieving employment equity targets or representation targets

While employment equity and equitable representation are important objectives in helping to bring about a more just and equitable society, this should not be equated with mainstreaming. One of the challenges currently is that employment equity targets is one of the few, if not the only 'hard' indicator, for mainstreaming efforts, particularly with respect to gender and disability. This may lead organisations and senior management to assume that once these targets are reached, they have done enough and need not do any more. While direct representation of disadvantaged social groups is important in bringing about more representative institutions and, hopefully, more responsive service delivery (see Box 6), it should not be seen as the be all and end all of mainstreaming, as it limits the extent to which empowerment and equity will be realised.

It is also worth noting that *internal mainstreaming* (which is concerned with the organisational and human resource aspects of a municipality, as distinguished from *external mainstreaming*, related to the service delivery and governance mandate of

Box 5. Municipal responses to HIV/AIDS

In 2002, the Department for Social Development conducted a survey of municipal responses to HIV/AIDS. Based on the feedback from forty-four municipalities (16% of total) it was clear that the majority of municipal responses fall within the category of prevention/awareness raising/education, followed by treatment/counselling/home based care. The main constraint identified by municipalities in developing and implementing local responses to HIV/AIDS was lack of funding (37%). A key conclusion of the survey was that municipalities are hesitant to take on functions requiring substantial funding, a significant reallocation of funds or a redeployment of staff if severe staff and resource constraints are not addressed.

tz, L and Roux, N (2004), "A study of local government HIV/AIDS projects in South Africa", in *Journal of Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS*, Vol 1:2, pp99-106

¹⁸ Sithole, P, Todes, A and Williamson, A (2007), 'Gender and women's participation in municipality-driven development: IDP and project-level participation in Msinga, eThekweni and Hibiscus Coast', in *Critical Dialogue*, Vol 3:1, pp.31-37.

Box 6. Youth Councils at municipal level

In June 2006, the City of Johannesburg established the Joburg Student Council (previously called Junior City Council). The Student Council is charged with stimulating the interest of youth in local government affairs and is meant to be a platform for youth to influence the City Council on issues directly affecting them and younger children. Invitations were sent to 160 schools around the city and after a 3-month consultative process the 112-member Student Council was established. The Youth Council is expected to hold monthly meetings at various council venues across the city. It is organised in a number of portfolio committees, such as health, transport and finance. Members of the City's Executive Committee are meant to play a mentoring role to the Student Council.

In July 2007, youth forums from the 45 wards of Buffalo City elected a new Youth Council. The Youth Council has 5 office bearers and 6 additional members. Its tasks are to liaise with the Special Programmes Unit on youth issues, help prioritise youth issues through the IDP, reviewing the municipality's Youth Development Strategy and developing a plan of action for the upcoming year. The election of the Youth Council follows the launch of a Youth Development Strategy in June 2007, which seeks to empower youth to become more involved in developmental local government and the decisions that affect them. Its main focus areas are HIV/AIDS, sport and entrepreneurship. The initiative has been supported by UNICEF.

municipalities) refers to more than just direct representation of disadvantaged groups. From the perspective of gender mainstreaming, other issues that require attention include equal career (promotion and capacity building) opportunities and equal remuneration for men and women, sexual harassment, organisational culture (addressing sexist attitudes, behaviour and language, for example) and family-friendly policies. From the perspective of disability, the creation of an enabling environment is equally important, but will imply different sets of responses, including (but not limited to) changes in the physical environment to ensure a barrier-free environment. Internal HIV/AIDS mainstreaming means that municipalities put in place measures to reduce vulnerability of staff to HIV infection and to help staff and internal systems cope with the consequences of the epidemic. This entails awareness raising, access to VCT, sexual harassment programme, providing/facilitating access to ARV treatment, staff benefits (e.g. medical and pension), disease management, succession planning and workplace initiatives aimed at reducing stigma.

3. Mainstreaming is not about organising events and campaigns

Awareness raising events and campaigns around national public holidays, such as Youth Day, Women's Day or World AIDS Day, or other national campaigns such as the Sixteen Days of Activism (against violence against women and children) and Disability Week, can play an important role in addressing stigma and prejudice against particular marginalised social groups. As such, such events and campaigns are important in expressing solidarity and giving recognition to the right of these groups to play a full, participatory role in society. But, as with the previous point about employment equity, mainstreaming efforts should not stop there. While it is not suggested that Mogale City's HIV/AIDS mainstreaming efforts are limited to this, it clearly puts strong emphasis on organising events and activities (see Box 7). The feedback from provincial structures for mainstreaming confirms that the focus is often on organising events and activities and not necessarily on strategic issues.¹⁹

4. An understanding of what mainstreaming means (i.e. what needs to be changed, why, how it affects local government and how to go about the change process), is critical, especially at senior management level

One of the key reasons why mainstreaming initiatives are not taking off as much as they should is because municipal representatives, particularly those in leadership positions at political and administrative level, do not fully grasp what needs to be changed, why the situation needs to be changed, what the implications are for local government

Box 7. Response to HIV/AIDS in Mogale City
Mogale City's response to HIV/AIDS includes the following:

- World AIDS Day events to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS
- Candle light ceremonies aimed at reaching 500 people living with HIV/AIDS to provide them with love and support
- Provision of home based care
- Prevention of mother to child transmission
- A 5-month certificated training programme at local clinics for 120 ward-based volunteers

¹⁹ See footnote 11.

and how to go about the change process. In part, this comes back to the point made earlier, that national and provincial policies and frameworks on crosscutting issues more often than not do not provide specific guidance, with clear actions that municipalities can relate to and associated measurements for change. As a result, mainstreaming is not well understood (see, for example, the conflation of 'gender' with 'women' and the narrow view of HIV/AIDS as a biomedical issues requiring behavioural and health-related measures only) and remains a marginal concern within the organisation, which in turn gets expressed in the marginal location of institutional structures and mechanisms for mainstreaming.

It is particularly important that those in leadership roles and positions in local government (Councillors and senior management) have a good understanding of what mainstreaming means, not only in conceptual or definitional terms (e.g. *mainstreaming is a process towards the achievement of transformation and development goals, more specifically equity, empowerment and representivity*), but more importantly in a very practical and applied way - what specifically are the implications for a particular programme, service, process in the municipality and how can the desired/required change best be realised within the powers, functions, capacity and resources of the municipality? Evidence from South Africa and indeed other countries suggests that the role of champions is central in initiating, driving and supporting organisations to do things differently. Unless these champions have the authority and powers to transform organisational practice and functioning, it is extremely difficult to bring about the necessary changes, let alone sustain these efforts.

5. Dedicated structures for mainstreaming are vital

Institutionalising the principles of equity, empowerment and representivity in the norms and procedures of government requires that appropriate structures are set up to guide, drive, support, implement and/or monitor mainstreaming efforts. While the specific role of these structures is likely to depend on local and institutional realities (such as the size, geographical location, resource base, capacity and functional responsibilities of particular municipalities) there is clear evidence from across the three spheres of government that these structures are key in institutionalising crosscutting issues. This is also necessary to reduce reliance on political will for the promotion of the rights and empowerment of marginalized groups. Over time, when mainstreaming is entrenched in all structures and departments of the municipality, it may no longer be necessary to have such a dedicated structure, but until that moment it will certainly be required.

The reality is that many of these structures, where they exist, are not functioning optimally, as discussed below. While it may be tempting to interpret their lack of performance and, at times, dysfunctionality, as if these structures are not serving a purpose, a more useful response is to establish why they are not functioning optimally and what support or structural changes may be needed to improve this.

Another issue that warrants close attention concerns the extent to which one unit, often even one person, can be responsible for mainstreaming gender, youth development, disability, HIV/AIDS and the rights of children and the elderly. Having to play a multi-faceted role, for example as a Special Projects Officer, is limiting the effectiveness of this structure/person to make a meaningful impact on the organisation and its ability to promote equity, empowerment and representivity (see Box 2). In addition, while the principle of promoting and protecting the rights of marginalised groups is the same, that does not mean that the required competencies for mainstreaming crosscutting issues is the same. Someone may be very versatile in youth development, but not have a handle on gender or disability concerns, for example. This raises particular challenges for smaller and weaker municipalities, which may already be struggling to get at least one focal person for crosscutting issues. One possibility is to consider locating these structures in district councils, which (together with metropolitan councils) are identified as regional planning entities, rather than all local municipalities, but this clearly requires proper coordination and engagement between district and local municipalities.

6. Structures responsible for mainstreaming efforts are only effective if certain conditions are met

While it is important to have appropriate structures in place to drive, support, implement or monitor mainstreaming efforts, such structures are unlikely to be effective unless they are adequately staffed (with the necessary skills, capacities and competence) and resourced, are relatively senior in the organisation, have direct access to and support from senior management, and are able to influence strategic and budgetary processes in the municipality. If these structures are institutionally marginalised, the most likely outcome is that issues such as disability, HIV/AIDS, gender and youth development remain seen as marginal issues that have little to do with the vision and ambitions of developmental local government (see Box 8).

7. Mainstreaming cannot be the responsibility of one person/unit in the municipality

Given all that has come before, this should not be a surprising finding. While it is necessary to institutionalise the organisation's commitment to human rights, equity and empowerment and allocate specific responsibilities for municipal mainstreaming efforts

Box 8. Local AIDS Councils in the North West Province
Local AIDS Councils (LACs) are seen to be an essential part of the institutional response to HIV/AIDS. However, a review of 22 LACs in the North West Province found that they play rather marginal roles in the response to HIV/AIDS:

- Most LACs were dysfunctional
- LAC organisational systems is top-down
- Roles and duties of LAC members are not always clear
- There is no shared agreement on crucial concepts
- LACs are coordinating bodies without any executive powers
- Executive Mayors who are supposed to be patrons of the LACs to provide political power are generally not actively involved.

Source: Schutte, PJ (nd), The sustainability of Local AIDS

(be it designing, supporting, implementing or monitoring) within the organisation, this does not mean that mainstreaming is (or can be) the sole responsibility of a designated unit or person. Ultimately, mainstreaming needs to be entrenched in the municipality as a whole - it should be part of the outlook of all departments and structures, their (respective and collective) strategies, tools and instruments, their monitoring and reporting. As mentioned earlier, this has particular implications for those in leadership and senior management positions, who have the authority *and* responsibility to gear the organisational systems, structures

and processes in the right direction.

8. Leadership is essential for mainstreaming efforts to take hold in a municipality

Organisational and social change always begins with someone, or a collective, taking a stand, expressing a vision for change and being willing to champion the issue, even if it raises resistance. This is what leadership is all about. Leadership can be expressed in all corners of an organisation or community - one does not have to be formally elected or appointed in a leadership position to demonstrate leadership. But those who are in leadership positions are expected to provide leadership, most especially on difficult or controversial issues. And they are expected to take into account the views and experiences of those who are less able to make their voices heard or influence decision-making processes that affect their lives. This is particularly the case when it comes to ward councillors. From experiences in South Africa and other countries it is abundantly clear that crosscutting issues have a much better chance of being addressed if those in elected and appointed leadership positions take them on and provide direction and authority (see Box 9 - AMICAALL). The recently launched Women Development Strategy of the City of Johannesburg is a case in point. The strategy is the result of an intense consultative process across the 11 regions of the city, in which the Member of the Mayoral Committee for Community Development played a central role, and in which over 1,600 women participated. This is by no means an isolated case of leadership provided by Councillors or senior officials on a particular crosscutting issue.

9. Mainstreaming demands that the voices of those directly affected are brought to the centre of the planning and decision-making process

Box 9. AMICAALL

The Alliance of Mayors Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level (AMICAALL) was established following the Abidjan Declaration at the Xth International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) in 1997. Among the commitments of the Abidjan Declaration was 'to create an alliance of mayors and municipal leaders to maximise commitment, participation, leadership, capacity and experience at community level in response to the challenge of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa'. AMICAALL focuses on developing a cadre of political leadership to lead and inspire local responses to HIV/AIDS. It seeks to embed such responses in municipal functioning, rather than setting up separate structures and calls for a locally-led, multi-sectoral approach that complements and supports national policies.

A key feature of developmental local government is to involve local residents and groups in decisions about their own development trajectory, and to take explicit measures to allow the voice of marginalised groups to be heard and influence such decisions. In this regard, it is important to find ways and means to allow the voice of women and men of different age groups (including youth, children, elderly persons), of different health status, and people living with, directly affected by HIV/AIDS or most vulnerable to HIV infection, to be heard. This means that participatory

processes, structures and mechanisms need to be inclusive and representative and, more broadly, that the space for public engagement allows for maximum participation from marginalised groups. In reality, participatory processes, structures and mechanisms are not always sufficiently enabling and open for local communities to participate, let alone for marginalised social groups.²⁰

While issues of formal representation (on ward committees, for example) and participation are critical, it is also important to recognise that a personal understanding of what it means to be disadvantaged (whether from the perspective of gender, age, disability, HIV/AIDS or other factor) does not automatically translate into an ability to formulate solutions at a structural or strategic level.²¹ It also does not necessarily mean that persons from the same social group share a common strategic vision or interest. Clearly, it will be important to engage with marginalised social groups on a collective basis, and/or with their representative organisations.

10. Mainstreaming implies that issues are embedded in strategic documents, such as the IDP

A central theme for all mainstreaming efforts is that the relevant principles, concerns, commitments and proposed solutions/responses need to be incorporated into strategic plans, particularly the IDP. It has been suggested that local government is largely compliant with national guidelines (especially on gender) at the level of projects, but less so at the level of IDPs.²² Part of the reason seems to be that national government itself has not placed much emphasis on this aspect of the IDP. In the past, many IDPs tended to reflect some upfront commitment to principles such as gender equity or youth development and a recognition that issues such as gender and HIV/AIDS are crosscutting issues requiring a multi-sectoral response. On closer scrutiny, however, few IDPs actually absorbed the true meaning of this by consistently and coherently articulating what the implications are for all aspects of local governance and municipal functioning.

Box 10. Buffalo City Municipality IDP Review 2005/06

The situation analysis of Buffalo City Municipality IDP Review has a section on crosscutting issues, which includes brief overviews on HIV/AIDS, Local Agenda 21, poverty alleviation, gender equity, children & youth, people living with disabilities, and older persons. The next section of the IDP, reflecting reviewed objectives and strategies, incorporates a set of key objectives in relation to each crosscutting issue, which is further articulated into one or more strategies. Key among these are the development, implementation and monitoring of relevant policies and strategies (e.g. a Gender Policy, Disability Strategy, Youth & Children's Development Programme) and the establishment of gender structures.

²⁰ For further discussion of these issues, see the input prepared by Terence Smith.

²¹ Kelly (2004), Op cit.

²² Todes, A, Sithole, P and Williamson, A (2007), *Local Planning*, Cape Town: HSRC Press; Bentley, K, Cherry, *representation and participation of women in local go* SALGA, HSRC.

This is despite the fact that national guidelines on IDPs call for HIV/AIDS to be addressed at all phases, from analysis, strategy development, projects, integration and approval. More recent IDPs are beginning to overcome this by articulating more explicitly proposed actions and outcomes of mainstreaming initiatives (see Box 10).

For mainstreaming to be embedded in the IDP (and other programmes, such as LED) a two-way, mutually reinforcing process is envisaged: as an integrative planning instrument, the IDP is meant to incorporate the strategic objectives and plans of municipal departments and other spheres of government. This means that the IDP should ideally reflect the goals, objectives, action plans and indicators of all these stakeholders related to mainstreaming crosscutting issues. The clearer and stronger these plans are in articulating what needs to change and why, what the required outcome(s) is/are and how the outcome(s) will be achieved with regard to gender, disability, HIV/AIDS, youth, the rights of children and of the elderly, the more likely these issues will be embedded in the IDP. On the other hand, the IDP should inform these other plans, particularly where these are not explicit enough on how equity, empowerment and representivity will be pursued or achieved.

11. Although mainstreaming does not always require money, resource (re-)allocation to support mainstreaming initiatives is needed

Mainstreaming is not always about extra money. For example, the dplg's *Framework for an Integrated Local Response to HIV and AIDS* makes a compelling case for recognising that HIV/AIDS mainstreaming is, in part at least, about 'doing the basics': the provision of water, sanitation, roads and social infrastructure can help to minimise vulnerability to HIV infection. There are, however, instances where additional money may be required, for example for the operational costs related to structures for mainstreaming or key activities. However, mainstreaming is essentially not about specific projects or structures, but about ensuring that the municipal budget as a whole reflects the political priorities towards equity, empowerment and representivity.

The approach of the Women's Budget Initiative is instructive in this regard. The project identifies three areas of budget analysis: 1. Specific allocations for issues affecting women (and, for the purpose of this paper, children, youth, elderly persons, persons with disability, people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS); 2. Allocations toward equal opportunities (internal focus, on staff); and, 3. Mainstream expenditure. The first two sets of expenditure may in the medium to longer term be phased out, if it is no longer necessary to have separate budget line items for disability, gender, HIV/AIDS, for example. The third part makes up the bulk of the municipal budget and needs to be assessed in terms of the impact of each allocation on women, men, boys and girls from different socio-economic and geographic backgrounds, age groups and health status. While many municipalities do make some budgetary provision for special programmes, activities or events for particular social groups, and for employment equity and change management/workplace programmes, it is not common for the full budget (expenditure and revenue) to be scrutinised in this manner. This can only be done if a municipality can identify the current situation of these various, and overlapping, social groups, if it can design programmes to respond to these different situations and if it has the ability to demonstrate that targets are being reached. These issues are further discussed under points 13 and 14.

12. Mainstreaming does not mean that the municipality has to do everything alone

By virtue of mainstreaming being defined as a process towards realising rights and empowerment, it is clear that this is not just the responsibility of a municipality, but in fact 'everybody's business'. At the same time, it is important to recognise that there may be programmes, projects and initiatives within the municipal boundaries that are initiated by local groups, communities, CBOs, NGOs, faith-based organisations, the business sector, universities, and so on. It would be a terrible mistake for a municipality to develop a programme or project in response to a particular need or concern that is already addressed by other actors or, worse still, that may undermine existing civic initiatives.

Partnerships can take a range of forms, without necessarily being formalised in the way that the White Paper on Municipal Services Partnerships suggests. A partnership can involve one other stakeholder or multiple stakeholders and it can serve a variety of different purposes. The most important issue is that the partnerships pursued serve local needs and the municipality's interests.

Box 11. A partnership approach to HIV/AIDS in Msunduzi Municipality
 The Msunduzi Municipality's HIV/AIDS Strategy has been heralded as an innovative response because it was based on a strong partnership model between representatives from government, civil society and business. An important element of its success was the fact that it had two key champions: a political one in the then-Deputy Mayor and a senior official. The main focus of the Strategy was on prevention and treatment, but it also specifically tried to address the issue of vulnerable children. One of the achievements of the strategy was that it created linkages between different sectors, which promoted opportunities for constructive engagement. The strategy also allowed for cross-sectoral engagements that not only minimised duplication of interventions but also improved the level of service provision. However, there were also a number of challenges that impeded the strategy, including an over-reliance on financial contributions from NGO partners, which was deemed to be unsustainable. In addition, there was a lack of monitoring and evaluation capacity and, very importantly, insufficient direct involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS. Recent years have seen a breakdown of the partnership, mainly as a result of the process of internal restructuring within the municipality, which meant that some of the key people involved in the project were relocated to different positions. This, coupled with changes in political leadership, has led to a lack of continuity and the loss of key champions to drive the partnership.

As the case of Msunduzi shows (see Box 11), a partnership-based response to HIV/AIDS is not only valuable, but also necessary to complement the skills, competences and resources of various actors and stakeholders and to provide a more coordinated, cohesive and effective local response to HIV/AIDS. In this respect, it is also useful to consider the various roles a municipality can play in mainstreaming crosscutting issues (see Table 3).

Table 3. Defining municipal roles

Doer	Municipal budget and personnel mobilised to implement
Enabler / Regulator	Make it easy for others to take action by availing municipal systems and assets and performing regulatory roles
Coordinator / Facilitator	Ensure others are performing their respective roles and responsibilities within the municipal area
Connector	Link demand-side stakeholders to HIV and AIDS service providers
Advocate	Advocate for other stakeholders, in particular other spheres of government, to perform their respective roles and responsibilities within the municipal area

Adapted from The dplg (2007) *Framework for an Integrated Local Response to HIV and AIDS*, p.29

However, while partnerships are necessary and valuable, these require coordination, management, leadership, sustained commitment and support to function properly. In the case of Msunduzi, for example, it proved difficult to sustain the partnership on HIV/AIDS when political champions changed, resulting in a rather dysfunctional partnership at the moment.

13. Mainstreaming efforts and progress towards the realisation of rights and transformative goals need to be measured, monitored and acknowledged

Evidence suggests that what gets measured (and, importantly, reported on) is more likely to be addressed. There is an elaborate performance management system for local government in South Africa, but it currently does not adequately take into account the need to measure progress on crosscutting issues. There is therefore an opportunity to reflect appropriate indicators in the Key Performance Areas of municipalities. The DPLG *Framework for an Integrated Local Response to HIV and AIDS* defines 10 KPAs as critical for

informing local responses to HIV/AIDS (see Box 12). Also, a few exceptions aside, municipalities have not incorporated these issues into the performance scorecard of senior managers, although some recent initiatives have started to move into this direction. Yet, international experience suggests that one of the most effective ways of ensuring that mainstreaming takes place is for relevant targets to be incorporated into managers' performance scorecard.

The call for indicators on crosscutting issues is not meant to reinforce a top-down compliance culture that ultimately does not serve to transform the institution, how it executes its mandates and what outcomes are achieved. Rather, this should be a strategic process, with the choice of targets and indicators carefully articulated to ensure that they are meaningful, rather than superficial. Two points are worth noting in this regard. First, the choice of indicators and targets, both measuring quantitative and qualitative change, is not merely a technical exercise, but inherently political. The decision to measure progress towards equity and empowerment is political, as are decisions about which aspect of change to measure. Key questions in this regard are, firstly, who decides what the intended outcomes are and how best to measure progress, and secondly, what kind of data is needed to assess progress and how will it be collected? This suggests not only a significant role for Councillors, but also leaves scope for community groups and civil society organisations to influence the formulation of indicators and targets.

Secondly, while inculcating a culture of reporting on progress with regard to the protection, promotion and realisation of rights and empowerment, it is important to consider that accountability is not only (or not necessarily always) something that is upwards, towards higher authorities (be it the municipal manager, Council or other spheres of government), but also outwards, towards the very constituencies and social groups whose rights are meant to be respected and promoted.

14. Municipalities need to have accurate and appropriately disaggregated data to plan, implement and monitor projects and programmes

Lack of disaggregated data hampers the ability of municipal managers to make effective decisions, whose impacts and outcomes can ultimately be assessed and measured.

Box 12. Key Performance Areas for municipalities in a context of HIV and AIDS

- All residents within a municipal area have safe, reliable, sufficient and affordable access to basic services
- Municipal standards and regulations in respect of land use management and land development are accessible
- Municipal systems and procedures are made increasingly accessible to users and constituents
- Management and governance systems are made more accessible to users within the municipality and institutional knowledge is retained in local government
- Role players active in the provision of social safety nets are effectively performing their role throughout the municipal area
- Efforts are made to foster practices of partnership-driven development in planning and implementation (community members, CBOs, NGOs, private sector and other spheres of government)
- Development interventions acknowledge place-specific development priorities while ensuring the adequate balance is achieved in respect of the coverage of development interventions between rural and urban areas
- Effective interventions are pursued to address gender inequity and inequality beyond prioritising access to development interventions for women
- The interests of the youth, the disabled and the aged are adequately reflected in all municipal planning and activities
- Access by NGOs, CBOs and other role players involved in the provision of HIV and AIDS-specific interventions to physical infrastructure and other operational resources is supported and facilitated

Adapted from The dplg (2007) *Framework for an Integrated Local Response to HIV and AIDS*, p13

Mainstreaming needs to depart from a situation analysis that accurately reflects the current status of women, men, girls and boys from different socio-economic backgrounds, living in different localities and settlement types, of varying age groups and health status. Such information then lays the basis for the formulation of disaggregated targets and indicators that will serve to measure progress in relation to specified social groups. This requires a level of sophistication few, if any, municipal data systems currently have. While some data is relatively easy to collect and can fairly easily be converted into disaggregated data and targets, in other instances it may be more complicated. HIV/AIDS is a case in point, where it is both costly and politically impossible to get complete data on infection levels and AIDS-related deaths, for example. In such instances, it may not always be feasible, desirable or even necessary to have local data that is broken down into great levels of detail regarding particular social groups and overlapping identities. In this case, proxy data and indicative data can often be identified. Over time, however, it is important for municipalities to strengthen their data collection and management systems to inform outcome-based planning and monitoring.

15. Effective mainstreaming efforts at municipal level require adequate guidance, support, monitoring and enforcement from provincial and national government

While there is clear evidence that municipalities have (and are increasingly) embarked on mainstreaming efforts, the reality is that mainstreaming of crosscutting issues has not happened as a matter of course in all municipalities or on all relevant issues (e.g. gender, youth development, disability, HIV/AIDS, children and the elderly). One of the contributing factors to this state of affairs is that there has not been sufficient clarity and guidance from national and provincial spheres of government on what the desired outcomes are and how these outcomes are best achieved by local government. In the same vein, while municipalities are expected to report on a range of performance indicators, there are currently no clear key performance indicators for mainstreaming crosscutting issues. As a result, and in some senses reinforcing this situation, national and provincial government have no monitoring system in place to assess what progress municipalities are making with respect to protecting and strengthening the rights of marginalised groups and their empowerment. Recent initiatives from The Presidency, the dplg and SALGA have begun to fill this void. It is too early to tell whether these initiatives are making the necessary impact at municipal level.

The call for more guidance, support, monitoring and enforcement does not imply that municipalities are presented with a generic template for mainstreaming, regardless of their status, capacity and financial well being to perform powers and functions. Nor, as mentioned earlier, is it meant to reinforce a top-down compliance culture that ultimately does not serve to transform the institution, how it executes its mandates and what outcomes are achieved. But it is clear that a significant number of municipalities require guidance and assistance in translating the vision for equity, empowerment and representivity into effective strategies, plans and programmes that relate directly to the mandate, powers and functions of local government. Guidance and support can take a variety of forms, including the formulation of guidelines, dissemination of background information and 'good practice' examples, peer-to-peer exchanges, training, capacity building, technical support, and so on. There may also be a need for financial support, particularly to support the role and functions of relevant structures within the municipality and/or with external stakeholders (e.g. gender forums or Local AIDS Councils).

16. Support for social mobilisation on the rights and needs of particular social groups is critical for effective mainstreaming

While mainstreaming efforts by municipalities would benefit from guidance, support and monitoring of compliance by provincial and national government, it is also important to allow for mainstreaming efforts to be informed by bottom-up pressures. The issue of recognising voice, as discussed previously (see point 9), is clearly crucial in this regard. In addition, it is important to value, respect, nurture and strengthen social mobilisation by

women, youth, children, the elderly, disabled persons, people living with/affected by HIV/AIDS and their supporters/supportive organisations.

As the incorporation of gender equity concerns in the White Paper on Local Government and ensuing legislation has shown, social mobilisation and activism is critical to influence the vision, strategies and programmes of local government and to hold municipalities to account. It is therefore important to encourage and enable organisations responding to and/or representing the needs and interests of marginalised groups to express these issues through social mobilisation and activism. This is also in line with the White Paper on Local Government, which defines a municipality in a manner that is not limited to local government organisations, but is inclusive of other actors and stakeholders present/active in the municipal area. One of the defining features of developmental local government is to empower marginalised and excluded groups in the community.

Local communities are vibrant expressions of social activism and mobilisation.²³ There are women's groups, *stokvels* and other community savings groups, sports clubs, religious groups, cultural associations, home based care groups, neighbourhood watches, community crèches, and so on. These community groups and organisations play an essential role in providing support and other services to local residents and households. In most instances, they respond to an immediate need (e.g. the need for care, access to credit, safety, companionship) but few of these local groups have the capacity and resources to directly engage their municipality on issues that concern them, in a manner that effectively influences the strategic direction of the municipality. Also, because of entrenched stigma and prejudice on issues such as gender equity, HIV/AIDS, disability, these issues are least likely to be mobilised around as strategic issues. In light of the White Paper's vision of local government strengthening community activism and mobilisation, municipalities can clearly play a role here. It can do this by, for example, providing financial or material support (e.g. allowing community based groups to use municipal venues for their activities), linking up existing community groups with other groups, NGOs or local business, creating platforms for direct engagement (through the ward Councillor or otherwise), providing learning and capacity building opportunities for community-based groups, and so on.

17. Mainstreaming changes the way an organisation functions, its culture and how it relates to internal and external stakeholders

Mainstreaming as a process towards the achievement of transformation and development goals (i.e. equity, empowerment and representivity) implies a reorientation of the outlook, actions, systems and structures of an organisation, including municipal organisations. Previous points have elaborated on particular ways in which this is the case.

While the principles and some of the processes and mechanisms for mainstreaming may apply, regardless of whether it concerns gender, youth development, the rights of children or the elderly, disability or HIV/AIDS, it is useful to bear in mind that mainstreaming may not mean the same or have the same implications for all these issues. This may be an obvious observation in relation to programmatic interventions (obviously, the intended outcomes and means of achieving these outcomes would differ, depending on the intended beneficiaries), but it may require a bit more explanation with respect to internal mainstreaming efforts. In general, internal mainstreaming efforts aim to transform the organisation to become more representative and to provide a fair, conducive and enabling work environment for all employees (and Councillors) to effectively fulfil their functions and to take advantage of opportunities for learning and advancement. With respect to gender mainstreaming, this means considering family friendly policies (e.g. flexi-time and child care facilities) as well as dealing with sexual harassment, amongst others. In the case of disability mainstreaming, it implies considering the extent to which the physical

²³ Swilling, M and Russell, B (2002). *The Size and Scope of the Non-profit Sector in South Africa*, Graduate School of Public and Development Management (Johannesburg) and Centre for Civil Society (Durban).

environment throws up barriers that need to be removed and whether particular aids may be required to support persons with disability to execute their responsibilities. With respect to HIV/AIDS mainstreaming, the focus is possibly more comprehensive, in that it includes measures aimed at reducing vulnerability to HIV infection among municipal staff and Councillors, measures to overcome stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS, and measures aimed at minimising the negative impact of HIV/AIDS on human resources (i.e. staff and Councillors), systems, structures and deliverables of the organisation. What all these examples have in common, though, is that organisational change is not just a matter of changing systems, structures and procedures, but also touches on the values and culture of the organisation.

6. Concluding observations and issues for further consideration

In conclusion, a few broad observations are made, which feed into recommendations for issues that warrant specific attention or further consideration.

1. Municipalities have by no means ignored their responsibility in promoting and protecting the rights and well being of local residents. But more often than not this has been based on a generic approach, rather than a disaggregated approach that takes into account the different needs, interests and experiences of disadvantage that characterise different social groups. One of the key problems underpinning this is that municipalities lack disaggregated data to inform policy, planning, programming and community engagement. The issue of *disaggregated data collection and data management clearly needs to be strengthened* at municipal level.
2. While there is evidence of efforts by municipalities to mainstream crosscutting issues, a few qualifications can be made:
 - For one, not all municipalities have engaged in mainstreaming efforts, often citing the lack of resources or capacity as a reason for taking on something that is considered an ‘unfunded mandate’. Given that mainstreaming is about the rights, well being and active participation of marginalised groups in their expressing their development goals, there should not be any confusion that this falls squarely within the vision and mandate of developmental local government.
 - Secondly, municipalities may have put in place policies or mechanisms to deal with one or more crosscutting issues, but that does not necessarily mean that all crosscutting issues are pursued in a coherent, integrated and coordinated manner. While gender mainstreaming and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming are (increasingly) more common, the same cannot be said for youth development, disability or the rights of children and the elderly.
 - Thirdly, many municipal mainstreaming efforts are partial at best and do not represent a comprehensive and strategic response, taking into account both internal and external dimensions of mainstreaming.

Arguably, one of the main reasons for this is the lack of *institutional understanding of what mainstreaming means, how it relates to the mandate and functional responsibilities of local government, what the envisaged or desired outcomes are, and how best to measure results in this regard*. Such an institutional understanding needs to be embedded in the *leadership* of an organisation, in this case Councillors and senior management.

Another, related, reason for this relates to the mandate, competence and authority/ institutional location of structures set up to drive the municipality’s mainstreaming effort(s). There is a need to *review and strengthen the role and functioning of relevant structures in relation to their ability to influence the strategic agenda of a municipality, with particular reference to the IDP and the budget*.

3. Municipal experiences with mainstreaming and lessons learned are not always documented, let alone shared with other municipalities. There is clearly a need to ***collate these experiences in a central database and find appropriate ways of sharing them***. It seems an appropriate function for the dplg and/or SALGA to take on. Given that municipalities currently are not required to report on mainstreaming efforts and the outcomes achieved, it seems appropriate to link this to ***the need for reporting on a set of key performance areas and indicators that allow for the measurement of progress with respect to equity, empowerment and representivity***. While reporting will be upwards, it will also serve to enhance accountability downwards or outwards, to local communities and marginalised groups.
4. The relatively weak compliance of municipalities with imperatives for mainstreaming is, in part at least, the result of gaps and weaknesses in the institutional context at national and provincial level. On the one hand, there is a proliferation of structures and policies related to mainstreaming, which are not necessarily coordinated in their aims and efforts, thus serving to overwhelm municipalities. On the other hand, expectations of the role and responsibilities of local government are often not specified and there is a ‘translation gap’ between what municipalities are meant to achieve and how best to achieve it, in accordance with their functional responsibilities and institutional capabilities. Clearly, what is needed in this respect is ***a revision and simplification of the national and provincial institutional context for mainstreaming*** combined with ***much greater clarity on what municipalities are expected to do in this regard***. This should be combined with appropriate support (whether in the form of capacity building, technical support, finances, or otherwise) and monitoring by (a) national/provincial stakeholder(s), e.g. the dplg. Careful attention needs to be given to fact that municipalities differ in functional responsibility, size, fiscal base, capacity, and so on, and what this means for their envisaged roles in mainstreaming crosscutting issues.
5. Last but not least, participatory processes and mechanisms are not necessarily inclusive enough to enable disadvantaged social groups and their representative organisations to influence the strategic agenda of a municipality. ***The processes, mechanisms and structures to facilitate participatory local governance need to become more inclusive and innovative ways of engaging marginalised groups need to be explored***. Related to this, there is a need for municipalities to articulate more clearly how they seek to ***support community empowerment and social mobilisation***, aimed at transforming local communities and strengthening and protecting the rights and well being of marginalised social groups.