

The Use of Evidence Based Policy as an Alternative Model for Institutionalising the Sustainable Development Goals in KwaZulu-Natal Local Municipalities

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Mr Mphathesithe Mkhize



Abstract

At the level of the international community, the use of monitoring and evaluation systems, which play a strategic role in a sound policy-making process, is important and relevant for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of policy reforms. Policy evaluation is critical to ensuring that policies actually lead to better outcomes by providing information on what works, why, for whom, and under what conditions to ensure that progress is made toward achieving government goals, embedded in international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The global sustainable development agenda is best expressed through the SDGs, which are best described as the ultimate measure of progress that is about the prosperity of people and the planet. The aim of this study is to critically examine the extent to which municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal are engaged in evidence-based policy-making for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The central question of this research is to what extent are local governments making institutional arrangements for empirical evidence-based policy for the SDGs? The methodology used in this study is the mixed-methods approach, where both research approaches are used for the study. This study seeks to propose or make policy recommendations in this regard.

Objectives

The study aims to examine the extent to which municipalities in KZN are engaged in evidence-based policy making for the SDGs. Therefore, the following objectives underpins the study.

- To critically investigate the role of local government in making efforts to establish institutional arrangements for evidence-based policies for the SDGs.
- To explore the extent to which evidence-based policy for the SDGs is being undertaken in local governments.
- To find out the contribution efforts of evidence-based policy for the SDGs in KwaZulu-Natal local municipalities.
- To find out what institutional arrangements have been made in KwaZulu-Natal local municipalities for evidence-based policy on the SDGs.
- To discover the challenges of local government in institutionalising evidence-based policy strategies for the SDGs in order to develop an alternative model in this regard.

Methods

- The study follows the paradigm of critical philosophical worldview.
- Secondly, for the study both qualitative and quantitative approaches are being undertaken as an appropriate mixed methodological approach for the benefit of the study.
- For the collection of data of the study, purposive sampling will be used as an appropriate technique for the study.
- Data will be collected by form of survey questionnaires and in-depth interviews.
- In this research thematic analysis will be used to analyze data.
- The quality of data will be ensured using data quality control method of trustworthiness e.g. credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity.
- In the study all ethical considerations are prioritised to ensure the authenticity of the study.

Literature Findings



Data availability by Goal and sector

Goal		NO. OF SDG INDICATORS	SDG Indicators with data	No. of domesticated indicators	NO. OF INDICATORS SOUTH AFRICA CAN REPORT ON	% OF INDICATORS SOUTH AFRICA CAN REPORT ON	No of additional indicators	Total SDG indicators (T1, T2, T3)	Total SDG indicators (T1, T2, T3) without duplications
1	Social	8	4	2	6	75.0%	1	14	8
2		10	4	2	6	60.0%	0	13	13
3		23	15	1	16	69.6%	6	27	27
4		9	5	2	7	77.8%	1	11	11
5		10	3	3	6	60.0%	0	14	14
11		8	1	3	4	50.0%	1	15	15
Total		68	32	13	45	66.2%	9	94	88
7	Economic	4	3	1	4	100.0%	2	6	6
8		13	7	3	10	76.9%	2	17	15
9		9	4	2	6	66.7%	1	12	12
10		5	2	1	3	60.0%	0	11	9
12		2	0	1	1	50.0%	0	13	13
Total		33	16	8	24	72.7%	5	59	55
6	Environmental	8	4	2	6	75.0%	1	11	11
13		2	0	1	1	50.0%	0	8	8
14		2	0	1	1	50.0%	1	10	10
15		11	2	3	5	45.5%	0	14	12
Total		23	6	7	13	56.5%	2	43	41
16	Peace and Security	15	3	8	11	73.3%	5	23	23
17	Partnership	17	4	1	5	29.4%	0	25	25
Total	All Goals	156	61	37	98	62.8%	21	244	222

SDGs in the KwaZulu-Natal Province

The municipalities are required to pronounce on the total contribution on the provincial plan and districts plan targets such as the following.

- Total number of jobs to be created on sectors of economy (Goal 8-Good, Jobs and Economic Growth).
- Early Childhood Development and (Goal 4–Quality Education). Skills Development aligned to key economic sectors (Goal4).
- Municipalities are also advised to optimize initiatives on the green economy such as recycling waste, to reduce negative impact on natural resources (Goal 13–ClimateAction) (KZNCOGTA, 2019).

Nevertheless, very few municipalities in the KZN province are currently able to collect and record sufficient quantitative and qualitative data to meet data requirements (Steyn, 2011).

Conclusion

For local governments, achieving the SDGs is important because they face major challenges that require their urgent implementation, such as standardisation of indicators, reliability of data, frequency and quality of collection, accessibility, and sourcing. Relevant metrics need to be made available to assess their progress. Yet, local governments such as KwaZulu Natal have a more than urgent need to improve the implementation of localisation of the SDGs through available data to provide evidence for better decision making. In the province, very few municipalities are currently able to collect and record sufficient quantitative and qualitative data to meet data requirements. As a result, there is a lack of organisational support for sustainable and effective monitoring and evaluation as a form of institutional arrangements. Therefore, indicators and data resources available in local governments are important for addressing local challenges by using data to shape sustainable policies for the benefit of local governments. This study seeks to examine the extent to which local municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal are making efforts for available evidence-based policies for the SDGs. In addition, the study seeks to propose or make policy recommendations in this regard.

References

- Segome, M. 2008. Bridging the gap: The role of monitoring and evaluation in evidence-based policy making. Romania: UNICEF.
- Statistics South Africa. 2019. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Country Report 2019-South Africa. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
- Steyn, J. 2011. Data for Local Government's Developmental Mandate: The Municipal Barometer, Data Challenges and Supportive National Spatial Data Legislative and Policy Frameworks. Pretoria: South African Local Government Association.
- Kariuki, P and Reddy, P. 2017. Operationalising an effective monitoring and evaluation system for local government: Considerations for best practice. African Evaluation Journal, 5(2): 1-8.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2017. Getting Governments Organised to Deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals: Summary Report and Next Steps. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- Reddy, P. S. 2016. Localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): *The role of Local Government in Context*. African Journal of Public Affairs, 9(2): 1-15.
- Jaiyesimi, R. 2016. The Challenges of Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa: The Way Forward. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 20(3): 13-18.
- KwaZulu-Natal Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs. 2019. KZN Perspectives on the Localisation of the SDGs. KZN Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs.