
TO: CITY MANAGER: MR SIBUSISO SITHOLE

FROM: UNIT HEAD: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND ACTION SUPPORT UNIT – MR VINCENT CEBEKHULU

DATE: 25 SEPTEMBER 2014

SUBJECT: TRAVEL REPORT BACK OF KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE BETWEEN ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY, AND KERALA INSTITUTE OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION (KILA) IN THE STATE OF KERALA, INDIA

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback for noting on the visit undertaken by a team consisting of Cllr B Dlamini, representing our Political leadership and Officials viz, V Cebekhulu (Head: Community Participation), R Bob (Project Executive: Community and Emergency Services Cluster), N Shembe (Senior Manager: Social Crime Prevention), and C Pillay (Program Manager: MILE) to visit KILA in Kerala, India between the 11th and 18th September 2014.



BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS

Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) has been engaged in the capacity building activities for local governments in Kerala since its establishment in 1990. The Institute is supported by the Government of Kerala, as its nodal institution for training, research and consultancy for the Local Self-Government Institutions. Further they provide policy advisory support to the Elected and Administrative components within the Local Administration of the State of Kerala (equivalent to our Provinces), based on its decentralisation model. Also, they also provide capacity building initiatives to other government departments, nationally and internationally.

Kerala is internationally recognised for innovation in decentralised and participatory governance. The government of Kerala has used decentralised governance as a tool to deliver basic services, social services and reduce poverty – where theories have been complemented by a number of sincere practices applicable to local governments facing similar challenges. Noting that the geographical contexts may differ, the experiences of Kerala State have much in common with eThekweni Municipality in responding to our social, economic, gender, technological, safety and fiscal governance challenges.

The knowledge exchange and study group occurred through a range of different mediums of engagements including face to face discussions, boardroom presentations and various site visits for observation.

PANCHAYAT (Ward Committees)

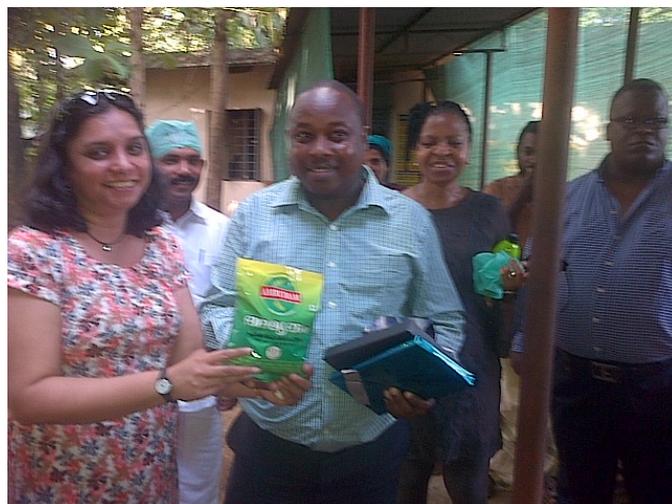
The site visits included visits to Panchayat (Ward committee equivalent) both Urban and Rural Panchayats. The Panchayat are situated in an environment/infrastructure that provide comprehensive social services in the form of pension application and pay-out, birth and death registration, agricultural extension support, sports, health, education and revenue collection facilities. It is important to note that the devolution of powers for social services resides within the local sphere. The Panchayat are made up of both the elected and Administrative components together with community representatives and they plan as a collective for their respective annual programmes and projects and this informs the Budget allocations. Quarterly meetings are held to monitor implementation of programmes and projects and expenditure patterns. Also, if the project exceeds allocated expenditure, than it is the responsibility of the Panchayat to source external funding through various means such as PPPs, Donor Funding and Sponsorships. Loans can also be secured however, this must be authorised by the State Government. This process is similar to our Community Based Planning processes although we have not place much emphasis of the operations and the value add of citizen prioritisation, selection and engagement.



KUDUMBASHREE (Family Prosperity Programmes)

Poverty Alleviation project (Kudumbashree – Family Prosperity programmes concentrating on Women Empowerment), was also presented and there after best practises were visited. The aim of the project is on social, economic and women empowerment. Various economic sector project such as sewing, agriculture, school food aid programmes, canteen and catering services, IT support and paramedic support. This project is a State Poverty Eradication Mission and is supported by government to organise like-minded woman within a specific village to come together and organise themselves to generate income. The programme builds capacity for the beneficiaries to enter into micro-financing mechanisms and micro-enterprise formulation (equivalent to co-operatives). Through this project women have access to loans via various financial institutions and the loan repayment rate sits at 98%.

Linked to Food Aid Programmes, the Kudumbashree that prepares and provides the food nutrition packs was visited and this was followed to schools that are supported by the project were undertaken to understand distribution. These site visits has shown that we need to develop, strengthen and enhance policies that are aim at providing sustainable poverty reduction and food security programmes.



E-GOVERNANCE

There were presentations on Information Kerala Mission and E-Governance. The objective is to establish in-house software programmes to connect local self-governing institutions with the other spheres of Government. One particular software development programmes was of interest viz. Meeting Management Systems and this should be explored further for our Ward Committee Structures and Council Meetings.

CHILD RESOURCE CENTRE

The Child Resource Centre which is supported by UNICEF is responsible to streamlining children related issues into local government through mainstreaming and policy development. They provide training to learners, educators, parents and local government practitioners. Additionally they provide inputs into budgetary processes at local government planning processes to ensures matter linked to child development and support are addressed.

JAMUMATHRI (People Friendly Policing)

A visit to the Police Commissioner of Kerala was also undertaken. The Jamumathri (People Friendly Policing) programme was discussed. There are two projects linked to this programme viz. Student Policing (similar to our School Safety Programme) and Community Policy Programme (similar to our Community Policing Forums and Ward Safety Committees Structures). Additionally, their police structure has a Police Station dedicated to Women and Children issues at a local level. This is process should be explored within our Metro Police structures to address issues of street begging, women begging with children, commercial sex workers and domestic and sexual violence.



VISIT WITH MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PANCHAYATS

The meeting with Dr. M.K Muneer, Honourable Minister of Panchayats and Social Justice is a follow up to the outcomes of Kerala delegation visit to Durban in July 2013, managed by the World Bank Institute. The primary objective of meeting with Dr Muneer was to continue the knowledge sharing and networking opportunities on local government and urbanisation between Kerala and Durban. **Action: Minister Muneer pledged political support for the process.**

The Minister further noted that given KILAs interest in learning and replicating the experiences and approaches of capacity building in local governments' as operationalized by MILE, that KILA and MILE identify areas of strategic collaboration. **Action: Establish a Memorandum of cooperation in areas of mutual interest related to local government and urbanisation.**

The Minister noted that following the visit to SA and Durban in particular he will soon implement legislation that seeks to designate Panchayats as women friendly based on criteria to evaluate the safety of women and girls in the Panchayats. He was deeply inspired by the influence of Mahatma Gandhi in SA and recently opened a Gandhi museum in Kerala.



VISIT WITH UNIVERSITY

MILE requested that KILA facilitate a meeting with the University of Kerala to explore opportunities of collaboration that could inform the city's strategic research agenda. The initial discussions on the use, benefits and application of Ayurveda/traditional medicine have potential for the eThekweni's public health programs - noting the Kerala State have rolled out government led programs in Ayurvedic medicine.

Action: The areas of public health, regional economic development and decentralised planning were suggested as potential themes for comparative studies.

CONCLUSION

The knowledge exchanges, study groups and site visits have presented the following benefits to programme implementers and sector practitioners in eThekweni Municipality:

- To promote knowledge generation, dissemination and sharing among practitioners dealing with poverty eradication, social upliftment, citizen safety and community participation
- To provide a platform for the review to strengthen the policy development process on Food Security and Community participation\ building

- Provision of inputs for further development and consolidation of a cohesive social and charity network on sustainable local development topics that correspond to regional capacity development needs
- To enhance our knowledge on strategic collaboration with emphasis on private sector (CSI and CSR). government and civil societies
- To enhance community participation and safer cities methodologies, practices and tools for effective citizen governance and engagement

The mission's aims and objectives have been met and will enhance our future planning, budgeting and implementation of social, citizen engagement and participation programmes and project. Additionally, this will enhance and inform future policy frameworks on the above mentioned areas of operations.

RECOMMENDATION

It is duly recommended,

- That the travel report to KILA be noted for further engagement.
- Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE) and KILA identify areas of common and strategic interest and work towards a Memorandum of Cooperation
- MILE fosters a strategic relationship with the University of Kerala to augment collaborative research in the thematic areas of public health, social innovations & entrepreneurship; regional economic development and decentralised planning. Research opportunities in the areas of water and sanitation; sustainable human settlement and alternative energy should also be encouraged.
- MILE supports Community Participation and Action Support Unit in the planning and hosting of an international conference under the theme "Deepening Democracy" in March 2015.

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