

THABAZIMBI MUNICIPALITY



COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2008/2009

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY **THABAZIMBI MUNICIPALITY**

“All leadership takes place through the communication of ideas to the minds of others” - Charles Cooley

INTRODUCTION

Thabazimbi municipality is located in the South-western part of Limpopo Province, situated in Waterberg District. The municipality is 320 km from Polokwane and 260 from Johannesburg. It shares borders with North West and Botswana. Thabazimbi is known as mountain of iron which is the Tswana name for this peaceful productive town, referring to the highly lucrative iron ore reef first discovered in 1919.

The Municipality has Marakele National park, which is a subsidiary of National Parks board and in the same standard as the Kruger National Park and Mapungube. The game lodges scattered around the area helps to promote the issue of environmental sustainability.

It was mined since 1930's when iron and steel production started. The town was proclaimed in 1953. Today Iscor Steelworks in Tshwane still draw much of their raw material from Thabazimbi Kumba Resources (Iron Ore Mine). Apart from Iron Ore the Thabazimbi Municipality is surrounded by Platinum producing areas such as: Northam Platinum Mine, Anglo i.e. Amandelbult and Swartklip Mines.

Other Minerals produced in the area include Andalusite which is mined by Rhino Mine and Lime stone for the production of cement by Pretoria Portland Cement (PPC) at Dwaalboom.

Boundaries of Thabazimbi Municipality include areas such as Thabazimbi, Northam, Leeupoort, Rooiberg, Rooibokraal and Dwaalboom. It is a very peaceful place to live in and malaria free.

BACKGROUND

The establishment of the Communication strategy has been mandated by the Constitution of RSA, Act 108 of 1996, Municipal Systems Act of 2000, the Access to Information Act of 2000, Municipal Structures Act of 1998. This will be a tool to improve government communication internally and externally efficiently and effectively.

A successful implementation of the strategy will go a long way towards building public confidence in the e municipality, turning around negative public perceptions and mobilize communities to join hands.

VISION

“To be the leading Municipality offering quality services in the most Economic, Affordable, Equitable and Sustainable manner”.

MISSION

“To promote ,Coordinate ,implement and ensure the financially and environmentally sustainable growth and development of Thabazimbi with a diversified and viable economy that provides an environment and services that benefit all”

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Strategy Objectives/

- To build public trust and confidence in the municipality
- To educate and inform the community about policies and programmes
- To indicate and demonstrate progress made in the implementation of municipal programs
- Mobilize communities to participate and to support municipal programs
- To explain the challenges and difficulties faced in implementing municipal programs specifically and generally all government programs
- To evaluate both the progress and the impact of municipal programs make on the quality of resident’s lives.
- Attract potential tourists and investors
- To build the brand equity of both the municipality and the management and political leadership
- To build a sense of comradely and corporate belonging among internal stakeholders (team building)
- To keep public informed about the policies and programs of government through bi-lateral with stakeholders as well as registering community views for government attention.
- To forge partnership between municipality and communities
- To disseminate specific information to all stakeholder efficiently and effectively.
- To frankly explain the challenges and difficulties faced in implementing municipal programs specifically and generally all government programs

- To get feedback from all stakeholders
- To educate and inform residents of opportunities available as well as their constitutional rights and obligations
- Promote and publicize services rendered by the municipality and other institutions of government.
- Attract potential tourists and investors
- Mobilize communities to participate in municipal policy and decision making processes
- To market the municipality.
- To promote transparency.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

There are five political parties i.e.

- **ANC**
- **UDM**
- **DA**
- **PAC**
- **FF**

The Council is composed of 10 Ward and 10 PR Councilors. ANC is dominating by 13 Councilors. The Mayor and the Speaker are members of the dominating party.

There is a degree of political intolerance .Some Politicians are unable to control their emotions during Public meetings.

ECONOMICAL

Most of the community members are employed in mines, Agriculture, Hunting and Tourism. Few people are in informal employment. Disabled people are not integrated into the municipality's implementation plan. This has led to low economic development opportunities for disabled people. The Municipality needs to facilitate this process through the implementation of the Disability Plan for the purposes of moving faster in resolving problems faced by disabled people. There is a challenge of unsustainable of projects.

SOCIAL

The population of Thabazimbi is estimated at 85 000. The languages are as follows: Setswana, Afrikaans, English, Xivenda, Tsonga, Xhosa, Zulus and N. Sotho

As Thabazimbi is a farming area, the rate of illiteracy is high. Learners who stay at farm school are unable to proceed beyond grade 9 due to distances of high schools. The issue of walking long distance to schools encourages early school leaving.

Very few people within the municipality area attend Colleges, Technikons, Universities and adult basic education and training.

There are high rate of HIV/AIDS, domestic violence.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is only limited to those who can afford. Majority of people do not have access. The following major network antennas of service providers are found in the Thabazimbi Municipal area although there is limited cellular coverage in some farming areas: Telkom, MTN, Voda com and Cell C. The municipality has a web site.

INSTITUTIONAL

There is a lack of tertiary institutions and high schools. The hospital is too small to cater the population of Thabazimbi. Most of the patients are transported to Mankweng or Polokwane provincial hospitals to access treatment. FBO's, NGO's and CBO are effective.

The main challenge is that farm areas are serviced by mobile clinics which are not always available. There are two magisterial courts and other areas are visited periodically.

LEGAL

There are by-laws which regulates the activities of the municipality.

PUBLIC MOOD

The public mood is positive as there are those who accept that the Municipality is trying, however certain group feel that there are no changes. This can be seen during community meetings. Most of the areas are farms, underdeveloped and highly affected by illiteracy and poverty. Their experience is that they are neglected as their problems date years back.

MEDIA AGENDA

Thabazimbi is typically one of the Limpopo Province municipalities with very little broadcasting and print media penetration, especially in the outlying farm areas of the municipality. *Die Kwevoel* is the only local newspaper. The news paper mostly caters for Afrikaans speaking community.

The media do not view the municipality in a positive way as some times bad image is published without proper research. There is a good relationship with the local newspaper as they are mostly invited to capture events organized within the municipality. Media statements will be released on monthly or quarterly basis to build up the image of the Municipality.

The national, regional newspapers, national radio and television channels are received in some parts of the municipality. They rarely address issues directly affecting the residents of the Thabazimbi municipality. They also invariably do not provide a platform for dialogue between the municipality and the residents. All other issues they cover should of necessity, have a broader regional or national appeal.

Given the fact that the media has effectively become an arena for public discourse and dialogue between municipalities and the residents they serve, it will require a deliberate and planned strategy to improve the municipality's communication with all its specifically targeted stakeholders

Communication challenges

- Capacity to coordinate communication.
- Communicate complex info in simpler language.
- Mobilizing all sectors as whites feel that they are not catered.
- Illegal operation of unlicensed shebeens and taverns.
- Inadequate communication resources.
- Lack of access center within the municipality such as One Stop Service Centers.

Messages and Themes

Business Unusual: “All hands on deck to speed up change”.

Thabazimbi Municipality is a municipality that strives to offer quality services and is keen to listen to the concerns of the community.

Messengers

INTERNAL

- Staff (management, administrative and general assistants)
- Councilors
- Union members and leaders on the staff
- Politicians

EXTERNAL

- Organized business
- Informal business
- Service providers
- Labour organizations
- Government departments
- Non-Governmental and Community Based Organizations
- Ward committees
- Rate payers and residents associations
- Traditional healers
- Farmers (commercial and subsistence)
- Mining houses
- Hotels, lodges, game and nature reserves (workers and tourists)
- Media (local, provincial and national)
- Parastatals
- Religious leaders and organizations
- Special groups (unemployed, youths, the aged and disabled)
- Sport and cultural organizations

- Women clubs and association
- Politicians
- CDW's
- Farm workers
- Councilors

Channels and media of communication

The foundations of a positive image are built within an organization, not outside it. For this reason it is important that the people who work for a particular organization have a positive image of it. Their attitudes, whether positive or negative, will directly or indirectly rub off on those who come into contact with the organization.

The following channels and medium of internal communication were identified:

INTERNALLY

- Regular and meaningful meetings (general and departmental)
- Monthly internal newsletter or pamphlet
- Intranet or manual internal memoranda
- Team-building sessions
- End-of-the-year and awards functions
- Suggestion box and rewards for useful suggestions
- Entry and exit interviews
- Staff orientation program
- Cultural and sport days
- Notice boards
- E mail and internet

EXTERNALLY

The success of the external communication strategy hinges on the acceptance of two important principles, namely that municipality employees work for the residents of Thabazimbi and that the public has a right to know and to be consulted on matters that affect

their lives. Residents need to feel their needs, views and concerns are taken seriously by both the municipal management and the elected public representatives.

The following channels for external communication were identified:

Means of communication

- Regular and meaningful stakeholder meetings (informative or consultative)
- Properly planned and managed community outreach programs
- Media statements, media interviews, advertisements and advertorials
- Targeted media tours
- Public meetings and hearings
- External bi-monthly newsletter
- Informative and inter-active website
- Direct mail and e-mail
- Well planned and managed events
- Project and program launch and hand-over events
- Writing informative articles in particularly local papers and respond to relevant readers letters to the editor.
- By word of mouth.
- By E-mails, telephone. Radios and etc.
- Flyers
- Izimbizos
- loud hailing

PHASED COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME

STRUCTURES AND PROCESS

The strategy will be submitted to the Management, then to Exco and the full Council for adoption. The copies will be distributed to the LGCF.

COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

ACTIVITY	DATE	OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET	REMARKS
JULY 2008					
Elderly people World Population Day	19/07/2008	To keep public informed about the policies and programs of government through bi-lateral with stakeholders as well as registering community views for government attention.	Social Service DoL DoH&SD SASSA CDWs		
LGCF Meeting	10/07/2008	To disseminate information and integrate activities efficiently and effectively.	Municipality Communication Officer		
Mayoral road shows	12/07/2008	To build public trust and confidence in the municipality.	Office of the Mayor		
AUGUST 2008					
Women empowerment seminar	14/08/2008	Mobilize communities to participate and to support municipal program.	Social Services All departments CDWs		
Oppie Koppie Festival	To be confirmed.	Attract potential tourists and investors.	Office of the Mayor		
SEPTEMBER 2008					
Dwaalboom show-municipality stall	To be confirmed.	To forge partnership between municipality and communities	PED DEDET		

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Land care info day	11/09/2008	To make the community and farmers aware on how they should take care of the land.	DEPT AGRIC		
Heritage Day Celebration	24/09/2008	Mobilize communities to participate and to support municipal programs.	Social Services All departments CDWs		
LGCF Meeting	10/10/2008	To disseminate information and integrate activities efficiently and effectively.	Municipality Communication Officer		
OCTOBER 2008					
Mayoral izimbizos	18/10/2008	To forge partnership between municipality and communities.	Office of the Mayor CDWs		
International day Older persons Social development month	To be confirmed.		DoH&SoD Social Services All departments CDWs		
NOVEMBER 2008					
6 Days of activism	20/11/2008	To educate and inform the community about policies and programmes of government.	Social Services All departments CDWs		
Batho-Pele event	To be confirmed.	To keep public informed about the policies and programs of government through bi-lateral with stakeholders as well as registering community views for government attention.	DoH&SoD All departments CDWs		

LGCF Meeting	14/11/2008	To disseminate information and integrate activities efficiently and effectively.	Municipality Communication Officer		
DECEMBER 2008					
International Aids day	01/12/2008	To keep public informed about the policies and programs of government through bi-lateral with stakeholders as well as registering community views for government attention.	Social Services DoH & SoD All departments All Private Sectors CDWs		
International Day for Disabled Persons.		To keep public informed about the policies and programs of government through bi-lateral with stakeholders as well as registering community views for government attention.	DoH&SoD Social Services All departments CDWs		
JANUARY 2009					
Mayor visit schools, schools re-open, spot visit to the selected schools	To be confirmed.	To keep public informed about the policies and programs of government through bi-lateral with stakeholders as well as registering community views for government attention.	Office of the Mayor Social Services DoE YAC CDWs		
LGCF Meeting	15/01/2009	To disseminate information and integrate activities efficiently and effectively.	Municipality Communication Officer		
FEBRUARY 2009					
Mayoral Road show Council meets the people	14/02/2009	To forge partnership between municipality and communities.	Office of the Mayor CDWs		

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SONA	To be confirmed.		GCIS		
SOPA	To be confirmed.		Limpopo Legislature		
MARCH 2009					
Human Rights Month(Municipal Event)	21/03/2009	To educate and inform residents of opportunities available as well as their constitutional rights and obligations.	Social Services All Departments CDWs		
LGCF Meeting	10/03/2009	To disseminate information and integrate activities efficiently and effectively.	Municipality Communication Officer		
APRIL 2009					
Thabazimbi Game and Tourism Expo		Mobilize communities to participate and to support municipal programs, to market and attract potential investors for the municipality.	PED DEDET		
MAY 2009					
Candlelight Memorial event.	To be confirmed	To educate and inform the community especially on HIV/AIDS Education.	DoH&SoD Social Services All Stakeholders CDWs		
SOLA	29/05/2009		Office of the Mayor		
LGCF Meeting	12/05/2009	To disseminate information and integrate activities efficiently and effectively.	Municipality Communication Officer		
JUNE 2009					
Youth Month Thabazimbi Youth Information Session.	20/06/2009	To educate and inform the community especially youth about policies and programmes of government.	Social Services YAC DoE SAPS,DoL,CDWs		

Additional notes

Most if not all these proposed activities will be supported by a media plan, giving publicity to these events. We will recommend that the **Mayor** be the **Principal Spokesperson** and that other **Councillors** and **Managers** do so if duly mandated by the **Mayor** and briefed by the **Communications Manager**.

It is also important that regular meetings with staff takes place in the various sections as well as general meetings to be addressed by the Municipal Manager and the Mayor. A schedule of meetings will also need to be drawn to have regular consultation with identified key stakeholders especially the organized ones.

ABBREVIATIONS

CDW	: Community Development Worker
DOA	: Department of Agriculture
DoE	: Department of Education
DCS	: Department of Correctional Services
DEDET	: Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
DoH&SoD	: Department of Health and Social Department
DoL	: Department of Labour
DoJ&CD	: Department of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
GCIS	: Government Communications and Information System
IDP	: Integrated Development Plan
LGCF	: Local Government Communicator's Forum
MRM	: Moral Regeneration Movement
PED	: Planning and Economic Development
SASSA	: South African Social Security Agency
SAPS	: South African Police Services
SONA	: State of the Nation Address
SOPA	: State of the Province Address
SOLA	: State of the Local Address
YAC	: Youth Advisory Centre

