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Local Economic Development as a Permanent Management Strategy Without Solutions: Why Led Perpetuates Conundrums Without Solving Them? Perspectives From Social Entrepreneurs in Polokwane Local Municipality

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Abstract:

This paper aims to critique how Local Economic Development (LED) as a permanent management strategy fails to address the challenges facing the most underserved communities in Polokwane Local Municipality. Understanding that LED is part of the central policy mechanism for local government with an aim to address entrenched structural constraints such as poverty, corruption, unemployment and inequality, persistence social and economic woes continue to characterize Polokwane Local Municipality. The paper critically argues that LED is perceived to be more of a management tool for bureaucratic processes rather than a tool that solves the challenges in the communities. Hence, most of the communities continues to endure social and economic problems. The unfortunate tragedy and milieu are that young people bear the brunt of such management tendency of LED, rather than using it to advance people's lives and livelihoods. Thus, the current status-quo in Polokwane Local Municipality is that LED provides short-term relief rather than providing long-terms sustainable solutions to challenges. Using a quantitative research approach, this paper collected primary data to critique the dynamics of LED from social entrepreneurs. The findings suggest that while LED offers promising interventions to address socio-economic challenges, it falls short of offering long-lasting and sustainable solutions for economic and social transformation. This paper contributes to the ongoing scholarly debate on LED policy and implementation and calls for stringent measures to improve LED initiatives and have community-embedded solutions such as having the interventions of social entrepreneur in LED pillars.

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Introduction

Malizia, Feser, Renski, and Drucker (2021) state that as competitive factors evolve, current solutions lead to new challenges that need addressing; thus, LED is an ongoing process where issues are managed but not resolved. White (2022), Lebopa (2023), and Maenetja (2024) characterize LED as a process wherein local participants engage in actions that directly affect their future and living standards. This participatory approach (LED) seeks to enhance the competitiveness of a local area while recognizing that global changes cause uneven development patterns, resulting in growth for some regions and decline for others (White, 2022). The aim of LED is to boost a community's economic prospects to improve the quality of life for all and secure its economic future (White, 2022). To enhance the conditions for economic growth and job creation, collaboration among partners from the public and private sectors, social entrepreneurs, and NGOs is essential.

In some cases, LED depends on the social capital available in an area. It works with regional institutions, organizations, and networks to tackle local economic opportunities and challenges (Malizia et al., 2021). The practice of LED indicates a shift from representational forms of engagement to participatory forms. While conventional development focuses on national growth with resources directed towards disadvantaged areas, LED aims to find ways for individuals in all communities to engage in the development process (Malizia et al., 2021). Engagement reduces the likelihood of conflict and fosters social and political cohesion. Therefore, LED occurs within a defined region, which may be influenced by geography or culture. This proximity creates an atmosphere that promotes growth, innovation, and progress. This occurs because local stakeholders possess a greater insight into their needs and requirements (Leigh, 2024). However, Mensah, Bawole, and Ahenkan (2013) and Malizia et al., (2021) concur that the primary goals of LED are to increase employment, assist and encourage and develop SMMEs, enhance the region's economic environment and prospects, and use businesses as a tool to combat poverty. Against this background of LED, this paper argues that the current milieu of LED appears to inspire a sense of no confidence in the communities because of the persistence social and economic woes. The bone of contention here is also a way in which the LED programs and initiatives are used as a way of compliance rather than providing durable solutions that can assist people to be out of vicious circle of poverty. In fact, the central argument of this paper is that LED is considered as a permanent management tool for compliance by municipalities.

Literature Review

Problem Statement

LED has been extensively established as a key strategy for fostering inclusive growth and reducing poverty in municipalities throughout South Africa. The empirical evidence by Mashabela and Thusi

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(2023) indicates that LED initiatives frequently do not meet their desired objectives. Data from Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) consistently reveal unpalatable unemployment figures, especially among young people, in Limpopo Province, wherein the province has recorded a significant 5,2% drop in unemployment, currently standing at 29,8% from 35% in the second quarter of 2025 (Nekhavhambe, 2025). In Polokwane Local Municipality, unemployment is deeply rooted, showing minimal integration into formal economic sectors even with persistent LED initiatives. Additionally, the Auditor-General of South Africa's (AGSA) reports have emphasized persistent problems like under-spending, improper allocation of resources, and an absence of quantifiable results in local economic development initiatives (AGSA, 2023-2024; AGSA, 2025). These results reveal a discrepancy between the aim of the policy and its effectiveness in execution. Thus, the main problem that this paper ought to tackle is the contradiction of LED as an enduring management strategy that maintains institutional functions without yielding equivalent socio-economic advancements. It specifically examines why LED remains a prevalent strategy in Polokwane Local Municipality despite concrete evidence of its limitations. By prioritizing these viewpoints, the research aims to critically assess whether LED, as it stands now, reinforces systemic issues instead of addressing them.

Conceptual foundations of Local Economic Development

Development is a continuous and intricate process where the environment significantly influences the current emphasis on LED-focused governmental initiatives (Enaifoghe & Vezi-Magigaba, 2022). Within South Africa, LED is deemed essential for various reasons, such as creating jobs and employment opportunities; increasing income levels, enabling individuals to access services; broadening a municipality's tax and revenue base; improving municipal services and infrastructure; fostering human resource development; creating new institutions for sustainable advancement; and linking developed with underdeveloped areas (Koma, 2012; Enaifoghe & Vezi-Magigaba, 2022; Makhaye & Subban, 2024). LED seeks to empower the most at-risk, disenfranchised, and impoverished groups within local communities to earn sufficient income to meet their essential needs and aspirations (Makhaye & Subban, 2024).

In the early 1970s LED emerged as a strategy for policy by municipalities in different countries which is also known as local or regional government and in South Africa is known as municipalities (Ababio & Meyer 2012:7; Sekhampu 2010:39). Chomane and Biljohn (2023: 1) show that LED evolved in three waves of development which are as follows:

 Firstly, in during the 1960s, LED embraced market-oriented strategy which was centred on market friendly tactics or place the promotion to external investors, including economic growth strategies.

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 Secondly, in the 1980s to the mid-1990s, LED was a pro-market strategy which involved attracting investors. However, the emphasis during this period was to maintain, sustain and expand local enterprises in different regions.

 Thirdly, in the starting of 1990s, LED continued a stance on pro-market strategy. The emphasis on this period henceforth was focusing on infrastructural investment and interconnection among enterprises, Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), favourable environment for businesses to function and to improve the quality of life in communities across the global south.

LED is a global trend that started in Europe and subsequently spread to other developed countries. Emerging economies in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa have also progressively adopted this strategy (Rogerson, 2015; Maenetja, 2024). LED programs were initially implemented in post-war urban areas of industrialized countries experiencing significant transformation (Blakely, 2016; Maenetja, 2024). LED was first created to tackle challenges encountered in industrial regions such as Manchester and England (Keeble, 1969 cited in Mandisvika, 2015: 200). According to Mensah et al. (2013), LED became popular in the UK and the EU during the 1980s. This occurred due to increasing unemployment problems caused by economic restructuring and a reduction in industrial activity. Therefore, Wilson and Polter (2020) argue that LED, as a program, aims to leverage potential economic endeavours of all the municipalities. Though authors are permitted to express their scholarly perceptions, this paper contends that at the current juncture, LED is seen as a permanent management strategy for the municipalities because on the persistence challenges such as poverty, unemployment and inequalities on the ground.

Research by Keeble (1969) and Gertler, Gonzalez-Navarro, Gračner and Rothenberg (2024) indicates that LED aims to create spatial links between rural and urban regions that enhance local development and stimulate the local economy. Simultaneously, White (2022) demonstrates that LED has evolved from a policy strategy used in the early 1970s to manage the movement of businesses and capital between locations with competitive benefits. In Western Europe, LED developed as a consequence of structural economic shifts that led to disadvantaged local communities (e.g., increased unemployment and downturn in businesses) (Maenetja, 2024). Binns and Nel (1999) state that the rise of LED in African countries mirrored that of industrialized nations, where economic downturns and insufficient external investment necessitated a focus on internal development. Nonetheless, the African perspective on LED relies on a self-sufficiency model.

Institutionalization of LED in Local Governance

The establishment of LED within the municipal governance is frequently praised as a forward-looking change that can integrate social and economic aspects into the functioning of local government (Meyer & Venter, 2013). However, considering LED as a permanent and bureaucratic feature in local government may be less revolutionary than it seems. This in reality means that the institutionalization of

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LED as a permanent strategy for management processes may weaken the very same objective it asserts for foster and implement. At its essence, LED was established to be a flexible, context-aware and also foster the culture of entrepreneurial activities to curtail poverty, unemployment (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023). Currently, it appears that once the LED strategy is approved by the municipal council, it turns to be a procedural and compliance strategy than curbing social and economic suffering that people endure on the ground. From the birds' eye view, one may proffer that LED strategies are merely crafted to meet the audit compliance instead of ameliorating the actual social and economic woes (Enaifoghe & Durokifa, 2023).

Another uncomfortable truth is that the permanent LED strategies which are reviewed without consequence and action may lead to a fallacious sense of advancement. Hence, having an LED office, a strategic document and few projects may indicate a tortoise progress, despite local economies being stagnant or unequal (National Framework for LED in South Africa 2006-2011). This snail progress enables municipalities to assert success without addressing foundational problems such as access to land, educational inequalities, poor access to markets, poor infrastructure or deep rooted social and economic disparities in the communities. At times LED strategies may appear to be check-box rather than a catalyst for social and economic transformation.

The bolder stance and authority argument of the paper is that LED ought not to be institutionalised at all, at least not in the traditional sense. Instead of establishing it as a permanent management tool for local governance, municipalities should consider it as a flexible or even a trial strategy than can have project-driven initiatives and collaboration with the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Hence, one of the key challenges of LED is lack of funding and inadequate personnel (Mashabela & Thusi, 2023).

The Paradox of Local Economic Development as a Management Strategy Without Solutions

LED has, in the past decades, become a fundamental aspect of policy discussions and local governance, especially in areas facing perpetual inequalities, unemployment, spatial injustices and poverty. Meanwhile, Khumalo (2013) shows that LED has emerged as an international development strategy in countries that attempt to empower the marginalized communities, reduce poverty, inequality and most importantly, provide employment and promote inclusive prosperity. Enaifoghe and Durokifa (2023) propound that the effectiveness of LED may create jobs, strengthen local businesses and generally, LED can be seen as a panacea to social and economic challenges. Thus, LED, presented as practical and inclusive method to promote economic development within communities, LED offers attentiveness to local demands, engagement of internal resources and the development of sustainable means of living (Khumalo, 2014). However, even with its broad institutional adoption in the municipalities

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such as PLM, the results of LED initiatives frequently stay unclear, inconsistent and not implemented at certain circumstances.

This paper assesses a significant paradox which is central to LED which is development into a permanent and lasting management tool that consistently generates long bureaucratic processes that is marred with challenges it aims to address. Instead of serving as a transformative tool to address social and economic woes, unfortunately, LED often acts as a procedural system which focuses on planning, stakeholder engagement and scant focus on the implementation of its endeavours. In this context, LED may turn into a cycle of intervention, where the process continues despite the absence of meaningful solutions. This simply means that LED strategy may be a way of ensuring formal processes of the municipality without delivery the actual deliverables that would improve the standard of living of the people. If indeed the LED initiatives were implemented, economic and social profile of the communities around Polokwane Local Municipality would be improved.

The central argument here is that part of the reasons for the continuous surge of poverty, unemployment, spatial inequalities and other social and economic ills, is precisely because of using LED strategy as a management strategy than a tool that can reduce such challenges (Enaifoghe & Durokifa, 2023).

The continuation of the aforementioned dilemmas in the previous paragraph brings forth theoretical and practical question that provokes ones' school of thought. Such questions are: Why LED, despite its stated commitment to empowerment and local agency, frequently struggle to achieve its sustainable economic change? How significantly do institutional and political constraints or interference influence the implementation of LED initiatives? When answering these questions, a layman would fathom that LED might operate more as a means to manage, stabilize and ultimately sustain social and economic challenges rather than as a strategy which is focused on providing solutions. This is precisely because, a layman may be poor without decent living standards, unemployed and in fact, does not have more economic opportunities.

Rethinking LED: Alternatives and Critical Perspectives

Enaifoghe and Vezi-Magigaba (2022) show that rethinking LED in a South African context entails moving away from "one size fits all" to a more tailored strategies depending on the municipal strategies and context. This is to ensure that each municipality establishes sustainable approaches to salvage unconducive living conditions in the communities. When one ponders around the concept of LED, one infers that typically focusses on enhancing the economic potential of a particular community in order to enhance its economic prospect and the living standards of everyone (Nkwinika and Munzhedzi 2016: 76). The reality of the ground suggests that people are exhausted from quarrelling and quibbling about the state of service delivery in their communities, all they want is simply water, jobs, safety and security, food, decent infrastructure, economic opportunities, health facilities and education amongst others.

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Once the LED initiatives and programs seriously addresses the above challenges, people would be exonerated from such challenges and have a sense of empowerment and decent living conditions. Hence, Scheepers and Monchusi (2002: 82) and Mumba and Van der Waldt (2023) concur that LED is a critical municipal engine to support the growth and advance social and economic progress. This can be achieved when there is a political will from both administrators and political office bearers to execute the pillars of LED.

Methods and Data

Research Design

This paper used a quantitative method research approach. Pandey, Madhusudhan and Singh (2023: 79) show that quantitative research involves a systematic investigation of a phenomenon through the gathering of numerical data and the utilization of statistical or computational tools and techniques. A quantitative method enables the numerical measurement of these perceptions from social entrepreneurs via structured questionnaires and rating scales, facilitating objective analysis.

Participants of the Study

The paper extracted primary data from 160 social entrepreneurs in Polokwane Local Municipality from the PhD document. Snowball sampling was used to select 160 social entrepreneurs. This is because snowball sampling is used in situations wherein it is hard to reach target populations. Therefore, referrals were important in identifying and selecting social entrepreneurs around Polokwane Local Municipality.

Data Collection Process

The paper collected secondary data through accessing journal articles, books, internet sources, government publications, conference proceedings and other organisational reports from various organizations. This was done through different search engines such as Google scholar, Science Direct, Sabinet and Sage amongst others. The key terms used to search secondary data included local economic development, poverty, unemployment, corruption, service delivery. Moreover, the data collection instrument used to collect primary data was administering closed-ended questionnaires to social entrepreneurs. The questionnaires collected quantitative data from the participants.

Data Analysis

The document analysis was used to analyze secondary data. This type of an analysis was used to get meaning from secondary data sources. Bowen (2009) indicates that document analysis can be used for analyzing the PDF documents and other secondary data sources. The paper also used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel to analyze quantitative data collected from

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social entrepreneurs through closed-ended questionnaires. These software produced graphs, tables and charts.

Ethical Considerations

The paper originated from the PhD thesis which obtained the ethical clearance from the university. Therefore, it has used one of the objectives from the PhD thesis. This paper only extracted the findings from the PhD thesis. Moreover, participants were given informed consent form to ensure that they understand the nature of the study and were informed that their participation is voluntary and may withdraw at any given time. All the sources used in the paper were duly acknowledged to avoid plagiarism. The participants were not harmed either emotionally or psychologically.

Results

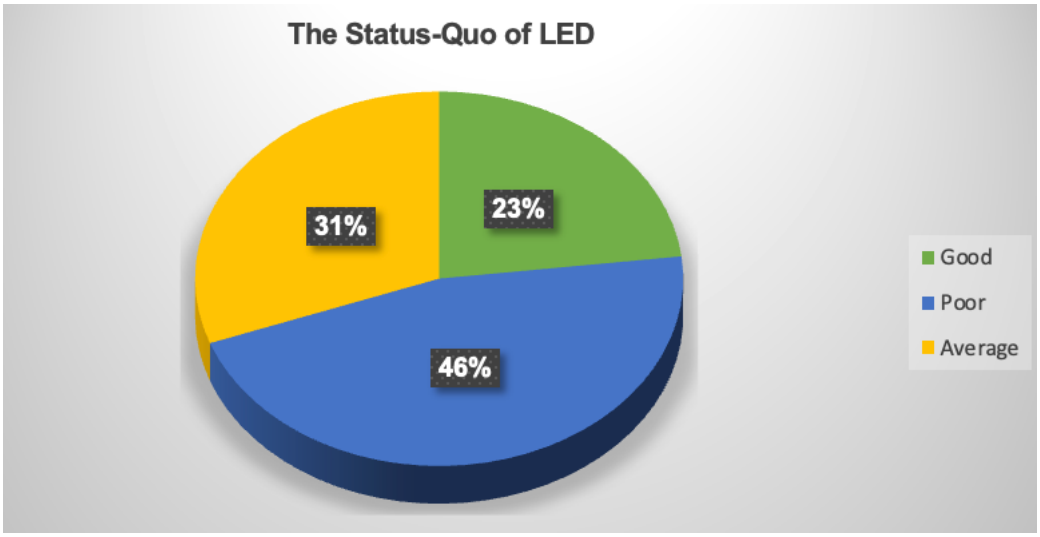

Figure 1: The status-quo of local economic development

LED in PLM is plagued by various challenges that challenge the existing norms of progress across multiple domains. Figure 1 above shows that the current state of PLM is not adequate. This is founded on 46% of those surveyed stating that the current state of LED is inadequate, implying that challenges in service delivery and a lack of economic centres persist. Furthermore, 31% of those surveyed stated that the current condition of LED is average. These results suggest that there is a minor enhancement regarding LED. Perhaps due to the incomplete provision of essential services like water, infrastructure, job opportunities, and economic centres. This means that LED is not poor or subpar; it is simply adequate. At the same time, a minority of the respondents, specifically 23%, has expressed that the current state of LED is satisfactory. The premise is that the participants are content and gain advantages from the LED.

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Challenges of LED	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Applicable	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Missing systems
Corruption	58,1% (93)	28,7% (46)	8,1% (13)	4,4% (7)	-	0,6% (1)
Lack of Capacity	45,6% (73)	43,1% (69)	5,7% (9)	3,1% (5)	1,9% (3)	0.6% (1)
Lack of finding and maximizing local resources for development	45% (72)	36,3% (58)	10,6% (17)	4,4% (7)	3,8% (6)	-
Lack of participation	41,9% (67)	38,8% (62)	9,4% (15)	7,5% (12)	2,5% (4)	-

Table 1: Challenges of local economic development in Polokwane Local Municipality

Mashabela and Thusi (2023) examined the difficulties of LED in PLM and determined that the LED unit in PLM must offer sufficient infrastructure and create additional economic centres. One significant finding from the 58% of respondents is that corruption acts as a barrier to attaining more substantial and comprehensive LED in PLM. Thus, Nkwinika and Munzhedzi (2016) pointed out that corruption weakens the effectiveness of LED. Similarly, Modise (2023) suggests that corruption is a cause of ongoing poverty and a hindrance to economic advancement. Consequently, the claims of the latter author align with the study's results, as most respondents think that corrupt individuals have infiltrated the LED unit in PLM.

Empowering the LED unit to assist SMMEs and improve service delivery is a crucial function of LED. The capacity may refer to financial resources, materials, equipment, and/or human resources. Consequently, most of the participants (45.6%) think that insufficient capacity is a barrier for the LED unit in achieving their goals. This conclusion is backed by Mashabela and Thusi (2023), who suggest that LED units in South African municipalities lack sufficient capacity and funding to fulfill their goals. A lack of capacity indicates that in some situations, LED units lack competent staff and are short on personnel needed to achieve their goals (Munzhedzi, 2015; Mashinini, 2017). The conclusion that can be made here is that the LED unit in PLM may be encountering challenges concerning their capacity.

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Local resources within communities can be utilized to improve LED. These resources can encompass cultural and historical landmarks, empty structures, arable land for farming, and the skills and knowledge possessed by local community members. Nevertheless, most respondents noted that one of the challenges of LED is the inability to identify and optimize local resources to promote local development. This might result from a restricted ability to conduct research and possibly community engagement with local populations to identify and discover available local resources that could be used to improve LED. Regardless, minority respondents (10.6%) reported that identifying and leveraging local resources is not a barrier for the LED unit to enhance the local economy.

Engagement is an essential resource that local individuals should utilize to improve LED in their neighbourhoods. The LED unit must enhance the participation process to foster a feeling of empowerment and ownership. Nonetheless, 41.9% of the participants stated that the absence of involvement poses a challenge for the LED unit. This indicates that LED units play a limited role in the communities concerning social and economic initiatives that could improve the local economy. Conversely, 9.4% of the participants think that participation is not an issue.

Effectiveness of LED	Very Effective	Effective	Not Sure	Less Effective	Not Effective	Missing systems
Employment creation	25% (40)	42,5% (68)	13,1% (21)	18,1% (29)	1,3% (2)	-
Reducing poverty	29,4% (47)	29,4% (47)	15,6% (25)	23,8% (38)	1,9% (3)	-
Infrastructure development	24,4% (39)	17,5% (28)	26,3% (42)	28,1% (45)	3,1% (5)	0,6% (1)
Promoting social development	25% (40)	29,4% (47)	18,8% (30)	23,1% (37)	3,8% (6)	-
Support the development of small business and entrepreneurship	27,5% (44)	21,9% (35)	10,6% (17)	37,5% (60)	2,5% (4)	-
Support the development of skills and education	25% (40)	50% (80)	8,1% (13)	13,1% (21)	3,8% (6)	-

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Support agricultural activities	21,3% (34)	36,9% (59)	22,5% (36)	16,9% (27)	2,5% (4)	-

Table 2: The effectiveness of local economic development in enhancing local economy

In spite of the difficulties encountered by the LED unit in PLM, the research found it essential to evaluate how effective LED is in enhancing the quality of life for individuals. Consequently, most of the participants (42.5%) stated that LED is successful in generating jobs. Conversely, 18.1% of participants stated that LED is not as effective when it comes to job creation. Nonetheless, 25% of those surveyed feel that LED is highly effective in job creation. These results indicate that in spite of the difficulties faced by LED, there remains significant hope for generating jobs. Creating jobs is a key element in enhancing local economic development and improving people's lives. Based on these results, it can be concluded that despite the ongoing dominance of unemployment in predominantly underserved rural regions, LED must be empowered to achieve full employment as a key micro-economic goal. Consequently, the LED initiatives could help remove young people from the streets and offer them opportunities to engage in a circular economic flow, allowing them to become active participants in the economy.

Poverty does not discriminate based on colour, ethnicity, or faith, and therefore, it can impact anyone during times of misfortune. Poverty is a complex issue that strips individuals in communities of their pride, happiness, and economic and social standing. It also weakens the integrity of individuals, as poverty leads to a loss of dignity and self-respect. Consequently, LED must be pivotal in addressing the increase of poverty in PLM. Consequently, 29.4% of those surveyed think that LED helps in alleviating poverty. This indicates that LED is crucial in breaking the cycle of poverty among individuals. The key aspect is that LED generate job opportunities, foster social development, and assist SMMEs in efforts to alleviate poverty. At the same time, 23.8% of those surveyed stated that LED is not as effective in decreasing poverty. These might be the participants who feel that significant efforts are still required to rescue and free individuals from extreme poverty. The development of infrastructure is also a key component of LED.

When built correctly, infrastructure development can draw in investment opportunities. It encompasses the building of roads, schools, clinics, economic centres, and water and sanitation facilities. Should the LED unit in PLM successfully create a sustainable infrastructure in rural and township regions, it could enhance people's lives. A significant portion of the respondents (28.1%) reported that the LED is not very effective in fostering infrastructural development, indicating ongoing issues such as road infrastructure and water and sanitation challenges, among others. Furthermore, 24.4% of those surveyed think that LED is highly effective in infrastructure development. At the same time, most respondents, accounting for 29.4%, think that LED positively impacts social development. Social

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development is inherently connected to infrastructure development, as it encompasses elements like leveraging cultural heritage sites, promoting social cohesion, and decreasing crime rates.

Small enterprises and entrepreneurship act as drivers of transformation in fostering growth. The small enterprises are also foundational to LED. Fundamentally, small enterprises serve as the driving force and foundation of LED (Enaifoghe & Vezi-Magigaba, 2023). Nonetheless, 27.5% of the participants think that LED effectively aids small businesses and entrepreneurs. Support may encompass financial assistance, provision of equipment, coaching and mentoring, as well as organizing entrepreneurial workshops and exhibitions for social entrepreneurs. In contrast, most respondents (37.5%) expressed that LED is not very effective in aiding small businesses and entrepreneurship. The implication is that while the majority of respondents gain assistance from the LED unit, this support is only partial.

The enhancement of skills and education in rural regions is essential for fostering sustainability and self-sufficiency among individuals in those communities. Skills development and education can provide youth with the knowledge and abilities essential for personal development and participating in economic activities like generating jobs. Consequently, 80% of the participants reported that LED is successful in delivering skills and education across various fields. The LED unit offers skills and education as part of its services to enhance the lives of youth in rural communities. This is an excellent reply from the participants who think that LED is crucial in education and skill development. The LED unit conducts educational services via inductions, workshops, and exhibitions. In contrast, 13.1% of the respondents reported that the assistance for education and skills from the LED unit is not very effective. This implies that there remain several initiatives to be executed in order to assist and connect with substantial populations.

A fundamental pillar of LED is agriculture both in the province and in PLM. Agriculture could act as the foundation of Limpopo's economic development by generating jobs. Consequently, agriculture is essential for food security, economic stability, diverse livelihoods, and enhanced well-being in the province and PLM specifically. Most respondents, at 36.9%, think that the LED unit is helpful for offering agricultural assistance. This indicates that the LED unit could assist both commercial and subsistence farmers by supplying seeds, tools, and financial resources, among other things. Moreover, 16.9% of those surveyed stated that the LED unit is not as effective in aiding agricultural endeavors.

Discussion

Social entrepreneurs have indicated that the status-quo of LED in Polokwane Local Municipality is average and poor. This corroborates the contention of the paper that LED is viewed as a continuous administrative process instead of a result-oriented strategy, sustaining enduring challenges such as unemployment and poverty without addressing them. The concept of “without solutions” in the title simply implies that although the municipality consistently review LED, cooperative strategy and LED

plans and frameworks, these efforts are still detached from real economic challenges confronting local communities in Polokwane Local Municipality. Rather than breaking down the obstacles such as political interference, corruption, lack of capacity, and poor infrastructure, LED frequently become a bureaucratic ritual where the same issues are constantly recognized but little is done to properly solve them.

The paper provided some perspectives of social entrepreneurs to shed a light of the status-quo of LED and challenges of LED amongst others. Hence, social entrepreneurs generally address social and economic voids created or not addressed by the government, placing them in prime position to fathom why LED continuously fail to solve them. The participation of social entrepreneurs in the paper indicated that LED does not have a genuine community ownership, and inadequately backs social enterprises and cooperatives that could foster inclusive development.

Conclusion

The paper demonstrated that LED continues to face challenges on Polokwane Local Municipality. It has indicated the gap between the intentions of LED strategy and the actual experiences of community members (social entrepreneurs) in Polokwane. The ongoing existence of poverty and economic marginalization indicates that LED, as it stands now, serves more as a compliance document rather than a tool for structural transformation. The paper ultimately contends that unless LED frameworks are fundamentally shifted towards implementation, then, good standard of living will forever remain a pipedream for the community members. Meanwhile, the paper also recommends that at least social entrepreneurs be added to form part LED pillars to strengthen the implementation of certain LED initiatives.

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