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UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONALS IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: SUPPORTING CAPACITIES FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

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OUTLINE

- Profession and professional
- Rise of information age and professionals
- Indigenization
  - South Korea, Japan, Germany, Afrikaners in South Africa
- Thought leadership
- Local as sub-national
- concluding remarks

PROFESSIONALS

- Professional comes from profession
- Professional is a person who follows an occupation or calling together with other people who have the same calling
- It assumes some form of educational experience
- Professionals use their knowledge and skills to earn their living

PROFESSIONALS

- Professionals work hard, serve other people, can be depended upon for their good judgment
- Provide thought leadership
- Professionals have gained societal importance with the rise of information age
- They form part and backbone of services economy

OVERVIEW OF CAPACITY CHALLENGES

- Capacity refers to the ability of individuals, institutions, and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner

- An overview of capacity challenges may point where capacity development investments could be focused

- Detailed roadmap for capacity development interventions

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

- Recognise that local development involves collaborative efforts from different actors

- Doing so effectively involves playing multiple roles

  - Convenor, planner, direct service provider, overseer of other service providers

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

- Local development as an important driver of a country's progress towards achieving its development priorities

- Local development as a process that leverages the comparative and competitive advantages of locality, mobilises its specific physical, economic, social, political resources and institutions

- Points to capacities to assess a situation and define a vision and mandate

LOCAL

- Local in this context is used to mean sub-national
- Local can be differentiated according to role, structure, and geographic level of government
- Local development is a change process
- Like other change processes, often leads to resistance especially if it involves a redistribution or re-assignment of resources

LOCAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

- Similarly, raising expectations and failing to deliver on them can also create frustrations

- Developing and supporting some quick pay-off outputs could mitigate such tensions

DECENTRALISATION

- Decentralisation refers to the restructuring of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional, and local levels

- Decentralisation should create an enabling environment for local development

NURTURING CAPACITIES

- Need to link organisational capacity development to societal capacity

- Nurturing capacities at local level means adopting approaches that may not be conventional

- Build on the challenges and opportunities that play out quite specifically at this level

NO PROFESSION CAN SUCCEED ACTING ALONE

- Barriers exist in terms of professions
  - Teachers, nurses, engineers, etc
- Need to break barriers
- Need to recognise that no profession acting alone can deliver local development and a more equitable society

KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPMENT

- One head cannot contain all wisdom
- Need to share knowledge in a progressive way that can contribute to a more equitable and sustainable world
- Supporting capacities for local development is one way professionals can contribute to a better world for all

SOME CONTRIBUTIONS

- Professionals could be well placed to play a wider role in the locality's economic, political, and civil society

- Help generate wealth, sustain prosperity and competitiveness of local economy

- Help politicians originate policies and legislation

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

- Professionals ought to provide thought leadership

- Thought leadership (in this context) as initiation of new directions, the basis for innovative change, advocating a better idea, promoting a better way of doing things

- Enables us to define leadership as the initiation of new directions and categorise implementation of new ideas as a managerial activity

INDIGENISATION OF KNOWLEDGE

- Indigenisation of knowledge and technical solutions
- Local initiatives based on local geography
- South Korea
- Japan
- Germany
- Afrikaners in South Africa
  - SANLAM, SANTAM, RAU, UP, UFS

SUPPORTING CAPACITIES FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

- Identified key areas where professionals could contribute
- Capacities to assess situation and define vision and mandate
- Supporting public administration reform
- Capacities to link local development processes to national strategies
- Capacity to budget, manage and implement

SUPPORTING CAPACITIES FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

- Capacities to manage for better service delivery

- Capacities to develop local leadership

- Mobilising resources and developing partnerships

- Capacities to create multi-disciplinary teams

- Capacities to work as a collective

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

- Local development is a change process
- What makes sense in one region or locality may have different results in another locality
- So we can talk of tensions resulting from technical solutions generated in one part of the world or one part of the country and implemented elsewhere

CONCLUSIONS

- Leadership is not a beauty contest
  - If you think it is a beauty contest, you may not be the most beautiful one in that contest
- Decision-making is sometimes not for the faint-hearted
- People do not have to like you BUT THEY MUST TRUST YOU
  - If they trust you, they will keep coming back to you
- You have to be mentally tough

CONCLUSIONS

- If positive contributions are to be made by professionals to local development, here at Ingquza Hill Local Municipality, there is a need for a new form of professionalism

- Knowledge is power but sharing knowledge can contribute to progress towards a more equitable and sustainable world

CONCLUSIONS: LOCAL LEADERSHIP

- Local leadership is a core issue in local development

- Successful local development requires local champion that can rally different stakeholders around a common cause and can manage tensions that may arise from local development processes

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Need to be more clearer about challenges facing the locality
  - Poverty, employment
- Need to more clearer about what we mean by local development
- Need to be clear about outcomes
- Need to take the initiative as an investment not a cost
  - Need to resource the initiative otherwise it will remain a pipedream

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Commission a report that will map local stakeholders
  - Mapping civil society and community organisations
- Commission a study that will provide a concise overview of capacity challenges and a detailed roadmap for capacity development interventions
- Undertake needs assessment with regards to the development of local leadership

OVERALL: TRANSPARENCY

- I would like to encourage all of us to be more transparent with this initiative
- The initiative is in its form and nature is expected to generate public goods that are of interest to the public
- That is to say, the initiative should be seen as a service to the public

OVERALL: MANDATES

- Emphasise that we do not attend meetings for the sake of attending meetings
- We generate mandates from meetings
- By end of this meeting we should have generated mandates for those we trust to execute such mandates
- We hope that those we choose to act on our collective behalf will not let us down including those that lack voice and agency

Thank You

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