

**THE ROLE OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN POVERTY
ALLEVIATION: THE CASE OF MBABANE, ESWATINI**

by

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of local economic development in urban poverty alleviation in Mbabane town in Eswatini. This was done by interviewing various stakeholders that are involved in LED processes which are the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the Municipal Council of Mbabane, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and Msunduzi community beneficiaries from LED initiatives and programmes. This study also examined the different definitions, debates, and the nature of the LED discourse in Eswatini and briefly, in other countries. This study is important because it fills the gap in knowledge on LED in Eswatini. The study followed a qualitative research approach and used purposive and snowball sampling to get data. Furthermore, the study investigated the pro-poor model and the pro-growth model and looked at how the Eswatini setting manifests itself within these models. The results found were that even though LED processes in Mbabane benefit the poor in a number of positive ways, there are still great strides to be made in terms of LED policy formation, capacity building, knowledge sharing and institutionalizing LED effectively at national government level in Eswatini.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CSO	Central Statistics Office
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
HDR	Human Development Report
GIF	Global Infrastructure Facility
LED	Local Economic Development
MCM	Municipal Council of Mbabane
MEPD	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
MHUD	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
NSDP	National Spatial Development Perspective
NDP	National Development Policy
NDS	National Development Strategy
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PPP	Public-Private Partnerships
RED	Regional Economic Development
SLGA	Swaziland Local Government Association
SNL	Swazi Nation Land
SPRSA	Swaziland Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UN	United Nations

1. CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

In this study I investigated the role of LED in promoting urban poverty alleviation in Mbabane town in Eswatini. I examined this based on the pro-market model and pro-poor model approach which are often used in understanding such a multifaceted scholarship. What was found was that LED enhances urban development by ensuring that local authorities are empowered and that they are good regulators in cities. This was found to promote pro-poor developments and to push for an active involvement of local people. Various authors have identified the challenges that most LED initiatives undergo (Nel, 2001; Tomlinson, 2003; Nel & Rogerson, 2004). In view of the fact that municipalities are strong drivers of development and that they are better positioned to help communities deal with poverty, developmental issues and unemployment, it became evident that LED projects and initiatives need to be maximized. Some central government bodies transfer some of their tasks relating to poverty and unemployment to the local government (Tomlinson, 2003).

LED is a policy that is designed to help curtail poverty and to entrust communities with the skills necessary to empower themselves holistically (World Bank, 2000). The process of LED includes the coming together of local and external bodies which can include the public sector, the private sector and the civil society to achieve a common understanding of the problems facing a specific locality and creating a shared vision and a distinct set of development objectives for its future (Nel, 2001). The forum that is in charge of collaborating these activities in Eswatini to fruition is the CLGF. It should be noted however, that Eswatini does not have a policy for LED yet but instead it has a guideline booklet that was compiled by the CLGF and published by the MHUD to help guide cities while the policy is still being formulated. It also draws from the NDS (1997) for Eswatini to carry out its functions.

The CLGF was founded in 1994, a period where most Commonwealth African countries were transitioning towards decentralization. The function of CLGF is that it intricately intertwines

national associations of local government, individual councils and ministries that are in charge of local government, as well as training and research institutions that have an interest in local government (Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance, 2008). There are three main roles that the CLGF have and these are: a) to promote and enforce local democracy and good governance, b) to promote the exchange of experiences and lastly, c) for capacity building (CJLG, 2008).

The CSO (2009) mentions the legislations, policies and strategies relevant to LED in Eswatini and portrays them of being the following:

- The constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland Act, No.001 of 2005, which states that the country will establish a sound and healthy economy and development;
- Urban Government Act, No 8 of 1969, which gives a framework that allows the administration of local authorities in towns;
- Regional Councils Order of 1978, which looks into the Tinkhundla system of government of Swaziland; the Tinkhundla and Regional Administration Bill (2014), which enables the Swaziland Government Decentralisation Policy,2005;
- NDP (2006), which gives direction to the government in the country and all the related agencies to prioritize basic services to the poor and to have these services in close proximity to where they reside;
- NDS,1997, which draws out the development vision for the country in the period between 1997-2022; and
- SPRSA, 2007, which decentralizes government institutions in order for communities to be empowered to look for developmental priorities (CSO 2009).

According to Eswatini's LED guidelines document that was published by the MHUD in the year 2013, the MTAD, and the SLGA, with support from CLGF, started a project that would use the LED approach to drive development through pilot studies that were launched in 3 local authorities, namely, Mbabane Municipal Council, Matsapha Town Council and Manzini Municipality. Pro-poor projects were the main focus of the approach and these included conducting training; providing outreach programmes for informal traders; having climate smart gardens for sustainable environmental management; and providing food security through the production of commercial products from recycling waste (MHUD, 2013).

The study examined the outcomes of the LED initiatives in Eswatini and in Mbabane town, since the inception of the said pilot study. In this chapter, the problem statement was presented, where we foregrounded the fundamental problem, which this study was seized with. Following this, the main research questions of the study were listed. Furthermore, the scope of the study was explained to set the parameters that this study was operating in. This chapter concludes by showing how the study was organized.

1.2 Problem statement

LED projects and initiatives are seen as vital in the process of job creation and poverty alleviation by raising the standard of living of residents living in poverty-stricken communities, and by improving the country's economic situation (Binns & Nel, 1999). In Eswatini, most towns are faced with the problem of urban poverty and a task has been put on local authorities to resolve this problem.

When looking through the Poverty and Equity Brief (2020), Eswatini as a country is said to have relatively high levels of poverty when viewed through its middle-income status. Furthermore, in the year 2016, the country's poverty rate was approximately fifty eight percent, which was down from sixty three percent in 2009, and sixty-nine percent in 2001 (PEB, 2020). When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world in 2019, Eswatini experienced a new multidimensional poverty which is still unfolding.

Mbabane municipality is one of the local authorities that have been tasked with facilitating LED pilot projects and initiatives as a response to the growing problem of urban poverty in Mbabane town. Some of these initiatives and projects include the establishment of backyard gardens, especially for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC); implementing of poverty reduction strategies; capacitating social centre volunteers on hygiene; implementing electricity distribution through PPP's; implementing a civic centre using PPP's as well as empowering adolescent girls and young women financially and psychologically to ensure a safe space for all (IDP, 2019).

The intention of this study was to examine the outcomes of the LED initiatives in Eswatini and in Mbabane town, since the inception of the CLGF programme, whose focus centers around elevating the standard of governance and giving satisfactory quality service delivery at local authorities.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of this research study was to examine whether LED efforts employed by the Central Government of Eswatini, in Mbabane, are producing desired outcomes of reducing poverty.

1.4 Research objectives

The research objectives in this study are as follows:

- a) To outline the nature of the LED discourse.
- b) To explain how LED can contribute to urban poverty alleviation in general and in Mbabane town.
- c) To examine whether LED contributes to urban poverty alleviation in Mbabane town.
- d) To propose recommendations and possible solutions to improve LED strategies for poverty alleviation in Mbabane town.

1.4.1 Key research questions

The key research questions in this study are as follows:

- a) What is the nature of the LED discourse?
- b) How does LED contribute to urban poverty alleviation in general and in Mbabane town?
- c) Does LED bolster urban poverty alleviation efforts in general and in Mbabane town?
- d) What can be done to improve poverty reduction in Mbabane town?

1.4.2 Research sub-questions

- a) What is LED?

- b) What are the guiding principles for defining LED?
- c) What approaches can be used to illustrate LED?
- d) What is the national and international context of LED currently?
- e) What is the legislative and policy context for LED in Eswatini?
- f) To what extent is the town of Mbabane poverty stricken?
- g) What can be done to reduce poverty in towns?
- h) How can you explain the relationship between poverty reduction and local economic development?

1.4.2.1 Importance of the study

There is very little existing literature on the status quo of LED in Eswatini so it was important to carry out this study. As a result of carrying out this study positive results were uncovered to bridge the gap in knowledge and experiences of LED in the country. The findings can further assist LED researchers, practitioners and government officials in improving its practice in Mbabane and also in Eswatini in particular.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study was carried out in Mbabane, Eswatini. Mbabane is the capital city in the Kingdom of Eswatini and it has a population of approximately 62 630 (CSO, 2020). It ranks 2nd in the country's population (population-hub, 2021). The city was founded by Mickey Wells during the late 1880s (IDP 2019-2024, p. 9). According to national demographic data, about fifty four percent of the town's population is under the age of twenty, which presents a relatively youthful population. It is situated in the North-West of Eswatini in the Hhohho region which is about twenty six kilometers from the nearest border gate with South Africa, and thirty eight kilometers away from Manzini, the country's hub (IDP, 2019-2014).

According to the HDR, the human development indicators for the different towns in Eswatini reveal an assortment of conflicting features (2020). Even though great strides have been made on infrastructure development for social services delivery, particularly in the health and education

sectors, there are still huge concerns about the quality and coverage of the services which are delivered in the different towns. Statistics show that the GDP in the country needs to grow to about five percent for it to have a positive and meaningful impact to its people. A lot of progress has been made in reducing poverty rates since then, with a ten percentage reduction in poverty rates between the year 2000 and 2017, from 69 percent to 58.9 percent (CSO, EHIES, 2016).

The background of Mbabane as the epicenter of the study is as follows:

a) Demographics

The population of Eswatini consists mostly of ethnic Swazis. The indigenous and first language is SiSwati and the second language is English. There is a small percentage of Zulu people as well as White Africans who are originally from British and African descent. Traditionally, emaSwati were herders and farmers but since the city's growth many people now work in the government space and in the urban area (O'Neill, 2021).

According to UN (2017), although the country has plentiful natural resources such as quarry stone, coal, gold and diamond deposits, it faces a lot of socio-economic challenges. Issues that are prevalent in the country include excessive hunting, soil degradation, overgrazing and limited supply of portable water.

b) Economy

According to the IDP for Mbabane (2019), the city of Mbabane's draw card is tourism and sugar exports. The city consists of light industries. Tourist attractions found in the city include a golf course, accommodation establishments, supermarkets, shops, restaurants and recreational clubs where people can go for night entertainment. The Mbabane market offers a different array of arts, crafts and vegetables. Heritage sites that are found in the town include Sibebe Rock (IDP, 2019).

The importance that the city of Mbabane has on the socio-economic, political and administrative landscape in Eswatini is tremendous. Mbabane is the country's capital and it is where

government ministries and departments are housed. In terms of development, this city is the only one that has seen a significant growth pattern when compared to other urban centres in the Kingdom and as a result of this many people have migrated from various parts of the country into Mbabane to seek jobs and better socio-economic services. There are many development efforts in the areas of social, economic, infrastructural and maintenance sectors within the city. The development approaches that the municipal council of Mbabane are employing are new and improved and these have ultimately led to the city's progress developmentally (MHUD, 2019).

c) Geography and climate

Mbabane typically experiences a high humidity most especially within summertime from November to March (Department of Meteorology, 2019). The IDP for Mbabane town states that the average humidity normally ranges above seventy-five percent and slightly below eighty-five percent and during this period the city experiences afternoon rains and sometimes thunderstorms when the temperatures are at record high (IDP, 2019).

To meet the research needs and time limits, a peri-urban community within Mbabane Town called Msunduza Township will be my main study. Msunduza has a population of about 16 000 inhabitants (MHUD, 2018).

Msunduza Township is characterized by a weak socio-economic status which include poverty, unemployment, temporary settlements and the increase of stress as a result of peri-urban living (Koivisto 2005). Msunduza (in Mbabane) is situated three kilometers from the centre of the city (Ndlela, 2005). Msunduza is the biggest and the most crowded informal settlement in Mbabane. It is where most urban people reside and it falls within a low-income category (World Bank, 2005). The area has a lot of people that are faced with poverty and unemployment, especially amongst the youth (The World Bank AFTU 2002).

1.6 Clarification of terms

a) Local Economic Development (LED)

There are many definitions of LED but for the purpose of this research study it can best be described as possible outcomes that are established on local dynamism and are pushed by local stakeholders. LED entails finding and utilizing locally sourced resources, suggestions and expertise to improve the development and expansion of the economy (Mufamadi, 2000). Another way that LED can be defined is that it is a participative and people-centred process that encourages and facilitates partnerships between local stakeholders, while allowing for a variety of arrangements and execution of strategies, which are more focused on local assets, with the final intention of generating reasonable jobs and continual economic pursuits (Canzanelli, 2001).

b) Urban Poverty

There are two ways which urban poverty is normally defined. The first way is that it is defined as an absolute quality which is established on a minutest amount of remuneration that is needed to maintain a good and sustainably comfortable life and the second way to define urban poverty is as a relative standard which is established on a set based on the average standard of residing in a country (McDonald & McMillen, 2008).

c) Decentralization

There is no common definition of decentralization as it means many different things to many people. According to the UN (1999), one way to describe decentralization is as the way of restructuring an entity so that jurisdiction is shared amongst areas of governance at all levels with relevance to proposition of inferiority, consequently growing the standard of the governance system, which could include growing individuals chances for inclusion in decision making; helping in moulding local people's dimensions and growing the rate at which government responds to local people's problems while ensuring that government is transparent and accountable. Decentralization is a multiplex subject which involves many geographical features and social spheres. The geographical features include national, international, subnational, and local spheres. The actors normally include government, the private sector and civil society. Cohen and Peterson (1999) identified six forms of decentralization and these include; forms on the basis of history of the sources; provincial and practical decentralization; problem and valued-centred structures; service delivery structures; single nation experience structures and objective based structures.

1.7 Methodology

To extract a superior comprehension of the relationship between LED and poverty alleviation in Mbabane town, a qualitative inquiry and analysis seemed appropriate for this study. The qualitative research approach incorporated the use of qualitative data such as “literature review, case study, documents and observation in order to understand a social phenomenon” (Burns 1997, p. 2). The methodological analysis of the research shows the ways, procedure, instruments, and systems used in managing the research design (Mouton, 2002). A qualitative approach was best suited for this study as it helped in understanding the context of the LED programme in Eswatini as an emerging scholarship and it also provided us with insights on new issues on LED and helped in understanding the complexity of connections and relationships that can be found between beneficiaries, the LED programme and the different organizations involved in the process.

Taking into account that the study is exploratory in nature, the data unveiled itself in this qualitative study. According to Nel (1999), LED initiatives in particular, need to evaluate LED programmes by focusing on social objectives and to see if they are met. Furthermore, the research methods need to allow the objective assessment of both economic and social achievements. It is important to also note that social advancements such as empowerment need more than just quantitative measurements as understanding such complex topics requires an appropriate assessment method which in this case is a qualitative approach (Nel, 1999).

The beneficiaries from the LED programme were better suited to share their perspectives and experiences on the LED programme and this helped to explain the nuances of the LED programme and how it has rolled out, from the perspective of those whom were involved in the project.

This study took a qualitative approach and this helped with understanding the social and economic factors that could be understood through quantification.

1.8 Limitations of the study

Limitations to the study included being in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic when I was expected to gather data which made face-to-face interviews difficult to carry out. I managed to overcome this limitation by ensuring social distancing and wearing a mask for face-to-face

interviews. For those respondents that had been directly or indirectly affected by Covid-19, provisions for telephonic interviews were made at a set time and date.

It took approximately four months to have a positive response from government officials with regards to securing interviews. This prolonged the time period in which I had hoped to have collected data by. To overcome this challenge I asked for an extension from my supervisor for submitting my thesis draft.

The last challenge was the anticipation from participants to receive compensation for participation in the study even though it was clearly stated before the interviews took place that there would be no compensation for doing such. To overcome this limitation, I explained that the data that was gathered from the study could possibly help the steering bodies for LED in Eswatini meet their holistic needs better for the future.

1.9 Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations that I carried out in this research was that I meticulously elucidated to the respondents about the aim of the research. I ensured that the respondents were informed about how the findings achieved from the study would be communicated and stored. In addition to this, respondents were told that any participation in the study whether telephonic or face-to-face was voluntary and that they could stop participating at any stage of the data gathering process if they wished to do so, without any penalties. Respondents were given consent forms to fill out and sign and they were also told that their identities would remain anonymous. Pseudonyms were used for all respondents within the study and for those that were challenging to disguise, respondents were told that their identities would be difficult to do so and that pseudonyms would still be used. This proved difficult especially for the civil society within the MHUD such as the Senior Officer in charge of LED and the Officer in charge of LED within the CLGF for Eswatini. To overcome this challenge, I explained to respondents that the data would remain encrypted and confidential and that it would be restricted to the researcher only and would only be used to address the research aims and objectives. All respondents were asked to sign consent forms to participate in the study. All data that was gathered from the study was kept locked in files that were protected for safekeeping to ensure protection from individuals or institutions that may have an interest in it.

The study at all times tried to ensure that it did not deviate from the study's research aims and objectives.

1.10 Chapter layout

Chapter One: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This chapter initiated the research problem and broached the problem statement, the aim of the research, the key research questions as well as the research sub-questions. It further highlighted the importance of carrying out this study and showed the parameters in scope which the study followed. Lastly, terms that were frequently used in the study were defined.

Chapter Two: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter 2 provided the literature review of LED as well as gave a critical analysis of the discourse for the reader. Various definitions, principles, stages, approaches and strategies of LED were presented. The relevant global and local research focused on LED and was explored and compared to other best practices globally.

Chapter Three: LED IN ESWATINI

Chapter 3 painted a picture of the general outlook of LED in the Kingdom of Eswatini and also presented the different sectors which steer it. The current legislation in the country with regards to development was presented. The case study area was also introduced in detail in this chapter.

Chapter Four: METHODOLOGY

This chapter laid out and described the research process. The research methodology that was used in this study was described and justification for its use was provided. This chapter further foregrounded the case study method, selected the design and it described how sampling and interview selection was done. Chapter 4 concluded by discussing validity and reliability in qualitative research and it portrayed how ethical clearance was carried out.

Chapter Five: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Chapter 5 provides the findings that were captured from the study. The findings are then analysed and explained.

Chapter Six: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provided the summary of the captured and analysed data. It also takes the reader through the collective and final conclusions and recommendations. It ends by showing how this study has contributed to the gap in LED knowledge in Eswatini.

2. CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I presented the literature review on LED. This provided a general picture of the LED discourse for the reader. The various views and competing conceptions of LED were also presented here. LED was defined and the principles that have helped cement it were laid out. The intention of the literature review is both to ascertain the extent of relevant global and local research focus on the topic under study and to gauge the extent to which local practice either adheres to or deviates from best practice globally. I equally take the approach, in my critical review of the literature, that all theoretical assertions or positions remain as such until their relevance to and applicability to the Eswatini research context are either established or disproved by the data collected.

2.2 Understanding LED

I am of the view that for LED to be understood clearly in a locality or city, it has to be examined from many different facets as it is cross cutting. The case is no different for LED in Eswatini. There are two main models that are often used by most development advocates to explain local development and these models are known as the pro-poor growth (pro-market) model and the pro-poor model. These models are discussed in depth later on in this section. It is imperative however, to comprehend LED in the broader sense before delving into the specifics of these models. This gives the reader a sense of the wider contestations and debates that arise pertaining to understanding the development sector.

Most literature on the development discourse point to the direction that LED is a tricky and contested concept and that it is oftentimes arduous to define (Syrett & Silver 2001; Meyer-Stamer

2003). Zaaijer and Sara explain LED as the procedure where local governments and/or grass roots groups take charge and manage their own assets and form collaborations with the private sector, or even amongst themselves, to create employment and to motivate an economic upswing in their locality (Zaaijer & Sara 2009). The World Bank describes LED as the different stages that are undergone by the public sector, the business sector and the non-governmental sectors when they come together to build better conditions for economic upswings and employment generation in a locality so that there is an improved quality of life for all residents within the area (World Bank 2000).

The definition of LED can also be known as the procedure where residents or organizations in localities utilize their special resources to bring about change in the area to benefit most of the community members (Nel & Humphrys, 1999). LED is the process where collaborations are formed amongst the local authorities, the private sector and the local community and where they can manage their local and external resources and use it to get the economy stimulated (Hindson & Meyer-Stamer 2007). The Millennium Development Goals primary objective is to eradicate poverty and its secondary or immediate goal is economic growth (Hindson & Meyer-Stamer 2007).

The focus of LED is to generate jobs for the welfare of all local inhabitants, to decrease poverty, appropriate resources and increase chances for betterment of local residents in local areas (DPLG, 2000). LED that is implemented from the municipality level needs comprehensive and realistic goals, strategies and effective partnerships between actors. Canzanelli (2001) set out criteria that he considered vital in the attempt towards facilitating effective LED and poverty alleviation and economic growth, which are namely: participation, endogenous resources, aiding vulnerable groups and sustainability. These parameters are discussed in more detail below:

- a) Participation- participation in local areas of developing countries need to be initiated first and the parties involved have to share a common vision and have similar goals for their local area. It is however, not an easy task to do as there has to be a lot of dialogue that is exchanged between parties which takes up too much time and positive results are not always guaranteed. The enormousness of the area plays a critical role in determining if the parties involved share the same vision and goals. The local area should be vast enough to

cover a suitable number of resources and small enough for a LED foundation to be formed using a bottom-up participated approach. Future dialogue is required for institutional and social sustainability (Canzanelli 2001).

- b) Endogenous resources- the way that LED has to be tackled is to manipulate the development of communities' internal resources (Canzanelli 2001). A positive response to exploiting the localities internal resources will lead to effectiveness of the involvement (Canzanelli 2001).
- c) Ample support to groups that are vulnerable- the practices of LED should be supportive of social and vulnerable people (Canzanelli 2001). The UNDP HDR highlights that development practices ought to be established on the general notion of human advancement (UNDP 2006). The activities of the LED approach should entail gaining access to economic activities, having an environment that is bio diverse and sustainable and the local district should provide decent work (ILO 2001).
- d) They should be sustainable- LED activities should not take way from the economic environment but should rather boost economic goals for the future (Musakwa 2008). Canzanelli voices that LED needs to aim to be financially, socially, institutionally and environmentally sustainable (2001). The meaning of financial resilience means that LED practices needs to be able to independently pay for expenses that they may incur and not to be dependent on donor fund agencies (Canzanelli 2001). Canzanelli and Dichter (2001) define social sustainability in LED activities as local actors within the community coming together and sharing a similar vision for their developments in the future. Institutional sustainability in LED activities implies that all economic activities will create a lot of jobs and still adopt sustainable practices and clean technologies (ILO 2019a).

In addition to the parameters that help shape the effectiveness of LED efforts are certain principles. Meyer-Stamer (2003) lists the guiding principles as follows:

- a) The first guiding principle is that LED should have the effect of creating opportune factors in a location. These opportune factors can include having a conducive environment for business to prosper by improving infrastructure, ensuring that workers are capacitated in the form of training and by making sure that local administrators have proper business acumen and efficiency when conducting business (Meyer-Stamer 2003).
- b) The second guiding principle identified by Meyer-Stamer is that LED needs to have the element of enhancing and promoting businesses, particularly those that are on the start-up phase (2003). Businesses are supposed to have a certain synergy to them where they work together as opposed to being in competition with each other (Meyer-Stamer 2003).
- c) The third principle which was identified for effective LED was that local resources have to be proactively identified to improve the process and that seasoned business people be mentors and coaches to emerging entrepreneurs or startup business people (Meyer-Stamer 2003).
- d) The last principle says that LED should strive to ensure that markets found locally work better and more efficiently. Furthermore, it needs to celebrate and improve spaces that are created in such a way that there is a healthy balance and synergy that matches supply and demand. It needs to also promote emerging business opportunities (Meyer-Stamer 2003).

Another set of guiding principles that could expand the understanding of the LED policy framework can be taken from looking at South Africa as a case where within the duration of time between 2005 and 2007 an LED policy framework was put together is by observing work by Rogerson (2009). This LED framework was put together for SA and had the government remove itself from the responsibility of spearheading LED. Its main thrust is to promote local economies to be included when making big decisions regarding local opportunities and resources. It was brought forward within the 2002 Draft LED policy document. The national policy objectives for the South African LED Framework and guidelines are as follows:

- a) The government had to use a developmental approach to make hard decisions in their role of shaping the economy of South Africa's destiny.

- b) It was tasked with creating space that captured most economic and social aspects of the local area to ensure that employment could be created and responsibility ensure by the local government.
- c) It pointed out that for competitive advantages to be accomplished in a country, there had to be inward investments.
- d) Locally owned spaces in South Africa had to develop and promote robust economies that were drawn from its NSDP.
- e) It recognizes that what makes the heart of an area is its social businesses and cooperatives and partnerships to ensure that there is a good and inclusive local economy.
- f) It puts the people that work first by making them the greatest resource in traits of good leadership, skills, creativity and local programmes and initiatives. (DPLG 2006)

As stated earlier, it must be noted that LED has different approaches or models. We discuss these in the section below. However, in the case of Eswatini, it should be noted that there is no existing policy for LED currently, but there are a set of guiding principles from a booklet that was created in 2017 using various stakeholders as well as borrowing from different case studies in other parts of the world. Most of the guiding principles borrow from what has been aforementioned in this section, especially South Africa. It is not surprising though as South Africa is a neighboring country to Eswatini and it shares most of its economic and social composition. Eswatini draws from the South African experience in the sense that it too has realized the importance of stakeholder participation for effective local development and also the importance of having skilled and unskilled laborers who are constantly given training to up skill themselves. This strengthens the human capital needs to be capacitated for good leadership and skills.

2.3 Pro-Market model

This model is known to local and regional economic development as the pro-growth approach or smokestack chasing approach. Smokestack chasing is the practice of drawing in potential employers with competitive incitement packages (Murphy, 2013). Wassal and Hellman describe it as the act when states and local governments utilize taxes and lucrative incentives to lure blue

collar positions to its districts or local areas (1985). Other writers such as Rodrigues-Pose and Tijmstra (2005) and Blackely (2002) explain this model as the way in which investors are given good packages such as cheap land, reduced rates, and good tax incentives to lure them in for financial rewards.

The simplest way to explain this approach is that it focuses on large scale projects. In the case of Mbabane town this can refer to the development of their transport system and infrastructure improvement which is discussed in more detail in chapter three. It can also refer to Mbabane’s small medium and micro enterprise plan that is within its LED strategy that focuses on stimulating the establishment, growth and sustainability of local businesses to make sure that there is promotion and development of SMMEs towards job creation (MCLEDS, 2019).

Blackely (2002) highlights that incentive based competitions have been the main economic development strategy in the USA cities in the time of 1950s to 1960s. This also borrows from the pro-market model. It is known that demand and supply policies can first be identified in developed countries such as Canada, Europe and the United States of America as early as the 1960’s and can be categorized into three development waves which depict the evolution of the smokestack chasing model. These development waves entail the first wave of development which occurred in the period between the 1960s to the 1980s; the second wave of development which occurred during the 1990s and the third wave of development which occurred from the mid-1990s to present (World Bank, 2004). This is shown in the Table 1 below:

Table 1: Evolution of the smokestack chasing model: from 1960s to present.

Development wave	Focus	Tools
1st wave: 1960s to early 1980s	The 1 st wave was based on:	The way this was achieved was through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enormous grants.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrated on investing in mobile manufacturing and acquiring foreign investment • Concentrated on investing hard infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loan schemes that are subsidized which propel inward investing manufacturers. • Tax breaks • Hard infrastructure that has been subsidized.
2nd wave: 1980s to mid-1990s	<p>The 2nd wave was based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing and maintaining already existing local businesses. • Focused on targeting specific sectors from different geographic areas. 	<p>The way this was achieved was through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying directly to individual businesses. • Offering technical support • Helping businesses that are just starting. • Having hard and soft investments.
3rd wave: late 1990s to present	<p>The 3rd wave concentrated on the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing soft infrastructure investments. • PPPs • Forging relationships with private and public sector. • Local towns become more competitive as inward investments increase. 	<p>Achieving this was done through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a more holistic approach to local businesses. • Having a more conducive investment climate. • Increased networking and collaboration. • Focusing on workforce development and education • Supporting cluster growth through inward investments. • Quality of life has become an important factor.

Source: World Bank, 2004

It is Bond's (2002) view that this approach to the smokestack chasing paradigm and LED is full filled by competitive markets, efficient urban governance, reducing the cost of living in localities, reducing taxes, having good public-private relations and having skilled human resources through capacitation trainings so that new investors can enter the district (Bond 2002). According to Patterson (2008), this pro-market approach to LED has the element of trying to engage international economic bodies to invest in localities so that these areas may have better competitive advantages.

The first and second developmental waves that depict the evolution of smokestack chasing in **Table 1** show that progression of development during those times centered on investing in hard infrastructure as well as supporting start-up businesses. Bergman (2017) argues that this was the way in which entrepreneurial states were born (2017). If the reader takes a closer look at the third wave of development, he/she can see that there was more emphasis that was drawn to collaborating

new or already existing private groups into regional development efforts. This assertion is supported by Bradshaw and Blakely (1999) where they say that regional development was focused mainly on forming new firms and advocating for entrepreneurship (Bradshaw & Blakely 1999).

As stated earlier in the beginning of this chapter, Mbabane city has an LED strategy that focuses on city development, SMMEs, advocating for sustainable local businesses, human capital, transport system and infrastructure. It can be said that it suitably draws from this paradigm of smoke stack chasing.

Recent studies on LED are also increasingly pointing towards government's development management planning to shift from LED to RED, also called R-LED, which is also underscored by the smokestack chasing model. A commonly used definition for RED is that it is the "planning and application of economic processes and resources available to a region that results in the sustainable development of, and desired outcomes for, a region" (Stimson, Stough et al., 2006, p. 6). According to Clark and Gaile there is a forth industrial wave which is slightly different from the first three waves as it focuses mainly on amalgamating the local economy into the globalized market while ensuring that human capital is developed and that there is an increase between communications (Clark & Gaile 1998). This view of RED is mainly witnessed in the current North American and European countries.

According to Bergman (2017), RED can be pursued by using five strategy rubrics which can be used intercreatively or in single form. These rubrics include the following:

- a) Getting investments directly in regional industries-regions that are faced with loss in population as well as employment loss are the ones who want to attract the most external investment in local business and industry (Ilvento & Loveridge 2000).
- b) Making the regional economy clustered- regional or industrial clusters are when a group of industry firms gain favourable benefits as a result of being close together in proximity or even to other connections (Bergman 2017).
- c) Restructuring the regional industrial base- some regions start showing a good industry mix of enterprise types which is normally unplanned and occurs as a response to various past influences. These industries are usually then faced with many dissatisfactions with

production and income levels from the industry mix which results in regions trying to move toward preferred industries (Bergman 2017).

- d) Ensuring that the regional economy is stabilized- stabilizing or anchoring regional employers such as having corporate headquarters, are very important anchors during times of recurring turmoil and over longer periods of time, which act as a buffer from losses of employment and supply-chain purchases from local vendors. RED planners contribute to the regional prosperity by being alert to the role of spatially-bound anchors that adapt to periodic pressures (Taylor & Luter, 2013).
- e) Sustaining the regional economy- sustaining regional economies is no easy task as even large and prosperous metropolitan regions can experience difficulties (Bergman 2017).

Pennink (2014) observed that RED pushed for the development of leadership and entrepreneurship but that these efforts often overlooked the communities that lived in the peripheries of those regions and that these communities didn't effectively gain the economic benefits. This observation was also seen during the collection of my data for this study. I found that the community of Msunduzi which is located in Mbabane town had more informal business benefits as opposed to tangible and significant formal economic benefits. This showed that in Eswatini LED efforts were mixed or rather, had a much more hybrid setup that comprised of the pro-poor model and the pro-market model and that they still had a long way to go in terms of developing R-LED. These findings will be discussed in more detail in chapter three. According to Jessop (2013), the makeup of R-LED is such that it has the power to form new inequalities where if there is a significant increase in money or wealth in one locality, there are people within the same locality that will suffer or rather, not gain similar benefits.

Plaatjie (2019) explains that there are problems that often arise in regionalist thinking with regard to LED planning and development. This is especially seen in areas that have metropolitan municipalities which are viewed as the centres that have global capitalist flows (Plaatjie 2019). He argues that the reason that this happens is because normally these metropolitan municipalities focus on national macro-economic development strategies. This is often the case in Mbabane town as well as its houses on all the government ministries in the country, and as a result focuses on more macro-economic development projects as opposed to more informal economic development

that would effectively target poverty alleviation in communities found within the peripheries of the city. This leaves out poor communities from being integrated effectively in the LED programmes and initiatives. These initiatives are discussed in more detail in the coming chapters.

2.4 Pro-poor growth model

According to the Department for International Development (DFID), UN, OECD and various other international organisations, ‘pro-poor growth’ is defined as economic growth that is good for or is beneficial to the poor (DFID, 2004; UN 2000; OECD 2001). The LED strategies that are used in this model capitalize on sustainable approaches which push for poverty alleviation or reduction over the interest of corporate desires or interests. It has been said that the pro-poor growth approach has more progressive elements when compared to the pro-growth approach (Bond 2002).

The pro-poor growth model borrows from the dependency and Marxist theories in that these theories have very little value unless they are applied and help alleviate poverty by improving the lives of people (Todaro 2000). The dependency theory is a paradigm or school of thought that is often used in social science studies which try to comprehend underdevelopment in localities and how these hurdles of underdevelopment can be overcome. For the purpose of this research study, dependency can be described as a social condition inside a country or locality, whereby the real needs of its people are happy with the proportional or rational use of its natural resources and systems to benefit all of them (Reyes 2001)

Marxism is more of a political and economic theory that came about from Karl Marx. It follows a school of thought that removes private ownership of assets and moving towards providing work and subsistence for all people of all classes (Marx 1975). Its definition according to Lewis is that “Marxism is the highest development of humanism. It is the form in which the age-long contradiction between human advance and human subjection is resolved, it is the last rebellion of the oppressed, and the only one in which success is possible. It takes its origin from the rebellion of man against inhuman conditions and its single aim is the recovery of man’s lost humanity. This is the very essence of humanism and Marxism as humanism in its contemporary form. (Lewis 1976).

The synergy that can be captured from these two theories is what then makes the pro-poor growth model possible. The main aspects being that it is community based and all inclusive in its sharing of local resources which ultimately reduce poverty collectively. In the case of Mbabane town, the communities found within its periphery benefit from projects from a recycling centre, climate smart gardens, capacitation on commercial production as well as how to produce and package compost. These projects can be viewed as pro-poor from their genealogy. Furthermore, the facilitation of skills training entities in Mbabane for local community members is also another method that can be seen from the pro-poor growth LED approach (Mbabane City's Local Economic Development Strategy 2019-2024).

One of the main drivers of the dependency theory that was mentioned earlier was Raul Prebisch. According to him, a conducive environment for a country's development to prosper, the following conditions are necessary:

- a) It is necessary to be in charge of the monetary exchange rate and to place importance on fiscal policies as opposed to monetary policies;
- b) A country needs to promote a more effective government role with regard to national development;
- c) There has to be a plan of action of investments within the country which gives a superior role to national capitals;
- d) The country has to allow the opening of capital from outside the country following priorities that are already established in the country's national plans for development;
- e) It has to promote a more efficacious internal demand in terms of domestic markets as a base to reintroduce the industrialization process;
- f) There has to be a need to create bigger internal demand by increasing the wages and salaries of workers which will have a positive ripple effect in the internal markets;
- g) There has to be a wide coverage of social services from the government, most especially in sectors that are poverty stricken in order to create conditions for these sectors to be more competitive;
- h) There needs to be a development of national strategies that are formulated with reference to the model of import substitution, protecting national production by establishing quotas and tariffs on external market (Reyes 2001a).

Sen (1993) states that LED should try and ensure that it focuses on preservation of people by increasing their standard of living. According to Sen, for development to occur effectively it has to promote freedom and discourage poverty and poor economic opportunities as well as upgrade and develop public facilities such as social care and health so that they can be used by all (Sen 1999). In this approach, there is a lot of importance that should be placed on communities and their organisations with regard to participation in planning, monitoring and implementation of new developments as this is one of the ways in which developments are likely to be beneficial (Sen 1999).

When reviewing the Mbabane City's Local Economic Development Strategy for 2019 to 2024, it is evident that Mbabane town in Eswatini is underpinned by mostly the pro-poor growth model. It has five (5) thrusts which include public private partnerships, city industries development, SMME's development, human resource development, transport system development and infrastructure improvement. These are discussed in more detail in chapter three.

2.5 Development and LED situation in Sub-Saharan Africa

The trends in SSA with regards to economic, social, political and cultural challenges reveal themselves to be actively similar to how trade evolved; the way urbanization occurred; how territorial imbalances occurred; as well as how decentralization qualities in the rest of the globalized world have also happened (Rodriguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2005). SSA is no different to what previous debates have claimed.

The main difference where Africa is startlingly different when compared to other continents is in its economic performance. In other continents around the world, urbanization is happening so fast and trade deals are offering a lot of economic growth. In SSA however, economic growth is very sluggish and slow in that it has some cases that are stagnant since the mid-nineteen seventies (1970s) (Rodriguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2005). SSA has disparities in trade, urbanization, investment and decentralization designs. These disparities have had the effect of creating miscellaneous territorial organizations which is a reality that poses to threaten the returns of general development policies for many countries within SSA (Rodriguez-Pose & Tijmstra 2005).

In SSA, LED has gained traction in recent years and it has attracted a lot of debate (Rogerson, 1995; Meyer-Stamer, 1999; Zaaier & Sara, 1993). The LED paradigm in essence has generated a lot of debate particularly on the subject of deciding if the traditional types of local strategies that are applied in SSA are beneficial. The benefits looked at are in the areas of: a) if they are working; b) if they can create economic development that is pro-poor. Pro-poor economic development in this context is the structured and systematic mode of capital accumulation that happens in a particular locality (Bond 2000). What has been noted is that the political and economic reforms that have occurred in developing countries is that they have had a renewed interest in decentralization policies as well as the implementation of these policies for LED to grow (Edralin, 1996). It is believed that strategically planned LED may present a more accepting or flexible approach to increase economic growth to trigger poverty reduction all across SSA (Binns & Nel, 1999). Rodriguez-pose and Tijnstra however also note that the grounds that suggest that SSA presents different structural difficulties from the rest of the world is somewhat flawed as other developing countries around the world also experience similar socio-economic processes (Rodriguez-pose & Tijnstra, 2005).

It is believed that strategically planned LED may present a more accepting or flexible approach to increase economic growth and trigger poverty reduction all across SSA (Binns & Nel 1999).

As stated earlier, LED approaches in SSA can be sectioned into three emerging types which are locality development, community economic development and enterprise development (Helmsing 2003). South Africa, Uganda, Malawi and Eswatini have implemented LED projects which include beekeeping, tourism businesses, multi-purpose community centres and climate smart gardens which are unique to their specific situation (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2010; Enzama, 2008; Edoun & Jahed, 2009).

Rodriguez-Pose and Tijnstra (2005) state that there are three enabling environments for local authorities to beam and they include economic hardware, economic software and organizational capacity and the existence of these environmental factors lead to success in LED projects and initiatives. Rodriguez-Pose and Timstra (2005) also say that LED that is strategically planned can provide a good mix of differing strategies to traditional settings especially when dealing with complex issues such as poverty and low economic growth. This is notwithstanding the fact that in

most developing countries, LED is still at its early stages. The population in the African continent is approximately nine hundred million and most of this population is subject to a form of administration in terms of local government (Thornhill 2010).

The most important thing that cities in SSA can do to strengthen LED is to upgrade and improve the business sphere and the private sector. This notion is reinforced by (Eifert et al., 2008) where he states that the reason African countries fall behind on the quality of the business environments' is because the regulatory environments are not business- friendly (Bannock & Darroll, 2007). In addition to this point, African cities often lag behind because of corruption, crime and weak governance as well as inadequate infrastructure which are some of the disadvantages of urban center agglomeration (Kessides, 2007).

LED gained momentum in Africa from the 1990s and most local governments and communities concentrated on LED projects and initiatives to facilitate economic growth and to promote the welfare and developments in local communities (UNCDF 2007; Reddy & Wallis 2011). The national government is mandated to give direction to the socio-economic development of regions and localities, and in the past, most national governments in the context of Africa did not have specific LED development policies to enable effective LED strategies (UNCDF 2007). Generally, it is believed that the public sector is supposed to enable economic development through having developments in infrastructure and yet the reality of it is that the local private sector facilitates growth and normally addresses the issues surrounding poverty in localities. LED has given positive results in a lot of African countries who have recently undergone changes such as restructuring, decentralization, and democratization. In Africa, countries such as South Africa, Uganda, Malawi and Senegal have been involved in LED at sub-national levels in government (Oduro-Ofori, 2011).

Implementing LED in some states in the African continent has come with its own set of challenges as some writers have noted (Khumalo 2015; Nyawo & Mubangizi 2015; Akudugu 2013). These challenges include the following:

- Having inadequate resources;
- Finding qualified personnel;

- Getting transport to and from work can be expensive as rent can be higher in most areas around urban areas;
- Poor information systems;
- Unsatisfactory and sparse systematic feedback;
- Responsibilities which are not clearly cut and defined;
- Having an absence of poverty reduction targets which may stall progress;
- Changing LED initiatives and projects;

In the case of South Africa, which is a neighboring country to Eswatini, it is interesting to note that even though there are sanctions that are shown in their Local Government Municipal System Act, 32 of 2000, the South African local government authorities hardly assess their LED implementation steps (Malefane 2009). This has resulted in numerous problems and one of them being that of not having sufficient records and documentation results. This makes it hard to correct mistakes and take appropriate measures. It is argued that for LED to be the most effective, it is supposed to intercut social, economic, natural, physical, and many other needs in a municipal area (Malefane, 2009). Other factors that become a blockage when it comes to implementing LED initiatives in South Africa include: incapacity or shortage of skilled personnel (Phago, 2005); weak administrative systems and corruption (Rose- Ackerman, 2004); insufficient infrastructure (Phago, 2005, ; Tsheola & Mokgokong 2012). The Eswatini system is very similar in these aspects in that some municipal towns still don't have telecommunication networks that are aligned with the current global trends and that some of the towns also have poor roads which have potholes. Research on LED in South Africa expanded as a result of pragmatic considerations as answers were being sought with regards to the economic restructuring issues in declining localities (Rogerson, 2000; Nel & Rogerson, 2005b). The jury is still out on if this has been achieved due to contesting views and results.

SSA has its own realities and experiences, but its overall feel is that it is open to trade, urbanization and decentralization, which other countries from other developing countries in Africa experience. This coupled with the fact that there is an increase in international trade and investment and a rising culture of agglomeration and urbanization of economic activity around the world, gives hope that SSA will catch up to the rest of the world soon if great care is taken when evaluating the local

situation before creating suitable LED strategies (Rodriguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2005). For the Eswatini context, particularly in Mbabane, it seems that there is a mixture of the pro-market approach as well as the pro-poor approach to their strategies after reviewing their initiatives for their town. In Mbabane town, the municipality applies business models and market forces to address development through activities such as recycling and entrepreneurship activities that connect with low-income people as customers, and give them the products and services that they can afford. They also try to make community members to be more engaged as business associates as either suppliers, agents or distributors and to provide them with improved incomes. Furthermore, the municipality aims to improve informal settlements and livelihoods of people living within the city by providing them with clean and safe sanitation and water. Vulnerable groups within the town are identified and appropriate programmes are put together for them. These strategies manifest themselves in both pro-market and pro-poor approaches.

2.6 LED Initiatives in SSA

According to Helmsing (2003), there are three LED initiatives in SSA. They include community based economic development; enterprise development; and locality development. These will be discussed in more detail below.

a) **Community economic development**

This is development that occurs internally where the aim is to form a good economic foundation for development and empowerment in the local economy (Helmsing 2003). Community based economic development can be defined as a process where people from a local area or community come together to build organizations and partnerships that merge so that there is a common goal of attaining profitable businesses with other interests and values (Helmsing 2003). The purpose of community based economic development is: to encourage a sense of pride and community camaraderie; to encourage self-actualization and empowerment; to entice people to consider becoming self-employed; to enhance the living conditions of local people living in settlements and finally, to stimulate public and community services (Helmsing 2003).

The components of community based development strategies as identified by (Helmsing, 2003; WHO 2003; Musakwa 2008) are to establish local safety nets, improve basic housing and settlement, and commit to basic service delivery and to stimulate the economy.

Formulating local safety nets is important for LED and it entails helping national authorities and the civil society to decrease inequalities in poverty through intersected collaboration (Musakwa, 2008; WHO, 2003). These safety nets can include creating day care centres, ensuring that there are adequate credit and savings group clubs and lastly, having enough security within local areas. Other safety nets include setting up improved housing and settlement patterns. This can be achieved only if there is adequate infrastructure available to the local district. These infrastructures and services can include having clean water, having enough electricity as well as having a good sewage pipe system in place (Musakwa, 2008). Other safety nets that have been identified by the UN HABITAT (2000), Helmsing 2003 and Musakwa 2008, include having basic service delivery. Basic service delivery can include privatization. This can help stimulate the local economy (Musakwa, 2008). A good country to make an example of in this instance would be Ghana. In Ghana, there are fifty one SME businesses that have been engaged and contracted to build and provide public sanitation (Helmsing 2003). LED in this regard can be beneficial through subcontracting services which can be a new norm for enterprises even in Eswatini.

Another way to stimulate the economy in urban areas in Eswatini would be to strengthen community programmes. This can be done through ensuring that barriers to entry are removed and that the informal sector given more importance and gravitas (Musakwa 2008). These programmes can include providing credit loans to upcoming business start-ups, providing training to business owners, and training small and medium enterprises as contractors of basic service delivery and technical assistance (Helmsing 2001). These initiatives could help train workers who were previously unemployable to become a part of a work force.

b) Enterprise Development

Enterprise development focuses mainly on those businesses which concentrate on the export market nationally or internationally (Helmsing 2001; Schmitz 1995). These exporting industries

usually conglomerate and this gives them several advantages and benefits (Schmitz 1998). Some of these benefits include: support for each other as firms; better lobbying for education and training which expands the capacity to learn and; saving on costs of transactions as the firms are next to each other in distance (Helmsing 2003).

In South Africa, the success of their enterprise development is observed in having a good enterprise policy that embraces guiding the economy in the direction of a stable environment that produces economic growth and increases the nation's economic competitiveness. This is steered by the Tourism Empowerment Council of South Africa. According to the development planning division working paper series no. 18 (2011), the elements that make up enterprise development include market development, providing commercial business services as well as social enterprises. Enterprise development also embraces finance and entrepreneurship development, training SMMEs on investment and growth as well as offering business skills development by means of training SMMEs on investment and growth as well as offering business skills development by means of training, coaching and mentoring (DBSA, 2011).

This sector depicts itself in the pro-growth model as well as the pro-poor model for both South Africa and Eswatini. It would be safe to assume that it draws from a hybrid approach to development.

c) Locality development

Helmsing (2003) argues that for locality development to occur, adequate infrastructure and socio-economic services which are granted only through adequate capital and proper local development planning need to be present (Helmsing 2003). Furthermore, there needs to be a balance in physical, economic and social overhead capital within the locality. Meyer- Stamer says that there should be minimal negative social effects such as pollution and decreased congestion and more positive effects such as an agglomeration of economies (Meyer-Stamer 2005).

The components of locality development need to show themselves in LED that is participatory (Helmsing 2003). Furthermore, there should be sufficient physical planning, development control,

urban planning, design and infrastructure coupled with socio-economic overhead capital (Meyer-Stamer, 2005). LED that is participatory in nature is often difficult as it is multifaceted and has multiple sectors (Helmsing 2003). It is for this reason that the local authority that is in charge of LED has to ensure coordination of development through provision of adequate information, consultations and broad based procedures. A city that takes part in participatory planning well in my view is that of Cape Town in South Africa. This city considers all sectors when planning for its projects and even Pieterse and Parnell (1999) agree with this view point.

Tools that can help with physical planning and development for LED include putting together planning controls and zoning as highlighted by Helmsing (2003). It is also very important to consider proper urban planning and design when planning urban centres and when there is an upgrade of commercial streets and physical premises. According to Helmsing, economic performance is then likely to improve (2003). This is known as “townscaping”. It refers to the act of ensuring that the improvements in a town are constantly done to make them more palatable to residents in the locality and also to future investors (Helmsing 2003).

Investors are more likely to be attracted to an area that has sufficient infrastructure as noted by Musakwa (2008). The availability of infrastructure decreases investment costs and increases profits (Helmsing 2003). Subcontracting basic services to smaller businesses can also stimulate the economy and can also provide quality socio-economic capital which is tremendously good for investments (Helmsing 2003).

2.7 Conclusion

Chapter two presented the literature review on LED to provide a tangible blueprint for the reader. The different definitions and guidelines that map LED out were laid out to give the reader local and global content under the study and to gauge how far Eswatini’s efforts at applying LED principles are compared to the other parts of the world.

3. CHAPTER THREE

DEVELOPMENT AND LED IN ESWATINI

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present a general background of the development discourse in Eswatini. I am able to do this by contemplating on how this discussion manifests itself through LED theory and practice. Doing this allows the reader to have a broader comprehension of the important issues and contestations that are found within the development subject, particularly in Eswatini. This chapter navigates how the development discourse that was discussed in Chapter two has embodied development and LED practice in Eswatini. This chapter begins by giving a brief background to LED in Eswatini and then proceeds to present an in-depth discussion on the current legislation with regard to development in the country. The LED sector in MCM is presented and discussed and it is linked to the pro-market model and pro-poor models which were discussed in the previous chapter.

3.2 Development in Eswatini

As long as from 1945, the world has witnessed more than fifty years of unparalleled development policies and exceptional global economic upswing (Akah 2008). Even though global differences are growing, with the economic disparity between states and people growing, poverty is still omnipresent and continues to jeopardize available opportunities to a greater number of the world's poorest people, particularly the people of Eswatini. As the portion of affluent people in Eswatini increases, there is an ensuing rise in the population of the poor (Poverty & Equity Brief, 2020). Furthermore, the policies that are enacted for economic development purposes often circumvent the poor, which contribute to heightened inequality (World Bank 2020).

The term “economic development” is often contested and it is usually mistaken for economic growth, industrial development or business development (Bergman 2017). Economic development as a discipline is prevalent at the national, state, regional, provincial and city levels (Bergman 2017). It often includes a number of differing stakeholders such as government, non-government,

private sector and community groups, which are focused on activities which include entrepreneurship, emerging business ventures, the creation of jobs, having sustainable growth, having improvement in the quality of life and seeing increased productivity. (Local Economic Development Training Module 2016).

The way in which the development era was founded according to Rist (1997) was that it manifested itself as a collective project of humanity (1997). Cornwall (2010) also explained that development has power as it has the ability to coerce and win over the hearts and minds of humanity to provide socio-economic benefits to localities that centre around development buzzwords which include: “community development”, “development that is participatory”, “human needs that are basic”, “having integrated rural development”, “effective sustainable development”, “participatory development”, “human rights” and “good governance (Cornwall 2010; Plaatjie 2019).

There is a very large scope in which development can be understood. When looking into scientific literature, development is comprehended as the process in which transformations and changes occur to have more aligned states and forms (Rojek 2019). Development is also seen as the process in which economic, social, political and mental factors are changed in a given time to have perfect localities (Rojek 2019). The enterprise development category evolves from this definition of development. It consists of two forms which are made up of internal factors such as the possibility of growth and efficiency of management and external factors which consist of having cooperation amongst enterprises and other factors from the locality as well as the efficiency of institutional infrastructure that propels the development of entrepreneurship (Rojek, 2019). The strategies that are found within enterprise development as a model constitute a comprehensive holistic development of an enterprise (Doligalski, 2018).

As a response to the developmental issues in Eswatini, The King of Eswatini, King Mswati III, expressed his wish for Eswatini to reach new and better development heights. This was articulated through his Vision 2022 that states and reiterates that Eswatini should thrive to be part of the top ten percent of medium human advancement sector group of countries that should be founded on sustainable economic development, equitability and political stabilisation (Shongwe 2017). The debate is still out on whether this vision can actually be carried out by 2022 as the country is

currently facing civil unrest based on lack of basic services in the health sector as well as an unfair distribution of resources and enormous tax requests from the working population (Forbes 2021). Eswatini further has a National Development Strategy formulated by the government where for a period of twenty five years, the strategy is meant to act as a blueprint for developmental plans that are formulated to allow for the equitable allocation of resources (NDS 2014). This strategy aligns with Eswatini's development vision which includes bettering the quality of people living in the country through reducing poverty, having increased career pursuits, encouraging equality of gender and protecting the environment. A careful review of this strategy gives the reader insight on the developmental models of approach that Eswatini is currently in. This strategy came about from the need to transform the government of Eswatini in developing, planning and managing its capacities and resources. The NDS was spearheaded by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (2018). It has seven macro strategic areas which include the following:

- Economic management
- Economic empowerment
- Human resource development
- Agriculture development
- Industrialisation
- Research for development
- Environmental management (MEPD 2018).

The macro strategic areas listed above allow for municipal areas to craft a development strategy that is aligned with the needs of its local people. These areas are explained in more detail below:

1. Economic management

In Eswatini, the process of achieving economic empowerment and management entails creating an attractive and enabling environment to increase more investors into the country. This then trickles down into achieving desirable social objectives which include poverty reduction, job creation, and local empowerment for women and vulnerable groups. Other parts or elements of

this strategy that are of vital importance are that it entails the following aspects which give a good road map for development:

- It should have a sustainable national budget
- It is required to have full transparency and accountability when using public funds
- It should create sufficient physical infrastructure
- It should protect the physical environment
- It should encourage regional economic partnerships to work for the benefit of the Swazi economy (NDS 2017).

This pillar of the strategy leans more towards the pro-market model approach because it does not give straight solutions such as having inclusive projects for the creation of jobs. It also does not have the specific details on how to create an enabling environment for LED to take place.

2. Economic Empowerment

This factor is responsible for bringing up the capabilities of national groupings to expand their choice horizons. This area has the following strategic considerations:

- It promotes local entrepreneurs to be actively involved in starting their own business enterprises and expanding existing so that they may be included into business operations.
- It assists disadvantaged groups;
- It assists in the maintaining of gender relationships in the process of formulating projects.
- It has to have adequate consultation with relevant stakeholders for maximum support (NDS 2017).

I argue that this pillar of development leans more towards the pro-poor model of development as it considers empowerment of disadvantaged groups and it leans towards entrepreneurship and inclusive growth. This pillar of development is also observed by Sen (1999) as he states that disadvantaged groups need to be part of the sector that have economic opportunities and that their basic public facilities such as social care and health need to be of good standing. Furthermore, Sen (1999) states that communities and their organisations need to be involved with regard to participation in planning, monitoring and implementation of new developments in their societies for them to be beneficial.

3. Human Resource Development

This is one of the main macro strategy pillars that Eswatini has. This resource has a huge impact on human development and when done effectively, it has numerous positive contributions in Eswatini. The elements that are important in this strategy include the following;

- Having effective and efficient education and training which includes vocational and technical orientation.
- Desirable and adequate incentives are given to emerging businesses to encourage vigorous human capital development;
- To have good and aligning youth programmes;
- To give critical care and consideration to members of society that have disabilities;
- To give consideration to all the areas that have an effect on the nature and standard of human capital such as health, water, sanitation and shelter (NDS 2017).

The importance of human resource development in Eswatini manifests itself in how it is able to increase skills development amongst its people. It also helps people that are inflicted by poverty to get the skills which are necessary in the economy which can further give them better paying jobs. This has a positive effect on pro-poor development within a locality.

4. Agricultural Development

The Kingdom of Eswatini has an edge in agricultural development over most developing countries because it has fertile soils, conducive climatic conditions, favorable potential for higher grade agricultural research and having good wage rates (Ministry of Agriculture 2020). This is why it makes sense for the agricultural sector to be one of the main drivers of the economy. This section has very good ties with other sections in the national economy. This thrust looks to improving agricultural offerings without destroying the environment (ESWADE 2021). Elements that are more prevalent in this sector include the following:

- Having adequate food at community households;
- To commercialise agricultural services on SNL;

- To have a good water resource management and systems;
- To have appropriate land allocation.

Great strides have been made into improving this sector country wide in both rural and urban areas. There even exists an agricultural parastatal known as Eswatini Water and Agricultural Development Enterprise which mobilises local people directly to develop their land for agriculture. This institution further installs water resources in the form of tanks that help with the stimulation of food security, poverty reduction and in the promotion of social cohesion in underprivileged parts of the country. Agriculture in most developing countries shows itself to have positive effects on pro-poor growth.

This unveils itself in a hybrid or mixed approach to LED as it has both elements of the pro-market model and the pro-poor growth model in Eswatini.

5. Industrialisation

This thrust diversifies itself towards industry and services, and it also tries to narrow the range of non-agricultural activities into a wider range so that the overall economic risk is reduced. This is why the country has to spot possible areas for industrial development. In this strategic area the following elements are important:

- Concentrating on maximizing value addition in agriculture and mining products;
- Focusing on pushing for financial services which include having offshore operations;
- Concentrating on forging good industrial relations;
- The promotion of sections with strong backward and forward linkages.

This strategic thrust can be traced back to the smoke stack chasing approach as city industries is more prevalent.

6. Research for Development

This pillar is important because research provides knowledge. It is vital to acquire relevant information before decisions are taken both for private and public sectors. Research areas should be funded and should be given good incentives particularly in areas of natural sciences, the production of technological services, social science development, humanities, education and health.

7. Environmental Management

Environmental management is very important for sustainable development and Eswatini recognizes it. The process of environmental management includes the following:

- Maintaining a good ecological balance;
- Making special environmental considerations during policy formulation.
- It accommodates environmental legislation processes;
- It ensures that the industry clusters that are in place for the purpose of getting the country's vision are environmentally friendly (NDS 2017).

The government of Eswatini is committed to sustainable development as well as the implementation of Agenda 21. The process of environmental management helps in forging a developmental path that will lead the country to prosperity for present and future generations (NDS 2017).

Eswatini has experienced a steady growth from 0.545 in 1990 to 0.608 in the year 2018 (Human Development Report 2020). A Human Development Index is a blended composition of life expectancy, education and per capita income indicators, which are used to group nations into four levels of human development (Human Development Report 2020). Eswatini has a national strategy for sustainable development and inclusive growth through to the year 2030 as well as a strategic road map for the period of 2019-2022, which gives guidance for development and economic recovery for the country (Poverty & Equity Brief, 2020).

As mentioned earlier, the aim of the NDS is to put together a vision and mission statement for the country with the proper tools for social and economic development for the country for the coming

twenty five years to give a blueprint for the formulating plans for the equal disbursement of schemes (NDS 2017). This is done to underpin the Central Government of Eswatini's development planning and management capacities and to strongly embed it to a national consensus on the direction of future developments in the country (NDS).

3.3 Local economic development practice in Eswatini

In the year 2012 the CLGF selected Eswatini to be part of a few selected commonwealth countries to partake in a CLGF programme that focused on improving governance and providing service delivery, contributing to international development goals and poverty alleviation (Parker 2015). According to the report on the state of LED in Eswatini, the situation in Eswatini with regards to LED is such that the government put together some guidelines to shape LED in their towns. These guidelines centre around four thematic areas which include the following: business development and support, investment destination, town planning and infrastructure development and lastly, the informal sector development (SLEDS 2016). These are explicated in more detail below:

1. Business support and development

This business support development thematic area concentrates on lobbying for user friendly laws and legislation (SLEDS 2016). According to Hunter K.G Wilson, Wilson L.A and Brunk G.G (1991), the term "lobbying" can be defined as an organized action that promotes interests that are specific by means of communicating them with a public official with the aim to influence public decision making.

This LED thematic area also concentrates on improving the business climate and addressing impediments and red tapes (SLEDS 2016). When competition is enhanced by having policies in place that improve the product market functioning by means of deregulating and facilitating entry, businesses are stimulated and their productivity performances improved (Nicoletti & Scarpetta, 2002).

This area of intervention for LED practice also sees to it that there is capacity building and coaching which is given to local business people (SLEDS 2016). Capacity building in this instance has numerous long term benefits. According to the Rural Economic Policy Program (1996), capacity building is beneficial in the following ways:

- It has an approach that is purposeful in the sense that it minimizes cases of over-relying on external expertise as sources for intelligence, knowledge, assets and answers to local community problems. Capacity development in this instance is therefore helpful as it prevents a dependency relationship on outsiders from forming (Rural Economic Policy Program 1996).
- Capacity building gives community members a sense of ownership and empowerment when it comes to deciding what they want their future developments to look like (Rural Economic Policy Program, 1996).
- It has an element of strengthening confidence, skills set, knowledge and resources that expand from capacity building efforts on projects that are run by community partners (Rural Economic Policy Program, 1996).
- The efforts that come from capacity building are such that locals are cognizant of their particularities of local culture and context, which puts them in a better position to solve their own problems and have appropriate solutions to their problems (Rural Economy Policy Program, 1996).

The last element in this pillar of the LED intervention for Eswatini is to establish business networks and forums and to encourage business to business (SLEDS 2016). This phenomenon of having business networks and forums is a common trend in urbanization (Edwards, 2013). This aligns with the pro-market approach that also resonates with South Africa where there is an importance of getting investments into the regional economy and in the local business and industry (Ilvento & Loveridge 2000). Furthermore, this LED intervention pushes for more progressive elements of locality development as suggested by Bond (2002) so this further shows that it follows the pro-market model.

2. Investment Destination

This thematic area for LED practice in Eswatini aims to promote locations as investment destinations; improve municipal infrastructure; and develop business or industrial parks (SLEDS 2016). As a result of the greater global interconnectivity, policy makers are experiencing new concerns. Oman (2000) says that there is an intense competition for Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) among national as well as subnational governments in the EU. This is why municipalities should always be in the lookout for the players who have potential to invest in this market and they should be ready to develop strategies that will give them an edge to succeed (Oman, 2000).

There are various debates on what FDI is. According to the IMF, Monetary FDI can be defined as backing where investors ask for a proper plan that operates outside of the investors' economy (IMF). Graham and Krugman (1993) view FDI as a financial flow that moves from a mother company to an overseas company that it commands (Graham & Krugman 1993). It was only through the congruence of these definitions that the OECD (2008) benchmarked a definition of FDI that means a cross border investment that is performed by having a direct investor who tries to have a long term interest over a business in the residents country, that is different from the country from which the direct investor is coming from (OECD 2008).

It is important to improve municipal infrastructure so that investments can improve at a destination. According to the World Bank (2019), a big percentage of the world's population now stays in cities and that cities give off about seventy-five percent of global CO₂ emissions. This has resulted in more subnational governments being forced to find alternative and practical ways to improve on the delivery of infrastructure sustainably (World Bank 2019). Notwithstanding the desperate need for this investment, the reality for most cities is that they are unable to buy quality infrastructure as a result of poor municipal finances as well as having a shortage in product development capacity (World Bank 2019). To attract private sector investment, the use of PPPs has emerged but even still, these projects are normally at national level as opposed to giving opportunities at subnational level (World Bank 2019). While this is one of the challenges faced by many cities, there is hope for more development to occur. For instance, the Global Infrastructure Facility (GIF) is in the process of clinching monetary support from international financial

institutions globally to support small projects and to find new subnational revenue streams that will enhance the overall outlook for cities (World Bank 2019).

Municipalities can also develop business or industrial parks as a way to attract more FDI into their localities. To increase economic viability and social equality, some municipalities use Industrial Parks (IPs) as a regional policy tool (Hendricks et al, 2021). When a municipality successfully erects and integrates such areas, it functions in such a way that land is used efficiently which ultimately attracts investments as it would then have a high added value countrywide (Hendricks et al, 2021). The main drawback here however, is that the process of creating an IP needs high startup investments to install infrastructure and prepare plots of land, which normally materializes through public financial instruments (Hendricks et al, 2021). This pillar also resonates with the pro-market approach to development that was posited by Bond (2002).

3. Town Planning and Infrastructure Development

This is the third pillar that LED urban areas in Eswatini seek to follow. This pillar attempts to incentivize and encourage private sector investments in infrastructure; identify projects for PPPs; and lastly, to provide good services through utility providers such as those that provide network, water and energy, etc. (SLEDS 2016)

The expansion and growth of cities brings about its own set of challenges. The way to find a holistic solution to the complexities that arise from this growth is by using urban planning (Archistar 2021). This is what has then led urban developers to create a set of objectives that local councils can adhere to and be role players (Archistar 2021). The seven key objectives that urban planners use are:

- To have a planned city growth which is in line with the city's vision;
- To have improved health for city dwellers;
- To have less environmental impact;
- To have national development;
- To have greater credibility and prevent disasters (Archistar 2021).

Furthermore, cities rely on urban planners for the following reasons:

- That they can remain functional;
- That they can grow in population;
- That they can attract business ((Archistar 2021).

In the year 2018, approximately four billion people resided in cities, and, as stated by the United Nations (2018), the populace in towns will increase by about 2.3 billion people by the year 2050 (UN, 2018). This perceived reality, however, is forecasted to create tremendous social, economic and environmental problems in urban areas (Grimm et al, 2008). These environmental pressures include poverty, unemployment, and an increase in crime, loss in biodiversity, pollution and political problems (Grimm et al, 2008). Another factor that urban areas cause is climate change as they are responsible for many greenhouse emissions, as well as depletion of resources caused by manmade activities such as agriculture (Stocker et al, 2013). Recommendations made to solve these problems have been outlined by forming numerous nature-based solutions and ecosystem service strategies globally, that contribute to the well-being of people and protecting the environment (Raymond et al, 2017). This is how the green infrastructure implementation, for example, came about.

The green infrastructure implementation strategy solves a few of the problems aforementioned by forming a network of green and blue spaces that are created and were able to give a broader range of ecological community (Benedict, M.A.; McMahon, 2002). The ecosystem services that are quite crucial when it comes to green infrastructure implementation in urban areas can be viewed as having either direct or indirect benefits to people (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2018, online). These ecosystem functions can be bundled into four groups which include the following;

- Provision
- Regulation
- Support
- Cultural (Salmond et al, 2016).

4. Informal Sector Development

This pillar of the LED theme and intervention for LED practice in Eswatini's urban areas has a myriad of functions which include promoting and supporting the informal sector and providing capacity and coaching to youth and women in business (SLEDS 2016).

The present-day state of affairs of the world's economic problems and the pronounced expansion of informal economies in developing and developed countries globally, has accentuated the need of comprehending the relationship between the formal and informal economies (Meagher 2013). This section will focus on the informal sector, as it is the sub section under review within this pillar. The discussions around informal economy started as far back as the 1970s and 1980s where there were many debates surrounding the true meaning of what the informal sector really is (Meagher 2013). These debates on definition finally resolved themselves over 25 years ago. The definition that has been accepted across the different disciplines and ideological spheres is that the informal economy means any activities that generate income that function outside the regulatory framework of a country (Castells & Portes 1989; Feige 1999). From the beginning of the 1990S, well informed debates moved from chimeric controversies on if there is a clear distinction between formality and informality of economies, to debates on how to make this definition viable for the purposes of statistics and making policies (Meagher 2013). Big strides were made in this regard due to the ILO's (2002) change of the definition of informal economy to address not only informal enterprises and their laborers, which was the initial focus of the original term for informal sector, but also addresses labourers that are unregistered and unprotected who work within formal sector enterprises (Meagher 2013).

There are three concepts that the ILO/WIEGO, laid out by Chen (2012) used to define informality and they are as follows:

- The informal sector applies to businesses or enterprises that have not registered their production and employment
- It focuses on employment processes that operate outside of the labour protection regulations of a given area, regardless of if it's a formal or informal enterprise

- The informal economy also encompasses all enterprises, labourers, and functions that work outside the legal regulatory framework of society, as well as the generated outputs (Chen 2012).

Within this LED theme and intervention method of the informal sector development, it is particularly important to capacitate the youth and women. As seen in many developing countries, women are the most affected by lower levels of socio-economic empowerment and poor levels of investment in human capital when compared to other developing countries (Elsayed & Roushydy 2017). The past few years has experienced a tremendous increase in the number of women who have been the target of numerous microfinance and employment intervention programmes that aim to make women more economically and socially independent. The most important of these interventions is the focus on skills development as the gateway to improving productivity, employability and income earning opportunities so that they may enhance food security and promote sustainable environments in their areas (Field et al., 2010, p. 125; Groh et al., 2016a). However, some literature depicts mixed results of the aforementioned interventions. Some studies give the picture that there is little evidence that shows that improvement is marginally big when compared to men (e.g. Berge et al., 2014; Fafchamps et al., 2014).

According to Field et al., (2010), one of the reasons that many interventions aimed at women empowerment fail is because they concentrate on physical support without incorporating human capital as well. Furthermore, within the aspect of gender differences, particularly when it comes to attaining education and business networking, the lack of physical support for women is a downfall (Field et al., 2010). Women very often lack basic knowledge and are less informed about opportunities in investments when compared to men (Karlan & Valdivia, 2011). Women who are self-employed are not seen as entrepreneurs in many societies and this makes it hard in finding entrepreneurship development training and services (Karlan & Valdivia, 2011). This is further exacerbated by the fact that the norms that govern the roles that women play in society are limited by the perceptions of what women can achieve in the work environment which then limits their interests in investing in their human capital (Field et al., 2010). This also includes questions pertaining to how women's roles are formalized in employment, the problems surrounding safety

and security in the workplace and lastly, lack of female friendly workplace policies, particularly maternity protection and having flexible working hours (Elsayed & Roushydy 2017).

3.4 LED at MCM

LED practice at the MCM is still at its formative years even though the first LED strategy was drawn up in 2002 (Integrated Development Plan 2014-2019). As mentioned earlier in the National Development Strategy for Eswatini (2017, p. 6), human resource development is one of the core macro strategic pillars for development success. It was only in the year 2012 that a current LED strategy was adopted for Mbabane city and a person was put in charge of executing LED duties (IDP 2014-2019).

As mentioned earlier, parts of the elements of a good LED strategy is that it should strive to elevate a city into a smart city. According to the Integrated Development Plan for Mbabane city (2019), Mbabane city has prioritized the following factors in order to make the City of Mbabane a smart-city:

- It has reduced infrastructure development and maintenance backlog;
- It has improved waste management in the urban area;
- It has improved entry to housing to make sure that social and economic development for the city's residence is guaranteed;
- It strives to bring investments into the town;
- It has improved how people and cars move within the city; and
- It has improved its biodiversity and conservation initiatives within the city since the inception of the 2012 LED strategy for the city (IDP 2019).

Since then, the city of Mbabane has since put in place a new LED strategy for the town that is aligned with the latest trends in the development sector. It formulated the Mbabane City's Local Economic Development Strategy 2019-2021. The thrust of this new strategy was to focus on the following elements within the urban area:

- It has a focus of improving ICT connectivity within Mbabane;

- It has a focus on increasing water supply within Mbabane;
- It takes care of sewer coverage and management in Mbabane;
- It ensures that electricity supply coverage is developed and maintained;
- It has enhanced its public open spaces (including security);
- It has made great strides in ensuring risk management within the city;
- It is the process of availing more recreational facilities that will also be targeted at the youth;
- It has identified vulnerable populations within Mbabane and has put together programmes for development for them;
- It supports job creation initiatives;
- It promotes business stimulation within the city;
- It supports Mbabane based businesses; (MCLEDS, 2019-2024).

Based on available statistics within the municipality, Mbabane has well accomplished some of its LED programmes on account of the fact that more than eight percent of the activities that were planned on the new LED strategy (2019-2024) were able to be implemented successfully (MCLEDS 2019-2024). The city has been boisterous in its achievements even though a few difficulties were experienced. According to the Mbabane City LED Strategy (2019-2024), these difficulties that led to the LED strategy not to be fully implemented were mainly as a result of a limitation on human capital resources and also scanty monitoring (MCLEDS 2019-2024).

Mbabane’s vision is to *“be an attractive smart-city, offering quality life and opportunities for all.”* Its mission is *“to create a conducive and sustainable environment through responsive quality service delivery and good governance.”*(IDP 2019-2014, p. 7).

3.5 Mbabane city’s local economic development strategy 2019-2024

The 2019-2024 Strategy for LED that Mbabane has is underpinned by five pillars, specifically: Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), City Industries Development, Small, Medium and Micro

Enterprises (SMME) Development, Human Resource Skills Development and Transport System Development and Infrastructure Improvement and Development (MCLEDS 2019-2024). These are depicted in Table: 2 below:

Table: 2 LED Strategy Implementation in Mbabane

Focus Area/Thrust	Strategic Objective	Action	Progress
Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)	Establishing PPPs In the city.	Localising their PPP policy.	The municipality was unable to implement this strategic activity because they did not have enough monetary funds from CLGF. A successful PPP Strategic Action plan was developed however.
		Developing an aptitude for implementing PPP effectively.	The municipality trained its key staff on how to implement PPP.
		Setting up a unit for PPP for the municipality.	A person that specialises in PPP was hired in the municipality.
		Engaging in business forums with local community.	Having a good relationship formation with the private sector and having yearly business forums.
		Participating fully in government forums to improve ease of doing business in the city of Mbabane as well as the country as a whole	The municipality participates with the national government in government forums.
City Industries Development	It grows industries that are already existing sustainably while looking out for new industries.	Facilitating the establishment of new industries and PPPs	Developments of PPPs that are currently present include developing the Mbabane bus rank, civic center, city tours and developing an abattoir.
		Developing the towns marketing and tourism strategy.	Mbabane formulated its marketing and tourism strategy.
Small Medium and Micro Enterprise Development	It stimulates expansion and sustainability of local businesses to make sure that SMMEs are promoted and developed.	Developing and Implementing an SMME strategy for development.	Mbabane city has a SMME Development Strategy.
		Forging partnerships with key stakeholders.	Formulating partnerships and MOUs with Eswatini Investments Promotion Authority (EIPA).
		locally sourcing skills and providing skills training to small contractors	Guidelines have been produced and have been finalised by the municipality. Training

			for local small contractors has been piloted.
		Providing capacitation on capacity on income generation.	1, 107 people were capacitated from the community.
		Developing recycling centres.	A recycling center was erected at Mahwalala in Mbabane.
Human Resource Skills Development	Skills development and quality education provided within Mbabane.	Having a quality education framework.	An Education Quality Assurance Framework was developed by the Ministry of Education and Training.
		Having academic discussions through forums.	Schools around the city meet once a year to exchange ideas.
		Providing WIFI in the city.	Mbabane's Wi-Fi pilot project was started in Mbabane.
Transport System Development and Infrastructure Improvement	Ensuring economic growth by fixing the transport system and infrastructure to business needs	Developing and implementing a Public Transport Strategy for the city.	The strategy was completed In 2017/2018.
		Collaborating with transport operators from the city.	Working with Mbabane transport operators to forge a good working relationship.

Mbabane Local Economic Development Strategy 2019-2024.

According to the Local Economic Development Strategy 2019- 2024 for Mbabane, the status update of the Mbabane Municipal Council's LED strategy implementation has five thrusts which are as follows:

1. Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)

The strategic objective of PPPs is to develop a relationship with the private sector. Currently, there is no national PPP policy in Eswatini due to insufficient funds from the funders of the initiative who are the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (MCLEDS, 2019- 2024). To align with this objective however, the Municipal Council of Mbabane put in place a PPP Strategic Action Plan. Furthermore, the MCM was able to setup a PPP unit which was in charge of engaging with business communities through the use of business forums which are hosted annually which help

maintain relationships with the private sector. Government forums are held often and this gives ease of doing business in Mbabane city (MCLEDS, 2019- 2024).

According to Fabre and Straub (2021), PPPs started being popular from as early as the 1980s and they are now widely used globally. Governments and international organisations, world over, view PPPs as one of the solutions to sustaining and bridging the gap between the shortages of investments in fundamental infrastructure sectors (World Bank 2017). Fay et al. (2018) put across that PPPs are largely in charge of contributing ten percent of the annual investment in infrastructure in developing countries and about three percent of infrastructure spending in the world. Furthermore, PPPs help in that they attract a significantly large share of direct and indirect public financing through acquiring guarantees (Fay et al. 2018). However, even though many policy makers are in favor of PPPs, more unsubstantiated proof has led to doubts about the performance of PPPs (Fabre & Straub, 2021).

2. City Industries Development

This strategy is one of the ones that is applied in the smokestack chasing model that was first mentioned in Chapter two. It implies that states can attract firms and “buy” economic growth by giving them incentives to be drawn into their localities (Black & Chandra, 1996). Looked at in the simplest of ways, this pillar of development can be described as the process where economic development increases as a result of buying and spending more in a city. This ultimately results in an increase in employment and wages which positively affects other sectors of the economy.

When looking at this thrust of development for Mbabane city, it is evident that it has the function of enhancing existing industries sustainably while creating room for new and emerging businesses. Some of the projects that are currently being worked on in the city of Mbabane include the Bus Rank Development Project, Civic Centre development, Mbabane City Tours, the Old Railway Depot Development as lastly, the old Abattoir site redevelopment (MCLEDS, 2019). This sector also looks at developing and implementing a city marketing and tourism strategy which is currently ongoing (MCLEDS, 2019).

The growth of cities is unparalleled in the history of humans and it plays a big role in the way central governments around the world's economy shape our social realities and environments (Mori & Christodoulou, 2012). According to the UN, the population in urban areas surpassed fifty percent and this marked a huge developmental milestone in human history (United Nations, 2008). Furthermore, this trend further shows that more migrants will move from rural areas to the cities world over, which will further increase human growth to around one point eight percent per year (Bassi, 2017). This leads to an increased complexity in the range of human needs and demands and it puts a strain on the environment (Sharifi, 2019). The environmental issues that these urban areas face need new, improved and effective ways in dealing with them (Sharifi, 2019). The solutions to these problems that cities are facing have attracted the use of technology as one of the effective ways of handling urban issues (Harrison et al., 2010).

3. Small Medium and Micro Enterprise Development

The establishment and development of SMME's are seen as the anchors of development by creating employment and reducing poverty (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2017). Developing countries such as Eswatini have seen that SMMEs are their saving grace to pull themselves out of extreme poverty and stimulate economic growth. This LED model falls within the pro-poor growth approach to eradicate poverty.

In Mbabane city, this function of their sub sector within their LED strategy is to encourage the growth of local businesses to make sure that there is promotion and development of SMMEs towards job creation. The municipality of Mbabane has an SMME development strategy that they utilize to ensure that this happens. Other services that the municipality provide is to give local companies within or around Mbabane city with guidelines on how to source local community based labour and also provide skills training to these workers. Within the SMME Development framework, the organization is also expected to provide capacitation to personnel working under the division.

SMMEs in the national and international world have gained a lot of prominence. In many countries the percentage of SMMEs is very high (Duarte 2004). The sector of development within SMMEs

plays a big role because they are firstly, seen as the power behind economic growth in countries and secondly, they are biggest percentage of businesses in the economic activity (Duarte 2004). According to the UN (1998), one of the topics that have been prominent on sustainable development is that of industry and its impact on economic and social development. Policy makers around the globe are now advised that if they want to make positive contributions to their societies in sustainable development, they need to make great strides in integrating economic, social and environmental goals into industry policy and decision making (UN, 1998).

Another buzzword that is related with SMME development in recent times is the word entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is the process of generating jobs and creating incomes (OECD, 2003). Central to a lot of local and regional development strategies are the efforts to create new enterprises and to attract investments into their local areas (Duarte 2004). This is also the case in Eswatini and in Mbabane city. As mentioned earlier in chapter two, SMMEs have a huge role to play in locality development and Helmsing (2003), laid down the new ways and policies that are to be used for Africa. He presented the differences in the three pivotal categories of LED initiatives which are enterprise development, community economic development and locality development (Blakely, 1994; Helmsing, 2003). All three of these categories are represented in Table: 2 within the Mbabane LED strategy.

4. Human Resource Skills Development

This thrust of development belongs to the pro-poor growth model. The concurrent increase of growth and poverty in many countries internationally including Eswatini, has found the need to upscale human resource skills and include poor women and men in their processes so that they may benefit from economic growth (Fufa 2021). Growth is seen to be pro-poor when the incomes of the poor rise relative to the incomes of the non-poor which contribute towards inequality (Kakwani 2000).

The MCM in Eswatini has taken great strides to improving the quality of education in Mbabane. It also provides the relevant skills development for economic development and growth within the town. This has been achieved by doing the following:

- facilitating the development of an education quality assurance framework;
- holding academic discussion forums;
- providing internet connection and Wi-Fi in designated areas around the city.

Based on the aforementioned points on what the municipality of Mbabane is working on to improve human resource skills development in the city. It has been widely accepted that for a learning culture to develop and emerge in an organization, a strong Strategic Human Resource Development department should be developed (McCracken & Wallace, 2000).

According to Grieves (2003), in Arora (2021), there are three elements that SHRD has to entail for it to be an effective strategy. They are as follows:

- a) A good SHRD should be aware of the convolutedness of change management;
- b) It should have an inclination to have an improved Human Resource Development Department.
- c) It should develop new perspectives and policies which act as a roadmap for twenty-first century development (Grieves 2003).

In addition, Grieves (2003), in Arora (2021) advocates that SHRD should be tackled through a combination of three disciplines which are; Human Resource Development (HRD), Strategic Management and Organizational Development (OD). According to Armstrong (2000) and Arora (2021), the following principles are what SHRD should concern itself with:

- It should concentrate on the development of individual learning strategies
- It should focus on knowledge management
- It should concentrate on the development of organisational learning
- It should focus on the development of intellectual capital
- It should concentrate on the development of emotional intelligence
- It should develop managers
- It should develop strategic capability (Armstrong 2000; Arora 2021).

The literature above suggests that there is still a long way for developing countries (such as Eswatini) to go for HRD leaders and practitioners to become more strategic in their organizations. The general themes that emerge here are that; firstly, SHRD has to concentrate on constantly evaluating the linkages among organizational strategies and HRD systems; secondly, the SHRD should facilitate the development of core capabilities that are important in developing and maintaining the sustained competitive advantage; and thirdly, SHRD should always be cognizant to emergent and planned strategies (Arora 2021).

5. Transport System Development and Infrastructure Improvement

The concept of transport and infrastructure LED first made its appearance in 2007, and since then, has appeared in many topics of study in regional development amongst economic and geographic developers around the world (Straub 2008). Most studies concentrate on the benefits that are produced by transport infrastructure for development including socioeconomic effects, economic growth, and long term spillover effects. I liken this model of development to the pro-poor growth model in Mbabane town in Eswatini. What is envisaged is that having proper transport infrastructure would produce social and economic benefits by creating employment, alleviating poverty and improving social and economic conditions for all.

This pillar of the LED strategy supports the facilitation of economic growth in Mbabane which supports the transport system and infrastructure as well as business needs. Thus far, the municipality of Mbabane has developed and implemented the Mbabane Public Transport Management Strategy and it constantly collaborates with the local transport operators within the town (MCLEDS, 2019- 2024).

According to Prus and Sikora (2021), an important aspect of transport infrastructure is the public way in which it provides services. Another important aspect in region development is to have an appropriate communication infrastructure which provides the basic enabling environment for the development of the socio-economic system (Prus & Sikora, 2021). Sendek-Matysiak et al. (2017) addresses the importance of developing transport in a region. They explain that favorable quantitative and qualitative conditions of the transport infrastructure within an urban area are

important as this can attract investments in infrastructure in the area which would ultimately impact positively on the economy of the region (Sendek-Matysiak et al., 2017).

Tønnesen et al. (2014) give a number of benefits of having good transport infrastructure in a region and the positive spin off effects it has on that particular region. These are as follows;

- If good transport infrastructure is developed in an area, there will be a fall in unemployment for surrounding communities within the region;
- There will be favorable conditions for settlement with that region;
- There will be a value increase in land and real estate within the urban areas;
- There will be an increase in investment attractiveness for that particular area;
- Transport connections make it much easier to meet the demands of community members in a locality;
- The effects of investments in the area of transport infrastructure have a direct influence on lower transport costs of its users and on growing the area of operation of companies and businesses in the sale of services (Tønnesen et al., 2014).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the literature review on LED for the reader. It started by describing the general outlook of development in Eswatini. It proceeded to describe the Vision 2022 of the country which describes how the country sees itself in the future in developmental terms. It further presents and describes in-depth, the National Development Strategy for the country which is a twenty five year strategy that gives a general blueprint on how the country plans to unravel their developmental plans. This chapter then gives the picture on LED practice in the country as well as its LED thematic themes and interventions for Eswatini. Chapter three concludes by describing the LED practice and programmes that have been put in place by Mbabane Municipality and the five strategic pillars for LED that the municipality currently has in place and how this strategy adheres to or deviates from best practice on LED globally.

4. CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

In chapter four, I explain the research methodology that directed this study. The chapter commences by giving a transitory rumination on the research design that is often undertaken for a scholarship of this quintessence. Following this, a justification of the election of the research design is given. I also describe the data gathering methods used; sampling; techniques for data collection; data analysis methods employed; the measures which were taken to ensure validity and reliability discussed. Eventually, I examine the limitations of the study, and the ethical considerations, and I windup with a conclusion.

4.2 Research Design

The purpose of the research design is to answer the main research question(s) in the study. The research design can be defined as a plan for a study that provides the overall skeleton for data collection (Leedy, 1997). According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2001), a research design is the plan that is used when selecting subjects, research areas, and data collection stratagem to answer the research question or questions. Durrheim (2004) defines the research design as a strategic framework for action that acts as a bridge between the research questions and the way that the research strategy will be executed or implemented. To communicate the research questions judiciously, the choice of research design ought to be informed by the nature of the study, the research objectives, and the researcher's viewpoint. Specifically, the nature of the study will inform the research design.

There are two general research designs that are often used in research namely, the quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to Van der Merwe (1996), the quantitative research approach targets at testing theories, finding facts, showing relationships between variables, and predicting outcomes. In contrast, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), the qualitative research approach

involves an interpretive, analytical and naturalistic approach to study the world (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). This approach tries to comprehend phenomena in real world settings, where the researcher does not try to manipulate the results in the area of interest but rather gets results from context specific settings where the study of interest unfolds naturally (Patton 2001).

The purpose of this study was to examine whether LED efforts that were employed by the Central Government of Eswatini, in Mbabane, were producing the desired outcomes of reducing poverty. This was done by selecting a case study in Mbabane, Msunduzi Township, as the residing area where LED beneficiaries were interviewed from. Furthermore, perspectives of various LED stakeholders of Mbabane Municipality were interviewed. This study is exploratory as it helped in understanding the LED theory and practice in Eswatini.

I used a qualitative research design in this study and employed a case study as a research strategy. The use of a case study has been looked in to extensively by Merriam (1998) and Yin (1994). In her discussion Merriam (1998), says that the case study does not assert any particular data collection methods, but instead centers on a much more holistic interpretation and clarification. Furthermore, the case study is viewed as heuristic, particular, and descriptive, which applies to the case study (Merriam 1998). A case study is regarded as heuristic when it is able to elucidate on the circumstance, which allows the reader to broaden their understanding of, uncover new meaning, or authenticate what is known (Merriam 1998). It spells out the reasons for a problem, the backdrop of the circumstances, the occurrence, and why. A descriptive case study is one that is thorough and very precise on the findings of the research. In addition, the descriptive case study shows the convolution of the situation, and it gives out information based on a number of sources and views in a number of ways (Merriam 1998).

According to Yin (1994), selecting a case study is demanding and it needs critical attention from the researcher (1994). The case study that was reviewed was Msunduzi Township in Mbabane town. Msunduzi was reviewed with reference to its: history, demographics, statistical data and location.

According to Punch (1998), there are four characteristics that should constitute a case study, namely:

- a) A case study has boundaries which need to be limited by the researcher to confine the case.

- b) The case is a particular example of something.
- c) During the analysis phase, the researcher should try to maintain the case as a single unit while keeping in mind that there is often a focus on particular aspects of the case
- d) A different mix of data types and data collection methods are used (1998)

Merriam (1998) apportioned compelling direction for the researcher using a case study research design. She also supported the theoretical framework as definition of the research problem (1998). She also presented the concept of sampling in case study, where contrasting with other types of qualitative research, there are two levels of sampling that are intrinsic in the design. The first one is selecting the case to be studied; the second is the sampling of the people within the case (Merriam 1998). The sampling method when identifying the people can be purposeful sampling. Common place would be that it is unique, has maximum variation, is convenient, snowballs, is theoretical, and has its own characteristics or random sampling (Merriam 1998). In regard to data collection, Merriam (1998) pointed out interviews as being the most frequent source of data in case study research. She also noted that observations can also be used but stressed that observations should be used carefully as data could be highly subjective (1998).

I used a case study to carry out this study. The data collection methods included carrying out interviews, observation, and collecting archived material. Stake (2005) listed responsibilities that a researcher should be cognizant of when conducting case studies which include the following:

- a) The case should be bound.
- b) There should be a selection of phenomena, themes or issues.
- c) Patterns of the data should be analyzed to develop the issues.
- d) There should be a triangulation of key observations and bases of interpretation.
- e) There should be a selection of alternative interpretations to pursue.

These were taken into consideration while conducting this case study.

4.3 Qualitative research design

The qualitative research design is superior at simplifying and managing data taking care not to destroy complexity and context (Atieno, 2009). A qualitative research approach incorporates the use of qualitative data such as literature review, case study, documents and observation in order to

understand a social phenomenon (Burns 1997). It further shows the techniques, methods, tools, and procedures used in conducting the research design (Mouton 2002).

According to Atieno (2009), qualitative techniques are good for questions where precautionary reduction of the data will prevent analysis or discovery (2009). If the aim is to unearth from the participants in an area or a process their experiences within it, the definition they put on it, and how they elucidate what they experience, the researcher necessitates ways that will allow for exploration and discovery and to do due diligence to their perceptions and their complex interpretations (Atieno 2009). As further discussed by Atieno (2009), the nature of qualitative techniques is that they have the similar goal of finding new ways of viewing existing data. If the aim is to comprehend phenomena genuinely and in detail, the researcher needs ways for discovery of central themes and analysis of main concerns (Atieno 2009).

To characterize the qualitative approach further, Worthen and Sanders (1987) view it as one that is done in natural settings, using the researcher as the main instrument in data gathering and analysis. There is a great deal of purpose, skill and concentration that is needed to have a good qualitative research, and unless this is recognized and the purpose of the study clear and committed, the assignment quickly becomes tedious (Atieno 2009). What occurs here is that the purpose directs the research question and the research question illuminates the choice of method, in order for the method to fit the type of data to be collected (Atieno 2009).

The convenience of the qualitative method is ingrained in its prominence on thick description such as getting real, rich, deep data which clarifies everyday patterns of action and meaning from the angle of those being studied (Worthen & Sanders 1987). A drawback of data collection in the qualitative approach is that it may be work intensive and tedious (Weinreich 2009).

There are several reasons why the qualitative methodology was best suited for this study. The first one being that the study was descriptive and of an explorative nature. The second one being that interviews had to be carried out with stakeholders who are directly involved with the LED practice in Eswatini and Mbabane municipality in particular. The last one was that beneficiaries of the LED programme had to be interviewed and this was able to reveal comprehensive and rich data, which was able to give answers to some of the research questions. This was done in line of Creswell's (2007) way of uncovering answers when using the qualitative method.

4.4 Sampling and participants

Sampling is a crucial aspect in research. Sampling procedures are often used to locate distinctive and enlightening parts of the population of interest to the research study. Although there are no strictly stipulated rules for sample size (Baum 2002; Patton 1990; Palys 2012), sampling in qualitative research normally banks on small numbers with the intention of studying in depth and detail (Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton 1990).

There are three main types of sampling in qualitative studies (Enago 2019) and these are purposive sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling. These are described as follows:

- Purposive sampling: this type of sampling refers to preselected criteria that is related to the research assumption which determines the participants of the research (Enago 2019).
- Quota sampling: sampling here refers to the researcher getting the participants quotas first before getting a sample (Enago 2019).
- Snowball sampling: in snowball sampling, the participants in the study refer other participants who fit the criteria or characteristics which the researcher needs for the study (Enago 2019).

As introduced in Chapter One, the aim of this research study was to examine whether LED efforts employed by the Central Government of Eswatini, in Mbabane, are producing desired outcomes of reducing poverty. The different stakeholders that are involved in steering LED efforts in Eswatini come from different backgrounds in relation to education, affluence, geographic locations and socio-economic influences. This made an interesting combination and setting for data collection. For the sole reason that Mbabane Municipality and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development are the institutions in charge of steering the LED practice and initiatives with the different stakeholders for the town, purposeful sampling became ideal for this study as they directed me to the best people to do interviews with amongst the stakeholders.

The method of purposive sampling was used to formulate the sample of the research which was under discussion. Purposive sampling further gave a homogenous sample of the residents that were interviewed. With this method, sample respondents are chosen on the basis of the particular

knowledge they have, relationships and expertise relating to a research study (Freedman et al., 2007). The main characteristic in qualitative research is in its reliance on the purposeful sample, instead of relying on the random sample of traditional research (Patton 2002). I also incorporated the snowball sampling approach for this study and it proved to be beneficial.

Participants for the study were selected purposively and interviews were carried out by means of face-to-face interviews and one telephone interview. The norm when conducting interviews in the social sciences sector is that of using face-to-face interviews. However, the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the strict health guidelines that were set in terms of physical contact at the time set for data collection accelerated the need for me to explore alternative ways to carry out interviews, hence the telephone interview for one of the participants.

Carrying out these interviews was ideal as it probed every individual's experience, which encouraged self-reflection on LED issues that were being discussed, which could have otherwise been distorted if group discussions had been done. Another factor that made these individual interviews ideal was that it prevented moderator bias which is more prevalent in group discussions. There were twenty individuals that were selected for these interviews with help from the Mbabane Municipality. These consisted of ten females and ten males but on the day that the interviews were due, only eight females and seven males were able to be interviewed. The rationale for considering gender and sex in this research was to observe if there were differing views in the way these individuals had experienced LED initiatives and their preferred way of interventions to their problems and solutions. Furthermore, five members from the steering bodies of LED stakeholders in the country were interviewed. These steering bodies comprised of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Mbabane Municipality and the CLGF. The way the interviewees were selected is shown in the **Table 3:** below

Table 3: Official stakeholders chosen through purposive sampling

Steering group	Number of participants/interviewees
Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	1
Mbabane Municipality	2

Commonwealth Local Government Forum	2
Female Beneficiaries	8
Male Beneficiaries	7

Interviewees selected from different stakeholders.

4.4.1 Inclusion criteria for each participant group

There were two groups which were identified for interviews. The group entities were referred to and differentiated as “Group One” and “Group Two”. Group One had male beneficiaries only. Group Two had female beneficiaries only. The reason for having gender as a differentiation tool was to observe if the experiences and perceptions of men as beneficiaries of LED programmes differed from their female counterparts. It was also to observe if the sociological effects showed greater gender differences.

Initially, focus group discussions were intended to be carried out in addition to one-on-one interviews but in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, focus group discussions were eliminated to limit human physical contact and ensure safety. Most of the participants were interviewed face-to-face and only one selected telephonically. The breakdown is shown in the **Table 4** below

Table 4: Inclusion and exclusion criteria/interview types

Gender	Age Group	Interview Type	Number of interviews
Male beneficiaries	18-35 years	Telephonic interviews	0
		Face-to-face interviews	7
	18-35 years	Telephone interviews	1

Female beneficiaries		Face-to-face interviews	7
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Interview types selected

The interviews took place with each of the seven males and eight females from Group One and Group Two respectfully. In-depth discussions were done and I was able to gain greater insight into the effects of the LED programmes on each individual since inception of the programmes.

4.4.2 Exclusion criteria for each participant group

Male participants from Group One were between the ages of eighteen and thirty five years old. Beneficiaries from the LED programme that were below the age of eighteen and above thirty five were not considered for the interviews. The reason for this was the consideration that participants in this age group (youth bracket) would be more willing and have transparency with the questions posed. Additionally, this consideration was made with the insight that participants in this age group all had cellular phones which would make telephonic interviews possible. Group Two had females only and the same exclusion criteria used in Group One was applied.

4.5 Data Gathering

Data was gathered by the end of September 2021. The time that it took to conduct each individual interview was approximately two hours during the face-to-face interviews. Only one individual was interviewed telephonically, who was interviewed for longer than the two hours. The data collection procedure was guided by interview questions (Appendix A), as it was a qualitative study. These questions were semi-structured. The contact details of interviewees were provided by officers from Mbabane Municipality. They have the data base of all the participants that have taken part in the LED initiatives and programmes in Mbabane. Participation of beneficiaries was voluntary and this was stated before the interviews were conducted. More data was gathered through academic journals, books, government documents and reports, desk-top reviews and also through the internet.

4.6 Data Analysis

When undergoing qualitative research, there tends to be a lot of textual data. This data often includes interview transcripts, observation notes, note book or diary entries as well as records on the subject matter (Wong 2008). This section of data analysis in qualitative research methods is most different to quantitative research methods. Qualitative methods are more intuitive, creative, thoughtful and theoretic (Basit 2003) and the research focuses on exploring values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts, experiences, and feelings (Tashkori 2003). For this research study, I used interview transcripts, observation notes and archived records to analyse the data that I gathered.

I identified major themes emerging from the interviews and the literature and then I cross compared them to extract meaning and get new categories. I also cross compared this information until saturation to get new meaning. During this process I was recording similarities and differences in the themes and bouncing them off each other for meaning and analysis repeatedly until new categories emerged. These then became my major themes.

4.7 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are important features of all research and meticulous attentiveness to these can make the difference between quality research and poor research (Brink 1993). There are various approaches that can enhance validity and reliability (Babbie & Mouton 2006). According to Le Comple and Goetz (1982), validity in research means having truthfulness as well as accuracy to the way data has been gathered and analysed (1982). There are various types of validity but Campbell and Stanley (1966) were able to define two main validity types that envelop the many types. These are “internal” validity and “external” validity. Internal validity refers to the intensity to which research findings reflect truthfully or the way research findings represent reality than being superfluous (Brink 1993). External validity refers to the way in which research findings represent the true representations applicable across groups (Brink 1993).

Selltiz et al (1976) describe reliability as being known for consistency, stability and repeatability of the account that an informant gives and investigators’ preparedness in collecting and recording

information truthfully and precisely. It touches on the way a research method is able to produce similar and consistent results over repeated testing times (Brink 1993).

To ensure consistency and reliability of the data that I gathered, I meticulously recorded and safeguarded my notes on the subject. I used a voice-recorder to carry out my face-to-face interviews and I recorded my telephonic interview. I then transcribed these to ensure that I do not deviate from the authenticity and validity of the discussions from the respondents.

Interviews with the officers from the steering bodies of LED from the MHUD, Mbabane Municipality and the CLGF were carried out face-to-face using an interview guide that I had prepared beforehand. The interviews were transcribed and then disseminated to add to the emerging themes on the subject matter.

During the process of triangulation, I asked respondents the same questions in different ways to ensure that the information that they were giving me was valid.

4.8 Limitations of the Study

Limitations to the study included being in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic when I was expected to gather data which made face-to-face interviews difficult to carry out. I managed to overcome this limitation by ensuring social distancing and wearing a mask for face-to-face interviews. For the one respondent that had been directly affected by Covid-19, provisions for a telephonic interview were made at a set time and date.

It took approximately four months to have a positive response from government officials with regards to securing interviews. This prolonged the time period in which I had hoped to have collected data. To overcome this challenge I asked for an extension from my supervisor for submitting my draft thesis.

The last challenge was the anticipation from participants to receive compensation for participation in the study even though it was clearly stated before the interviews took place that there would be no compensation for doing such. To overcome this limitation, I explained that the data that was gathered from the study could possibly help the steering bodies for LED in Eswatini meet their holistic needs better for the future. Except for these, there were no major limitations in the study.

4.9 Ethical considerations

In qualitative research studies, there are general guidelines that govern ethical guidance and these focus on how to apply these guidelines in practice, especially when interviewing vulnerable groups especially women (Arifin 2018). The researcher needs to explain the gist of the research as well as how the findings will be used and dispersed. It needs to be clearly stated to respondents that participation in the study is voluntary and that they may discontinue their involvement at any stage of the project.

Participants that participated in this study were given a clear explanation of the research process and were provided with letters of consent that also stipulated the objectives of the study. Each participant that was interviewed face-to-face was given a consent letter to sign before the interview took place. For the participant that could not meet physically, a telephone script was briefly provided with a statement that communicated that the individual was being invited to participate in the research project. Furthermore, a comprehensive statement was read which highlighted the nature of the research project, the identity and institutional affiliation of the researcher, a description of the type of questions that would be asked, as well as an accurate estimate of the time that the telephonic interview would take.

Pseudonyms were used for all participants. For respondents from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Mbabane Municipality and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum it became a bit of a challenge to retain anonymity as they are public figures. Luckily, none of them objected to this. Pseudonyms were still maintained however. I followed all procedure that is in line with ethical standards for dealing with and handling research data and I did not falsely manipulate the findings to suit my research objectives. The interview guide and the ethical clearance sheets from the relevant authorities are attached in the appendices (**Appendix A & Appendix B**)

4.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodology that was used in the research study was discussed and explained. Reasons were stated for the use of the qualitative approach. The chapter also discussed the data gathering techniques used which included the literature review, face-to-face and telephonic interviews. The sampling approach adopted for this study was also identified, followed by a

reflection on issues of validity and reliability, data analysis and lastly, issues of ethical considerations.

5. CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed and analysed. As previously mentioned in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to investigate if the LED efforts that have been put forth by the Central Government of Eswatini have been able to alleviate poverty in Mbabane Town. In discussing my findings, I group the results into comprehensible themes that relate to the research objectives. Findings from the interviews conducted were also laid down and discussed in the most original state possible.

The research objectives of the study are the following:

- a) To outline the nature of the LED discourse.
- b) To explain how LED can contribute to urban poverty alleviation in general and in Mbabane town.
- c) To examine whether LED contributes to urban poverty alleviation in Mbabane town.
- d) To propose recommendations and possible solutions to improve LED strategies for poverty alleviation in Mbabane town.

The research questions that this study wanted to answer are as follows:

1. What is the nature of the LED discourse?

- What is LED?
- What are the guiding principles for defining LED?
- What approaches can be used to illustrate LED?
- What is the national and international context of LED currently?

2. How does LED contribute to urban poverty alleviation in general and in Mbabane town?

- What is the legislative and policy context for LED in Eswatini?

- To what extent is the town of Mbabane poverty stricken?

3. Does LED bolster urban poverty alleviation efforts in general and in Mbabane town?

- What can be done to reduce poverty in towns?

4. What can be done to improve poverty reduction in Mbabane town?

- How can you explain the relationship between poverty reduction and local economic development?

5.2 Findings and analysis from interviews with LED stakeholders.

The findings in this section were gathered and guided by the purpose of the study which has been stated above. Pseudonyms were used to describe interviewees/participants to maintain anonymity. The findings are presented in four parts: Part A entails results found from face-to-face interviews with officers from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development; Part B entails results from the Municipal Council of Mbabane; Part C the Commonwealth Local Government Forum; and Part D entails results found from interviews carried out with beneficiaries of the LED programme. These beneficiaries reside in the peri-urban community in Mbabane which is known as Msunduzha Township. Respondents from these interviews were assigned pseudonyms to maintain anonymity.

Part A: Interviews with Mr. Mavuso and Ms. Dlamini, senior officers from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. The interviews took place after pleasantries had been exchanged and the nature of the study explained.

Understanding LED at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

Question 1: What is your understanding of LED and what is the role of your department with regards to LED? Please motivate your answer

The respondents answer to their understanding of LED was similar across all the respondents' categories as they said that they understood it to be about youth development, skills training,

helping orphans and vulnerable children as well as increasing economic development within the local area.

According to Mr. Mavuso, the main responsibility within his department is co-ordinate and facilitate urban development and to provide housing throughout urban areas in Eswatini. He explained that this is done through effective physical planning. He also explained that they take part in urban housing research and urban development as well as land administration. He explained that this is done through coordinating with all departments within the Ministry, all legislative bodies and all agencies that deal with physical planning and housing.

The second interviewee was Ms. Dlamini. She is also one of the senior officers within the department. Questions were asked to her to see how far her understanding of LED is but she gave similar results to Mr. Mavuso. She reiterated on what the objectives of the ministry were and listed them as the follows:

- Formulating appropriate policies on housing and human settlements;
- Facilitating provision of housing through efficient physical planning, administration of urban land, and housing research.
- Facilitating development control through preparations and approvals of town planning schemes;
- Advising on building plans in controlled areas as stated in the Housing and Building Act, 1968;
- Undertaking research on housing and human settlements;
- Developing strategies that help with improving the provision of housing and human settlements.

By asking this question to the senior officers of the Ministry, I was able to comprehend the role and the objectives that the organization has in linking satisfactory urban development and economic development within urban areas, particularly in Mbabane town.

Question 2: How far is the Ministry with the LED Policy?

According to Mr. Mavuso and Ms. Dlamini, the senior officers within the Urban Development Department at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, carrying out LED practices within urban areas is very slow as they do not have a policy for LED yet but rely on guidelines to draw up their local economic development strategies. A conducive environment for LED to prosper requires that there are proper policies in place to support their initiatives.

This is confirmed by Raul Prebisch who was mentioned in Chapter two when discussing the pro-poor growth model, who makes similar observations. According to Prebisch, a conducive environment for a country's economic development to prosper requires that there are proper policies in place for it to thrive. Furthermore, there needs to be a more effective government role with regard to national development.

Mavuso and Dlamini further explained that most municipalities in the country are still in the early stages of implementing LED schemes as they do not have adequate funds to roll out their LED projects. They further explained that the Ministry currently only has a LED Guide book that they use as reference to show how LED needs to be approached.

Mavuso states that as a Ministry, they hope to encourage more private sector investments for the towns in the country and that they required the help of local municipalities to support these investments especially in the emerging global trend of public-private partnerships that help towns and their surrounding communities to get long term investments.

We are convinced by the Ministry's thrust to encourage more private sector investments in LED that the Ministry is following the enterprise development approach in LED, which is rooted in the pro-poor growth model. This model is said to be a successful technique in LED as confirmed by Plaatjie (2019) in Chapter two.

Question 3: What role has the Eswatini government played in formulating the LED strategy in urban local authorities in the country?

According to Mr. Mavuso and Ms. Dlamini, the government's role has been to facilitate the LED implementation process using the LED Guide book as a reference. This was facilitated through forming a collaboration between the Government of Eswatini, Commonwealth Local Government

Forum and urban municipalities. The guidelines prescribe the need for this relationship, as stated earlier in Chapter three.

“The programme has been administered in all the urban local government authorities of the country and its role is to increase economic growth in local towns,” Mavuso stated.

Ms. Dlamini stated that the Ministry organized a workshop in 2018 which consisted of various stakeholders which included personnel and managers from town councils and municipality’s in the whole country, community representatives from the towns, chiefs, and 59 rural councils. During this workshop specialists in LED gave presentations on what LED entails and examples of successful case studies in African countries and globally were presented. All the different stakeholders were segmented into different groups and they were required to come up with proposals that would work for Eswatini. In this way, the participants were able to share ideas on what would best work for their constituents and local authorities.

Tackling LED in this manner proves that that Helmsing (2003) was right in recommending that LED needs to be participatory as stated in Chapter two, so that coordination is ensured through the provision of adequate information, consultations and broad based procedures.

Question 4: What is the aim of the LED guidelines that you have drawn up?

According to Mr. Mavuso and Ms. Dlamini from the MHUD, the aim of the LED guidelines is to guide municipal areas and rural communities on how to facilitate economic growth in their areas and also to hoist the developmental role of municipal areas and rural areas to be engaged in the economic goal which is currently cited in the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Vision 2022 of the country. Dlamini said that the vision 2022 of Eswatini has a twenty-five (25) year span which is from 1997 to 2022 and it states that by the year 2022, Eswatini will be part of the top ten percent (10 %) of the medium human development group of countries that have established sustainable economic development, political stability and social justice, as stated in Chapter three.

Ms. Dlamini did explain however, that most of their plans were set back as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in a lot of political, social and economic instability. This supports Kessides (2007) observation as stated in Chapter two. According to Kessides (2007), African

towns are often left behind in development because of corruption, crime, weak governance as well as inadequate infrastructure.

Question 5: What indicators are you using to measure or monitor the movement towards vision 2022?

This question was asked to find out if the ministry had any indicators to monitor sustainable economic development in the country. Based on the responses from Ms. Dlamini and Mr. Mavuso, the country used its National Development Strategy to guide them in benchmarking education, health, service delivery, economic prosperity, agriculture and environmental sustainability and lastly, governance and corruption.

“I believe there is still room for improving our methods of indices used for measuring economic growth in the country instead of relying on only the Gross National Product and Gross Domestic Product,” said Mavuso.

He explained that improvement had to be made by measuring social conditions within the country such as life expectancy, infant mortality as well as health care. Just from the interviews carried out, it became evident that there was still a lot to be done in terms of formulating policy cohesion for LED between national and local government policies through local development frameworks.

Question 6: In your view, how can LED be better effected in the country’s local towns?

According to Mr. Mavuso, LED can be integrated more effectively if there would be a policy that supports LED specifically and also if the government had more funds to support LED initiatives. He also suggested that LED strategies need to involve all stakeholders during all the stages of LED implementation. This supports Binns and Nel’s (1999) view as stated in Chapter two which states that LED can be effected better if it presents a more people-centred and locality specific alternative to structural adjustment programmes in cities.

“There has to be better collaboration and improved dialogue between the private sector, the local government and civil society organisations for LED to be applied effectively” stated Mavuso.

Ms. Dlamini made an example of Ezulwini town in Eswatini. She stated that the local authority there which is known as Ezulwini Municipality is one that has successfully incorporated an LED project which was outside their mandated scope which is only to provide for Ezulwini community members by providing efficient services and infrastructure which only covers for the rates that they pay. This finding confirms what literature says by Rodriguez-Pose and Tijmstra in Chapter two who states that having an enabling environment in organizational capacity can lead to positive ripple effects that can make LED projects and initiatives successful.

One of their initiatives is that they have empowered women that sell their wares at the Ezulwini Handicraft Market by teaching them about book keeping, cleanliness, branding, customer care and information trade sharing. She explains that the women are now empowered and that their growth is holistic.

Part B: Interviews with Ms. Mkoko (City Economic Development Officer) and Mr. Mdladla (Public Private Partnership Officer) from the Municipal Council of Mbabane.

Question 1: Do you have Local Economic Development programmes or initiatives in your organization?

This question was posed to Ms. Mkoko and Mr. Mdladla who are the senior officers that are in charge of city development and economic growth as well as public private partnership ventures in Mbabane town. From the interviews conducted, it was gathered that the institution has an existing LED strategy in place. However, this strategy is guided by the LED guide book that is provided by the Central Government of Eswatini as there is no policy for LED yet.

“We currently have a LED strategy that has five thrusts. These are city industries development, public-private partnerships, SMME development, transport system development and infrastructure improvement. I will direct you to the officer who is in charge of PPPs who can give you more information in that regard.” Ms. Mkoko stated.

In addition to listing the five pillars which are in the LED strategy for the Municipal Council of Mbabane, Ms. Mkoko said that about 75 percent of the activities that are scheduled in the LED strategy have been successfully achieved.

These include setting up a PPP unit for the municipality, engaging with the business community through business forums, participating fully in government forums to improve ease of doing business in the city of Mbabane, facilitating the establishment of new industries and PPPs, developing and implementing a Mbabane City marketing and tourism strategy. Furthermore, they were able to collaborate with key stakeholders, produce guidelines on local sourcing and community based contracting and providing skills training to small contractors. Lastly, they were also able to facilitate the establishment of a recycling centre, climate smart gardens, and the production of commercial products using reusable waste material. This LED approach ensembles the pro-poor growth approach to development where it empowers the local community and the pro-market approach where it engages with the business community in the facilitation of new industries and PPPs.

This is in line with Grieves (2003) observation that states that an effective LED strategy should have an inclination to extricate the concept of human resource development from skills training programmes. It is also stated by Duarte (2004) in Chapter three that the engine of economic growth in countries comes from business in economic activity which confirms that money can be generated from selling commercial products using reusable waste material.

Mr. Mdladla, the Public-Private Partnership Senior Officer stated in the interview that so far, his office has signed agreements with ten companies who would like to advertise on their landing page every month. He also stated that Mbabane city has WI-FI which can be accessed by about one thousand five hundred users monthly. He says these are some of the things that make an enabling environment for businesses to prosper and as a result is conducive for economic growth. It is unfortunate however, that I was not able to meet any individuals that gave evidence to having experienced using free Wi-Fi but I was given the Wi-Fi password and was able to test it out for myself and it worked.

“ Some of the projects that we have lined up for the 2019-2024 LED strategy under PPPs is that of putting up low cost housing, low cost incubation centres, a family recreational facility which is similar to Badplass resort in South Africa as well as building a bowling alley. These are some of the projects that are in the pipeline but because of the effects of covid-19 and insufficient funds, we are running behind schedule in implementing this. “Mr. Mdladla stated.

According to Mr. Mdladla, the city of Mbabane is well on its way to becoming a smart city and the benefits from this will trickle down to the residents from surrounding communities. A smart city is one that uses information and communication technology (ICT) to have better operational efficiency, share information with the public and to provide a better quality of government service and citizen welfare (TWI 2022). It benefits locals by giving a wide array of benefits such as connected surveillance systems, having intelligent roadways and public safety monitoring (TWO 2022).

Question 2: If yes, what programmes do you currently have in place?

From the interviews, it was deduced that a number of activities were currently running in the town which included training staff on PPP implementation, hosting business forums annually, implementing a tourism strategy for Mbabane, capacitating residents in low income communities as well as helping residents in the town to establish climate smart gardens. These projects were confirmed to be true by beneficiaries. I would say that the LED strategy for Mbabane takes a more hybrid approach as it has elements of pro-poor and pro-poor growth LED approach in that it aides the poor and also hosts business forums which has economic growth effects.

Question 3 “What are the key priorities of the LED strategy for Mbabane town currently?”

According to Ms. Mkozi, the key priorities that their LED strategy focuses on is that of creating enabling infrastructures in town such as good roads, markets, place developments and conducting workshops. Furthermore, she stated that they take part in entrepreneurship development projects which include skills development amongst beneficiaries, business support systems, providing access to markets and lastly, providing access to finance that targets women and youth. This shows

itself that they have a pro-poor and pro-growth approach to LED that also manifests itself in the enterprise and locality approach as it also benefits vulnerable groups with the skills and resources necessary to have an enabling environment for development.

“We also do social entrepreneurship projects and the social mobilisation of cooperatives. We take pride in rebranding Mbabane town and turning it into a smart city.” She stated.

According to Ms. Mkoko, the municipality is trying to move away from the core mandate of catering to domestic household issues for the city and it’s trying to diversify when it comes to their revenue streams. They aim to form strategic partnerships with the community, NGOs, business societies and national government. This has elements of the participatory approach to LED that was mentioned in Chapter two.

In the face-to-face interview with Mr. Mdladla he conveyed that the municipality is involved in tourism development projects such as agro-tourism and eco-tourism in collaboration with communities, the Eswatini Tourism Authority as well as the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs. They would also like to bring Mbabane town to the standard where agricultural value chains are enhanced. The agro-tourism and eco-tourism development projects show themselves in the pro-poor growth model and the smokestack chasing approach as they relate to industries development.

“We are working on feasibility studies on product development and developing the informal sector. There are various waste management projects that are ongoing so there are very good prospects for Mbabane city from a holistic front.” He said.

Question 4: Would you say that LED programmes employed in Mbabane town have an economic growth focus? Please explain your answer

The interviews conducted with the officers from the Municipal Council of Mbabane revealed that some of their programmes have an economic growth focus and that the Mbabane residents benefit from these programmes. They focus on stimulating growth and sustainability of local businesses

within Mbabane and this ensures the promotion and development of SMME towards job creation and ultimately economic growth.

This manifests itself in the pro-poor growth model as it has an economic growth focus and it functions within an enterprise LED approach as first observed in Chapter two. This approach to LED ensures that there is sufficient promotion and development of its SMMEs toward job creation which reduces poverty. Furthermore, the establishment and development of SMMEs are seen as the anchors of development by creating employment and reducing poverty as noted by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2017). As observed in Chapter two, the LED strategies that are used in this model capitalize on sustainable approaches which advocate for poverty reduction over the interests of corporate desires.

Question 5: Do you have any community projects within Msunduzi in Mbabane?"

"Yes. We have set up community projects such as installing a recycling station, facilitating backyard gardens, training informal business owners of shops and hair salons and capacitating them. We also have an orphanage and soup kitchen that we set up and maintain," Mdladla said during the interview.

The informal trade can be defined as a small-scale, semi-legal based enterprise that normally takes place outside bureaucratic public and private sector frameworks (Hart 2008). It is difficult to measure the benefits produced by the informal sector in developing countries and cities but literature points towards it being an important contributor to local economies and employment creation (Chong, 2007). The informal sector is not only vital for local economies but it is also a great way of achieving more sustainable cities. In the case of Mbabane town, the increase of informal trade increases the densities of economic activity, which improves efficiencies of urban services such as public transport systems. In this regard, it appears that the Municipal Council of Mbabane has been successful in unleashing the untapped entrepreneurial potential of the informal sector and having the right regulatory measures to integrate street vendors into their city.

A term that is often found describing informal traders that work for recycling stations is “informal waste workers.” The ILO define this term as people or small and microenterprises that take part in waste management without them being registered and without them being formally charged with providing waste management services (Medina, 2007). The Informal Waste Sector (IWS) has the following sectors that relate to recycling solid waste:

- 1) Informal waste collection- in some localities, often in low-income areas such as Msunduzi Township in Mbabane, which are not served by the Municipal Council of Mbabane, entrepreneurs give this service. What occurs is that the informal collectors of the waste charge a pickup fee to its residents. In Mbabane town, informal traders that take part in this exercise are able to make money (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development 2011)
- 2) Informal recovery of recyclables- this is viewed as the most common way in which individuals collect materials and use them for recycling (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development 2011). In many countries, having waste pickers included as is the case in Eswatini, they have programmes that involve separation at source. This makes it easier for collection.
- 3) Manufacturing activities- some people or groups of people can take part in manufacturing activities that use materials which have been taken from waste as raw materials. In the act of adding value to these waste materials, they can earn even more money than just recovering and selling recyclables. In Mbabane town, many women take part in turning waste material into earrings, pots, bracelets and also turning organic waste into compost.
- 4) Provision of services-people or groups of people can take part in providing waste management services. Some of these include sweeping the streets and bus stations (Medina, 2007).

The community projects found in Msunduzi range from having limited links to the formal economy as well as having direct and strong backward and forward linkages to the formal economy. This can be approached using the pro-poor model and the pro-market model to reduce poverty in the city of Mbabane.

Question 6: If yes, what are they and how have these benefited the community? Please explain

The respondents said that their programmes have benefited the community through job creation especially for women and vulnerable people. They also stated that they have been able to partner with NGOs and companies to run their social programmes sustainably. In this instance it is clear as confirmed by Sen (1993) in chapter two where he confirms that LED should try to ensure that it focuses on preserving its people especially youth and women so that their standard of living is improved and they are afforded more job opportunities.

Question 7: Who are the programmes targeted at?"

The programmes were targeted at vulnerable groups such as women, youth and people living in low-income urban communities. They were also targeted at informal traders and small businesses.

Question 8: What other stakeholders do you collaborate with for your community projects?

Stakeholders that the Municipal Council of Mbabane work with include the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the Eswatini Local Government Authority, Gender Links, Junior Achievement and Urban Local Authorities.

Question 9: What would you recommend for improving community projects and initiatives?

Ms. Mkoko said that she would recommend more collaboration and sharing of funds for community initiatives between national government, local government, private sector, NGOs, development partners and the communities. This statement also does confirm the fact that the success of LED depends mostly on partnerships as also alluded to by Nel (2001) in chapter one, Zaaiker and Sara (2009) and the World Bank (2001) in chapter two who state that managing resources and forming partnerships with different stakeholders helps the community to understand the problems facing them better and creating a shared vision and a distinct set of development objectives which are vital for the success of LED.

Part C: Interview with officer from Commonwealth Local Government Forum

Question 1: Do you have any programmes that deal with economic development/community development in your organization?

Mrs. Dlamini, who is the current LED officer for the Commonwealth Local Government Forum stated that they did have a few projects and programmes currently in place. She also said that they have two main projects in Eswatini. The first one is called the Jo Cox Project and it mainly concentrates on promoting women empowerment in the work place. The second one is the Local Economic Development Project.

The Local Economic Development Project was started in the year 2012 and it was implemented in three local authorities in the country namely; Mbabane, Manzini and Matsapha. She further stated that in 2017, the Local Economic Development Project expanded to ten more local authorities which are; Ezulwini, Mankayane, Ngwenya, Lavumisa, Hlatikhulu, Hlangano, Malkerns, Siteki, Pigg's Peak and Vuvulane.

Question 2: Can you tell me more about the projects that are currently running?

Mrs. Dlamini explained that she was currently finalizing the second phase of the LED project and that she was also implementing the Jo Cox Project which consisted of three groups that are 1.) Women in LED; 2.) Women in Local Government; and 3.) Young women in Local Government.

The women in the LED category include women from the Urban Local Authorities in Eswatini who have small businesses. The second category includes women in local government involve a network of female councilors and senior managers from all Urban Local Authorities in Eswatini who have small businesses. The last category includes junior young female officers from all Urban Local Authorities and it aims to mentor young women.

“Training female officers enables us to have the caliber of people who will one day take leadership positions and also the female youth from the urban communities who are aspiring to be councilors.” Stated Mrs. Dlamini.

Walton (1999) confirms in chapter three that strategic human resource development is an important part of local economic development and that if people are included in the process of introducing,

eliminating, modifying, directing and guiding processes and responsibilities in an inclusive way it makes it easier for them to be well equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out tasks that may be required by institutions.

Question 3: What are the key priorities of LED programmes for Mbabane town currently?

Mrs. Dlamini explained that the key priorities that the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) has is to assist the twelve local authorities in Eswatini to create their LED strategies, except for Mbabane town which already has an existing one. She stated that the LED strategies for the twelve local authorities concentrate on implementing projects such as land acquisition, enabling infrastructures, entrepreneurship development, social mobilisation of co-operatives, stakeholder engagement and participation initiatives, e-governance, town branding, diversifying the local authorities revenue streams, strategic partnerships, tourism development, enhancing agricultural value chains, conducting surveys, enhancing forestry value chains, informal sector development and waste management projects.

This information alludes with the observations that were made by Blakely (1994) and Helmsing (2003) in chapter three as they capture different aspects of the three pivotal categories of LED initiatives which are enterprise development, community economic development and locality development. These initiatives manifest themselves in the pro-poor model and the pro-market model so it would appear that they take up a hybrid approach to economic development to suit their special needs at alleviating poverty in the city and in surrounding areas.

Question 4: Would you say that the LED strategy that is currently in place for Mbabane town have an economic growth focus?

Mrs. Dlamini said that the projects that they have initiated have had the effect of creating jobs which ultimately results in economic growth.

Even though the term “economic development” is often a contested and is often mistaken for “economic growth” as observed by Bergman (2017), it is interesting to note that the LED strategy for Mbabane includes different stakeholders and that their group efforts have the element of

improving economic progress. Mbabane town focuses on activities such as entrepreneurship, new business startups, job creation and increased productivity (Local Economic Development Training Module, 2016). This borrows from the pro-poor model as well as the smokestack chasing model that was discussed in chapter two. As witnessed by Bond (2000, p. 3), in chapter two, pro-poor economic development is one that is structured and has a systematic mode of capital accumulation, which seems similar to pro-poor economic growth in Mbabane town.

Question 5: Do you have any community projects or LED initiatives in Msunduzi Township?

Mrs. Dlamini stated that there were some people from Msunduzi who participated in their Jo Cox Project as part of the LED Network. She explained that the project trained the participants in business entrepreneurship and business management. It also helped participants to be linked with markets through social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. The Jo Cox Project also helped community members on how to write comprehensive business plans and mentoring them to become better at managing their businesses. Mrs. Dlamini further stated that they facilitated competitions where members could stand a chance to win money to fund their businesses. This observation is one that was made by Helmsing (2003) in chapter two when explaining the pro-poor model approach within the community based economic development where it is stated that the community should be included in all the steps towards LED.

This approach to economic development encourages a sense of pride and community camaraderie and it encourages self-actualization and empowerment and for local people, especially women and youth to stimulate public and community services.

Question 6: If yes, who are the projects targeted at?

Mrs. Dlamini said that the projects were targeted at mostly vulnerable groups such as women and the youth as well as people living in low-income urban communities.

Community based economic development is a very important approach when developing vulnerable groups such as women and the youth and this point is confirmed by literature from Helmsing (2001) and Musakwa (2008) in chapter two where they state that people who live in low

income urban communities can stimulate the economy of the community by implementing programmes that would ensure that barriers to entry are removed and that the informal sector is given more importance. They further reiterate that programmes can be focused on to alleviate poverty would be offering credit services to those that desired to start businesses, offering training to business owners that already have existing businesses and also training workers who were previously unemployable to become part of the work force.

Question 7: Are there other stakeholders that you are linked to with regard to most community projects?

According to Mrs. Dlamini stakeholders that the CLGF work with include the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Eswatini Local Government Authority, Gender Links, Junior Achievement and Urban Local Authorities.

This response reiterates with the importance of forming partnerships when attempting to develop community projects. As observed by Canzanelli (2001) in chapter two, participation from different stakeholders is a very important factor to consider when facilitating effective LED and that if this is done well, it can alleviate poverty and contribute towards economic growth. Canzanelli further alludes that for a good partnership to occur, there needs to be ample dialogue that takes place in the initial stages before creating a steady LED foundation using a bottom-up participated approach (Canzanelli 2001).

Question 8: If yes, what assistance do they provide?

During the interview Mrs. Dlamini stated that Junior Achievement provides mostly business training and access to other partnerships and mentorship. Gender Links provides knowledge on gender issues.

Question 9: Would you say that there are any holistic strategies or organizational frameworks in place for LED to thrive in your organization?

When answering this question, Mrs. Dlamini stated that she thought it would be better answered by the local authorities themselves. She acknowledged that nationally, they did not have a policy specific to LED but that the country had LED Guidelines and Private Finance Initiatives Guidelines which aim to guide the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) work being done by local authorities.

Question 10: What would you recommend for improving community projects and initiatives?

Mrs. Dlamini said that she would recommend more collaboration and sharing of funds for community initiatives between national government, local government, private sector, NGOs, development partners and the communities. In chapter two literature from ILO states that the activities of the LED approach should entail gaining access to economic activities and that the practices of LED should be supportive of social and vulnerable people. Furthermore, Canzanelli states that LED needs to aim to be financially, socially, institutionally and environmentally stable. Financial stability in this instance means that LED intervention should be able to cover its own expenses and that it should be able to detach itself as soon as possible from funding of the donor agencies (Canzanelli and Dichter, 2001).

Part D: Interviews and findings for Msunduzi Township LED Beneficiaries

The following section will present results found from single face-to-face interviews as well as the telephonic interview that was carried out with beneficiaries from LED projects and initiatives steered by the Municipal Council of Mbabane. Eight females and seven males were able to be interviewed on the set dates. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the individuals as well as ensure that there was no bias in their responses.

Typologies of beneficiaries

Type 1: Four beneficiaries that work for AMICAALL (Alliance of Mayors Initiative on Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level), a Local Economic Development Initiative.

AMICAALL is a programme that is concerned with forming partnerships and it is represented by various stakeholders of society that include international agencies, non-governmental organizations, vulnerable groups, community-based organizations, private sector and the civil society. Each of them have made positive contributions to the organization based on their areas of expertise.

The first beneficiary to be interviewed was Sibongile, a single mother who is thirty two years old and has two children, aged two and four. The interview took place on the 25th of June, 2021 at a place we had both agreed on. We had a face-to-face interview and strict precautions were followed with regard to COVID-19. Formal introductions were made before I was granted permission to tape record the conversation with Sibongile. The second beneficiary to be interviewed was Xolile. She is twenty six years old and is also being assisted by the AMICAALL programme. Consent regarding the interview was explained and she was also notified that the face-to-face interview would be recorded with strict anonymity and that a pseudonym would be used. Respondents three and four, Jane and Pam were interviewed on the 2nd of July 2021. The interview process was explained and established before the interviews began. Below lays down the contents of our interviews in more detail.

Question 1: Has Mbabane Municipality been able to assist you positively through their AMICAALL programme? Please explain

According to the respondents, being part of AMICAALL has been a good and positive experience in their area because of the way it raises awareness about HIV/AIDS, youth programmes, home based care, education opportunities and giving aid to HIV/AIDS orphans. Sibongile and Jane explained that they were able to start and maintain their small to medium businesses from the fund afforded by the organization.

“AMICAALL changed my life. Before I joined this organization I was a single non-working mother of two but now I have my own business where I sell eggs to make a living and to support my family. My business is growing daily and even though there are some challenges that I face from time to time, I am able to support me and my family. AMICAALL helped me a lot. Because of them I was

able to get an interest-free loan to start my business and I further got business skills that taught me about book keeping and hygiene.” Explained Sibongile.

Only Xolile had an opposing view of the programme,

“Angikhoni kulisebentisa ngendlela yakhona lolusiti ngoba ngidlela emlonyeni kantsi loluhlelo lutsatsa sikhatsi kutsi libe nemuphumelo.” which loosely translates, *“I have so many expenses and immediate needs and I live hand to mouth. Because of this I find it hard to use the help that I get from AMICAALL sustainably,”* Xolile says.

When asked for clarity on what she meant, she said that, it was sometimes difficult to think about saving or to keep track on book keeping when all that was on her mind was figuring out how she would get the next meal for her family so that they do not starve. This response presents a different dynamic in the sense that people who are on survival mode seem not to be able effectively assimilate development programmes in the way that they were intended.

This proves that women have structural problems which also prohibit them from taking advantage of LED support available to them. It is widely known that people who are vulnerable are more likely to have health problems and this risk factors are associated with poor psychological, physical and social health (Aday, 2001). Literature on how to effectively take care of vulnerable women points towards making sure that they have increased access to quality care and that the cost of care should be affordable so that women can effective social resources for coping with vulnerability (Kirsch et al., 2002). To allow women to adapt better to the community ills that they constantly face, it is advised that they implement better strategies that incorporate partnering with communities as well as community-wide agencies, such as community centers, libraries and schools which can decrease their social and health risks (Doak et al., 2001).

Type 2: Four basket weavers that reside at Msunduzi Township

The weaving of baskets is one of many skills that represent African craft and it also represents the culture of many African communities. The art is considered a dying one as it usually lies with the

older generation of women and men that reside in rural areas in Eswatini. The skill is then passed down to the younger generation by the same women and men. The rapid rate of urbanization and cultural change, as well as the growing commercialization of baskets as an art form globally and the increased rate of travel and tourism, has caused a tremendous demand for weaved baskets in art galleries and designers worldwide. As an effect of this, some basket weaving skills and style forms have disappeared completely.

Four face-to-face interviews were done with beneficiaries from the LED programme which is run by the Mbabane Municipality. These interviews consisted of three females and one male. During the course of the interviews it became evident that they had undergone training on how to expand their skills set and creativity for their products so that they meet international standards. The interview process is described in more detail below.

Question 1: Has Mbabane Municipality been able to assist you positively through their AMICAALL programme? Please explain

One lady, Thobile, aged 31, who is a resident of Msunduzi Township describes her delight for having undergone training.

“We have receives a lot of training on how to improve our products so that they meet international standards. We thank the municipality so much for this programme. I am now able to make a lot of money from selling baskets and I even get orders from overseas now. This could not have been possible if the municipality did not intervene. I am so very happy, “she says.

It can be argued that the increased level of commercialization of basket weaving also has a negative backlash. However, for the four interviewees that are basket weavers, it has immensely changed their lives for the better in getting more money and acquiring skills. When interviewed, Jabulani, aged thirty five, celebrates how being a part of the basket-weaving club allowed him to explore more creative ideas to weave his products by even using recycled materials such as plastics instead of using only glass. This adds a positive element to the growing rate of plastic pollution in towns

as it can be recycled to make beautiful art. This is what was deduced from the other two respondents, Zandile, aged 24, and Zanele, aged 31, also from Msunduzi community.

“I can make baskets using plastic and hemp, which is a special type of grass. Through the training that I have received, I am now able to also create beautiful earrings and handbags using recycled materials. I cannot believe the amount of money that I am making just from using my talent. I am also now able to support my mother who is dependent on me for an income, “said Jabulani (29), the fourth and last respondent to be interviewed.

Type 3: Two owners of hair salons

One of the main aims of the LED programme is to equip budding entrepreneurs in the local areas with skills and business training so that they can better manage their small businesses and that they can make healthy profits. During the analysis stage on how the municipality can best do this, one of the sectors that were looked at was the hairdressing sector. They observed that there was an increasing number of people in the town who had basic hair dressing skills and ran their operations from under small shacks or from the side of the road of the busy town. The institution then took it upon itself to train a few of these individuals.

Amongst the ones that benefited from the programme were two beneficiaries that agreed to take part in an in-depth face-to-face interview with me. The first interviewee, is Xolani, a 22 year old male who runs his own hair cutting business. The second interviewee was Philile, who also owns a hair salon.

“There is a huge demand for men and women who want to cut their hair and do the latest hairstyles. Before Ms. Dlamini from the Municipality contacted me, I had a shack where I was doing my business. They then said they would build a proper formal structure for me, provided that I take part in their entrepreneurship program and that I pay a monthly fee of only E 35.00” explained Xolani.

When I interviewed Philie, the second interviewee, she described the help that the municipality gave them as very valuable. They expressed however, their disappointment that there were no hairdressing colleges or intuitions in the town that could support the hair dressing industry. Secondly, there was a huge gap in the critical skills that are needed to become a successful hairdresser. Lastly, it was vital for the town to invest in providing more training in the hair dressing industry.

Type 4: Corn growers and sellers

Corn growing and selling is one of the ways in which local community members sustain their livelihoods and get some money. There were two beneficiaries that grow and sell corn and this was speared by the LED programme run by the municipality in Mbabane. During the face-to-face interviews it was gathered that the local residents take agriculture trade seriously and that they would like to expand their trading relationships to a global level at some point.

“It was during mealie season two years ago when Mr.Dlamini from the municipality approached a number of us who were selling mealies at the bus rank in Mbabane Town,” explains Fikile, a twenty three year old female.

During the interviews it was ascertained that individuals that are part of the corn growing and selling business are optimistic that they would make agriculture development a big part of the Eswatini economy. These respondents are one of many local residents who make a living by selling fruit and vegetables. Elisa, the second respondents explains that the municipality has allowed her to utilize their market structures to sell their mealies. Mr. Dlamini, who is in charge of the local development programme explained to me that the institution supports youth local dwellers to grow and sell their vegetables in the market stalls that they provide for the town.

Even though the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations acknowledges that urban agriculture is an illegal practice in most countries, they have estimated that approximately eight hundred million people globally take part in urban agriculture and that this has helped in cushioning them against rising food costs and insecurity (Inter Press Service, 2014).

Type 5: Recycling

There is a Municipal Council of Mbabane- European Union Project that is about Waste Minimisation and Management initiatives that has been funded over four million emalangeni by the European Union Local Authority and it is expected to be used over a period of three years (The Nation, 2019). This project, according to Dlamini, has benefited numerous residents of Mbabane, including four residents of Msunduzi Township who were interviewed for this study.

During our interview with one of the four male respondents who have undergone training provided by MCM. Mr.Zwane

“By being part of the programme provided by the municipality, we are now able to go into larger scale opportunities with regards to recycling and waste management. With this knowledge we can push Eswatini’s position in the waste management ecosystem.” Explains Zwane, one of the male respondents.

Collective summary of findings

In addition to the findings gathered from the interviews above, it has been ascertained that LED projects and initiatives that have been carried out so far have had a generally positive influence on the residents from the township of Msunduzi in Mbabane. Some of these positive factors are as follows:

- Msunduzi has benefited from a dry sanitation project whose aim is to give adequate sanitation solutions and raise awareness in the community.
- Waste management initiatives were also introduced to the community of Msunduzi. These included training on waste management and recycling. It also encouraged members of the community to take part in composting and having their own backyard gardens.
- The municipality has taken great strides in empowering females to start their own small businesses. It has also capacitated them with the business skills that are needed to successfully run enterprises.

- The Municipal Council of Mbabane has managed to link community members that are interested in starting their own business enterprises with banks and money lending institutions. The municipality then acts as surety for these individuals.
- Lastly, from the findings that were collected, it became clear that the LED strategy in Eswatini takes up more of a hybrid form where there are mixture of pro-market approaches and pro-poor approaches to development.

Indicators used to measure the success rate of programmes and initiatives.

When investigating indicators that are used to measure the success rate of programmes and initiatives that are rolled out in local government institutions; the following discoveries were made:

- Apart from economic indicators, it was a challenge to measure the social benefits afforded to residents in local communities.
- The Municipal Council of Mbabane has a public-private sector department which has made partnerships with cooperatives that integrate the public and private sector for development and provide ample infrastructure in the town. The public-private partnerships also help with improving the quality and efficiency of public services. They also aid in providing means of finance to public assets and services. When viewed from this angle, LED strategies employed in Mbabane could be seen as a having an economic growth focus.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented and analysed the findings from the study. This gave an insight into LED efforts that the Eswatini government have put in place for development to thrive in the country. The findings were able to show how the LED approaches that are in place in Mbabane have helped alleviate poverty in the locality and how they can further enhance solutions to further improve their LED strategy for more developmental growth.

6. CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the summary of the study, including the conclusion and recommendations. This chapter takes the reader briefly through the initial aim and research objectives of the study as discussed in chapter one and it enlightens the reader on if the research problem was adequately addressed. Lastly, the chapter shows how this work has contributed to the gap in LED knowledge in Eswatini.

6.2 Research background and objectives

The title of my research study is “THE ROLE OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION: THE CASE OF MBABANE, ESWATINI”. In chapter one, the study introduced the different definitions of LED and what it entails. Furthermore, it introduced the problem statement of the study and the aim, and proceeded to lay down the following research questions:

- a) What is the nature of the LED discourse?
- b) How does LED contribute to urban poverty alleviation in general and in Mbabane town?
- c) Does LED bolster urban poverty alleviation efforts in general and in Mbabane town?
- d) What can be done to improve poverty reduction in Mbabane town?

The study introduced the discourse of LED and the problems that this subject seeks to correct in society. This was done by referring to LED research work done by Nel (1999), Syrett & Silva (2001), Meyer-Stamer (2003), Zaaiker & Sara (1993), Nel and Humphrys (1999) and Canzanelli (2001) among others. The scope of the study was identified which is Msunduzi Township in Mbabane. The case study was approached according to Stake’s (2005) phenomena when conducting a case study which is:

- a) The case study was bound.

- b) There were common themes that were identified and cross examined in the study.
- c) The patterns of the data were analysed to develop the overarching issues.
- d) Triangulation of key observations for bases of interpretation were done.

6.3 Research procedure and methods

I used a qualitative research approach to respond to the research objectives and research questions that my study sought to answer. I discussed this in detail in chapter four. Using a qualitative research design became ideal as I was able to carry out face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders in LED to address the key research questions of the study. Carrying out these interviews helped me a lot as I was able to be provided by rich descriptive data which I was able to analyse. It was best to use a qualitative research design for a nature of this study as it showed itself to be superior at simplifying and managing data and taking care not to destroy the complexity and context as observed by Atieno (2009).

I used the literature to guide me during the process of theme formation so that I could formulate the best questions to shape the interview sessions in an open way that did not restrict the interviewees. Respondents were free to speak their minds and these sessions were recorded as permission had also been granted from them. I used all the information in my avenue to prepare for this study including consulting literature, books, government documents and journal articles. I deployed the purposeful sample technique as my mission was to have in-depth conversations with people who were directly affected by the LED initiatives and programmes. The interviews were segmented into four parts. Part A entailed interviews with senior officers from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. Part B shows results with interviews from officers from the Municipal Council of Mbabane. Part C shows interview results from the officer from the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and part D entails results found from interviews carried out with beneficiaries from the LED programme. I transcribed all recorded interviews.

Once I had recorded the interviews, I cross referenced the information until saturation was reached and I compared its similarities and differences up until common themes emerged that were able to answer my research questions.

I ensured that all respondents knew their rights which were consistent with the proper practice of ethical research which was that they could refuse being interviewed if they wished so and that they could withdraw from the conversation at any point of the interview if need be. Respondents were told how the findings would be communicated on completion of the study. Transcribed data was kept secured in my password protected laptop which was to be erased as soon as the study was completed.

6.4 Limitations of the study

There were a few limitations that were experienced when taking part in this study. The first one was the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic which stalled my progress on when I could carry out face-to-face interviews. Luckily, I was eventually able to schedule these interviews, ensuring that all participants wore a mask and that sufficient social distance was maintained.

It took about four months to schedule interviews with government officials, which also stalled the period that I had envisaged to have collected data by. To overcome this limitation, I requested an extension period from my supervisor which was granted.

The last challenge was the anticipation from participants to receive compensation for participation in the study even though it was clearly stated before the interviews took place that there would be no compensation for doing such. To overcome this limitation, I explained that the data that was gathered from the study could possibly help the steering bodies for LED in Eswatini meet their holistic needs better for the future.

6.5 Findings and analysis

As I had previously mentioned, findings from this study were analysed until saturation was reached before any emerging themes remained that were able to answer my research questions. The following section presents the findings based on the following themes:

a) The nature of the LED discourse

The study presented information alluding to the fact that LED is cross cutting and has many different faces which can sometimes make it difficult to define. It can be summarized as the collective efforts from different sectors such as the community, the civil society and non-governmental organisations collaborate and find ways to maximize the resources found in their areas for the socio-economic benefits of all local residents. Carrying out this study showed that if resources from a locality are distributed accordingly and effectively, local economic development can be a sustainable way to support local residents. The parameters in which LED facilitation work the best is under community participation, sustainability, helping vulnerable groups including women and orphans as well as the proper manipulation of endogenous local resources as posited by Canzanelli (2001).

The nature of LED is further understood precisely when examined against certain guiding principles that were put forward by Meyer-Stamer (2003) which center on creating favorable opportunities in a locality, promoting businesses, identifying local resources and creating a healthy balance of business needs and demands. LED manifests itself in different models known as the pro-market approach and the pro-poor approach which in essence are about how to cultivate more business opportunities and investments attractions to an area and also how to alleviate poverty by improving the social and economic needs of the poor.

In the case of Mbabane LED manifests itself in formal and informal business structures which gives off more of a hybrid model approach that entails both the pro-market approach and the pro-poor approach. This includes public private partnerships, SMMEs development, city industries development, improving human resource skills and improving transport and infrastructure development within the town and its surrounding areas.

After having carried out interviews with local residents, it was deduced that their understanding of what LED entails is to ensure activities such as youth development, skilled and unskilled labor training, and helping vulnerable groups.

b) LED contribution to urban poverty alleviation in general and in Mbabane town

To understand the contribution that LED has to urban poverty alleviation, the study showed two models that LED often manifests itself in. The first one being the pro-poor growth model which is known as economic growth that is holistically beneficial to the poor. This model vouches more for

systems that are sustainable that help lessen the poverty situation of a community more than favoring corporate interests.

For Mbabane town, this model shows itself by supporting local communities with sustainable projects such as putting up recycling centers, advocating for having climate smart backyard gardens, compost packaging and having an active facilitation of skills training entities for local community members.

Another way of looking at how LED contributes positively towards poverty alleviation is to examine how it manifests itself in the pro-market approach model. This model is also known as the smokestack chasing model. It looks at ways in which potential investors can be lured into a local area by giving favorable incentives and packages. These packages could include affordable land rates and better tax incentives. In the case of Mbabane, it was found that public private partnerships, city industries development and good transport systems and infrastructure were some of the factors that has the potential to draw in investors into the city.

c) LED bolstering urban poverty alleviation efforts in general and in Mbabane town.

In the case of Mbabane, projects that were seen to bolster urban poverty alleviation included having a dry sanitation project which gives adequate sanitation solutions and raise awareness in the locality. More projects included having effective waste management projects as well as proving skills training to its residents. Females are also supported in starting their own business and are also given the necessary startup capital to support their business needs. These LED efforts bolster urban poverty alleviation efforts in poverty alleviation.

d) Improving poverty reduction in Mbabane town.

To improve poverty reduction in Mbabane, it was discovered that city industries development, effective public private partnerships and transport infrastructure be improved. Policies that support these initiatives were found lacking and it was seen that proper policies need to be put up. Furthermore, to improve poverty reduction it was discovered that there needs to be both service provision and developmental roles. The capacity to carryout LED plans and initiatives needs to be given enough thought for effective poverty reduction strategies. Lastly, LED efforts need to be financed properly and they need to be able to maintain themselves and not to depend on donor funders only.

6.6 Recommendations

Carrying out this study has explained the nature of the LED discourse in general as explained in chapter two, as well as the principles and models which govern it for the global and Eswatini setting. From the interviews and information that was gathered from different stakeholders within the locality, a few things stood out. The first was that the success of LED initiatives and programmes in Msunduzi are as a result of having one vision when formulating the meaning, approaches and the range of LED activities between stakeholders from the local level and the national level so that LED efforts can be better experienced.

Furthermore, stakeholders are encouraged to strike a balance between pro-poor and pro-growth approaches to LED so that the LED efforts result in inclusive growth for local economics which creates jobs in the process, contributing to poverty reduction. What distinctly stood out as well was that to maximize the potential of a locality, which is Msunduzi in this instance, there needs to be a planned approach to LED which enables local governments to mobilize stakeholders and resources.

Recommendations to the data that was gathered is broken down into the following emerging sub sections: policy issues, institutions, capacity to plan and implement LED, financing LED, and lastly, knowledge and learning.

1. Policy issues

When going through literature on LED in most Southern African countries what seemed to emerge is that there are no proper LED frameworks that guide LED planning and implementation. It was found to be the same with the case of Eswatini. What this does is that it results in some projects being isolated and not being integrated and coordinated well with other local governments and economic policies and programmes. The process of adopting LED relates to the promotion of decentralized policies and constitutional strengthening of local governments which try to respond to the growing demand for jobs and services from local citizens in communities.

Recommendation

- Recommendations for policy issues with regard to LED is that the national government in Eswatini needs to formulate a policy that allows for the effective facilitation and implementation of LED within its urban towns and peripheries. This policy would act as a blueprint to guide LED planning and implementation as well as help in identifying the roles of stakeholders in LED. This would ensure that there is an integration of LED efforts within decentralization policies.
- Another observation that was made with regard to policies is that there needs to be a complete synergy where urban and rural development policies connect. It was deduced that there is a need to lobby for user friendly laws and legislation (SLEDS 2026, p. 12) so that the business climate is improved and that red tapes are removed for ease of doing business.
- The last point that emerged from a policy perspective for urban development and poverty alleviation is that if competition is enhanced by having policies in place then the product market function would be improved by means of deregulation and facilitating entry and ultimately businesses would be stimulated and their productivity and productivity improved (Nicoletti & Scarpetta 2002).

2. Institutions

It has been my observation when taking part in this study that LED does not have a specific mandate for local government in Eswatini, even though local governments are supposed to be shifting from providing services only to also provide more developmental roles. This has been a drawback as it has led to lack of funding, as well as unclear roles which has most local governments concentrating on administering projects instead of being proper facilitators of development at local levels. Lastly, it is evident that Eswatini has not made LED institutionalized at government level and instead they have municipalities concentrate on these.

Recommendations

- The first recommendation is to make sure that LED policies are institutionalized through the proper regulatory and legal frameworks.
- The second one is that there needs to be an identification process that looks into finding the most appropriate location for LED processes and operations at the different levels of government.
- There has to be enough capacity building for the institutionalization of LED to be more effective.

3. Capacity to plan and implement LED

There is a capacity challenge in local governments to effectively implement LED. The processes involved in LED implementation include data gathering, facilitating stakeholder involvement, coordinating the planning and implementation of LED, monitoring and evaluation as well as communicating LED outcomes. This cannot be done effectively without capacity, which is the general problem in Eswatini.

Recommendation

- There needs to be a way to position LED appropriately within the central and local government structures.
- There has to be an increase in capacity development programmes that prop up the local government's duty to plan and carry out LED thereby facilitating local development. It has been witnessed that capacity building gives community members a sense of ownership and empowerment when it comes to deciding what they want their future developments to look like as observed from the Rural Economic Policy Program (1996).

- Furthermore, capacity building has an element of strengthening confidence, skills set, knowledge and resources that expand from capacity building efforts on projects that are run by community partners (Rural Economic Policy Program, 1996).

4. Financing LED

One of the biggest challenges that face most Southern African countries is that to effectively roll out LED, there needs to be sufficient funding which is usually in very short supply.

Recommendation

- One of the indicators for public capital investments for infrastructure development should be the influence on LED. LED should also have a mandate to stimulate public private sector partnerships and also engage private finance establishments to aid the informal sector.
- Financing LED is important as this would promote the locations investment destination by improving municipal infrastructure and developing business and industrial parks as suggested by the SLEDS (2016). Improving on this function would result on greater global interconnectivity. Oman (2000) agrees with these sentiments and states that municipalities should always be on the lookout for the players who have the potential to invest in the city and that they should be ready to develop strategies that will give them an edge to succeed (Oman 2000).

5. Knowledge and learning

LED experiences on the ground need to be properly documented so that learning is promoted. The outcomes from LED have not been properly documented and frequently shared with stakeholders at national and local levels.

Recommendations

- There should be more documented case studies on LED in Eswatini.

- To promote learning in LED practices, there needs to be more in-country and cross country sharing.

6.7 Conclusion

This study looked into the role that LED has in reducing poverty in Mbabane town in Eswatini. Chapter one introduced the research problem that the study was seized with. Chapter two incorporated the literature review which touched on LED, the pro-poor model and the pro-market model. Chapter three highlighted development and how the LED space in Eswatini manifests itself. Chapter four explained the qualitative research design that was followed in the study and chapter five showed the findings and explained how the data was analysed. The last chapter, which is chapter six gave the conclusion of the whole study and made necessary recommendations based on the findings from the study.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

PART A: Interviews with senior officers from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

Question 1: Background

- What is the name of your organisation?
- What is the role of your department within the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development?
- What is your understanding about local economic development?

Question 2: Understanding LED

- How far is the Ministry with the LED Policy?
- What role has the Eswatini government played in formulating the LED strategy in urban local authorities in the country?
- What is the aim of the LED guidelines that you have drawn up?
- What indicators are you using to measure or monitor the movement towards vision 2022?
- In your view, how can LED be better effected in the country's local towns?
- What is your understanding of LED? Please motivate your answer
- How does LED contribute to urban poverty alleviation in general and in Mbabane town?
- How does LED bolster urban poverty alleviation efforts in general and in Mbabane town?
- What can be done to improve poverty reduction in Mbabane town

PART B: Interviews with officers from the Municipal Council of Mbabane

Question 1: Background

- What is the name of your organisation?
- What is the role of your department in the Municipal Council of Mbabane?
- What is your understanding about local economic development?

Question 2: Understanding LED

- Do you have LED programmes or initiatives in your organisation?
- If yes, what programmes do you currently have in place?
- What are the key priorities of the LED strategy for Mbabane town currently?
- Would you say that LED programmes employed in Mbabane town have an economic growth focus? Please motivate your answer
- Do you have any community projects within Msunduzi in Mbabane?
- If yes, what are they and how have these benefited the community? Please explain
- Who are the programmes targeted at?
- What other stakeholders do you collaborate with for your community projects?
- What would you recommend for improving community projects and initiatives?

PART C: Interview with officer from Commonwealth Local Government Forum

Question 1: Background

- What is the name of your organisation?

Question 2: Understanding LED

- What is your understanding of LED?
- Do you have any programmes that deal with economic development or community development in your organisation?
- Can you tell me more about the projects that are currently running?
- What are the key priorities of LED programmes for Mbabane town currently?
- Would you say that the LED strategy that is currently in place for Mbabane town have an economic growth focus?
- Do you have any community projects or LED initiatives in Msunduzi Township?
- If yes, who are the projects targeted at?
- Are there other stakeholders that you are linked to with regard to most community projects?
- If yes, what assistance do they provide?
- Would you say that there are any holistic strategies or organizational frameworks in place for LED to thrive in your organization?

- What would you recommend for improving community projects and initiatives

Part D: Interviews and findings for Msunduzi Township LED Beneficiaries

Typologies of beneficiaries

Type 1: Four beneficiaries that work for AMICAALL (Alliance of Mayors Initiative on Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level), a Local Economic Development Initiative.

Question 1: Has Mbabane Municipality been able to assist you positively through their AMICAALL programme? Please explain

Type 2: Four basket weavers that reside at Msunduzi Township

Question 1: Has Mbabane Municipality been able to assist you positively through their AMICAALL programme? Please explain

Type 3: Two owners of hair salons

Question 1: How has the municipality been able to assist you through their LED programme? Please explain

Type 4: Corn growers and sellers

Question 1: How has the municipality been able to assist you through their LED programme? Please explain

Type 5: Recycling

Question 1: How has the municipality been able to assist you through their LED programme? Please explain

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORMS TO PARTAKE IN RESEARCH STUDY

Title of study: The role of Local Economic Development in Urban Poverty Alleviation: Case of Mbabane, Eswatini.

I humbly request your participation in this research study. My name is Pamela Stromvig and I am currently enrolled for a M.A in Development Studies at the University of South Africa. Please meticulously read the information below and be open to ask questions where clarity is needed.

You are not forced to participate in this study and you are free to stop whenever you wish to.

Purpose of study: to examine the role that local economic development has in urban poverty alleviation in Mbabane town, Eswatini.

Importance of the study: it will add to the gap in knowledge of LED in Eswatini as there is very little research that has been done on it thus far.

Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are allowed to decline participation or stop the interview at any time you wish to.

Process: The interview will be face-to-face and it will take about 60 minutes to complete. I will record our conversation.

Confidentiality: I will publish the findings from this research study. I do however, promise to keep your name anonymous and to use a pseudonym. I will destroy my notes and delete the contents of our recordings as soon as I have the data that I need. Published contents for this study will be shared with the Municipal Council of Mbabane, who are the main steering body for LED in Mbabane town.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me, Pamela Stromvig, on 66049644@mylife.unisa.ac.za or stromvigpamela@gmail.com

Consent to participate in Local Economic Development study

Participants Name: _____

I have read and understood this consent form and queries have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

