

# Transparency of Information and Communication in the Municipalities of Avaradrano, Antananarivo: A Lever for Citizen Engagement in Local Development

RANDRIAMBOLOLONA RAVOLOLONIRINA Liliane Charline<sup>1</sup>,  
ANDRIANARIMANANA Jean Claude Omer<sup>2</sup>, RAKOTOSON Olivia<sup>3</sup>,  
RASOLOARIVONY Theis Lala V.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Doctoral School of Natural Resource Management and Development – University of Antananarivo – Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESUPRES), Madagascar

<sup>2, 3, 4</sup>École Normale Supérieure, Antananarivo, Madagascar

**Abstract**— *In a global context where communication has become a key pillar for ensuring transparency and citizen participation in development processes, public communication constitutes a strategic lever to strengthen the link between local administrations and populations. In Madagascar, particularly in the rural municipalities of Avaradrano, Antananarivo, despite the implementation of communication mechanisms, the regular dissemination of clear and comprehensible messages remains a challenge, limiting citizens' effective engagement in local development projects. This research aims to evaluate the role of communication as the transfer of clear and transparent information in the development of rural municipalities. From this issue arises the following question: to what extent does the routine practice of information and communication techniques foster citizen trust and engagement in municipal initiatives? A qualitative approach was adopted, using interviews and observations with a diverse population comprising municipal authorities, communication officers, municipal staff, and residents, to examine the methods, frequency, and clarity of communication practices. The results indicate that the regular, transparent, and comprehensible dissemination of messages strengthens citizens' trust and facilitates their participation in local projects. However, the lack of material resources, linguistic difficulties, and limited coordination among municipal services remain challenges. These findings highlight the importance of improving communication practices in rural areas to bridge the gap between municipal projects and the population, and to promote more open and participatory local governance.*

**Keywords**— *Communication, information, transparency, local development, rural areas.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In an international context characterized by growing demands for transparency, accountability, and citizen participation, public communication has emerged as a strategic lever for local development. Around the world, local authorities that invest in participatory communication mechanisms not only strengthen their legitimacy but also enhance their capacity to mobilize citizens around public initiatives (Chafik & Abbadi, 2023). Tools such as citizen newsletters, public budget hearings, and digital platforms create spaces for continuous interaction between governing bodies and the governed.

In transitioning democracies, the combination of participatory tools has proven particularly effective in improving local governance outcomes

(Kasymova & Schachter, 2014), while information and communication technologies (ICTs) facilitate two-way communication and active citizen participation in decision-making (Kumar & Vragov, 2009).

In this perspective, transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement are closely linked to well-designed communication strategies. Clear and accessible dissemination of institutional information, reinforced by independent journalism, fosters a climate of trust and helps hold local authorities accountable (Ndraha et al., 2024). Experiences such as those in Vietnam demonstrate that citizen participation in electoral processes and local initiatives is an important vector for democratic governance (Hoa & Garcia-Zamor, 2017).

Information and communication technologies also play a transformative role, enhancing transparency and access to public services while allowing citizens to monitor the actions of their representatives (Сръомка & Табацкий, 2024). Nevertheless, the widespread adoption of these tools still faces challenges: low connectivity, inadequate resources, and institutional resistance. Overcoming these barriers requires communicative governance backed by political commitment and solid technical support. Citizen participation, stimulated by inclusive and critical public communication, improves the quality of democratic debate and strengthens institutional accountability

(Wanjiku Ngunjiri, 2023). Participatory mechanisms such as public consultations, forums, and budget publications enhance transparency and trust in institutions (Garvanlieva et al., 2017). In particular, participatory budgeting has emerged as a tool for social innovation and shared governance, promoting civic education, elected officials' accountability, and the legitimacy of budgetary choices (Svidroňová et al., 2023). Effective governance therefore relies on a combination of responsible leadership, operational transparency, and smooth institutional communication (G. M. Mudacumura, 2014).

In this regard, institutional communication, conceived as a two-way process grounded in transparency, regularity, and linguistic accessibility, is essential to foster trust and encourage community engagement (Zémor, 1999); (Servaes, 2010). However, in Madagascar, particularly in the rural municipalities of Avaradrano, these principles are seldom

applied. While some municipalities have designated communication officers, these efforts remain isolated, poorly professionalized, and often top-down. Information is transmitted sporadically, is difficult to access, and often incomprehensible to a large part of the population. Limited technical skills, the lack of context-appropriate tools, and linguistic diversity constitute major obstacles to establishing a genuine and constructive dialogue between local authorities and citizens.

This opacity contributes to sustaining public mistrust of local institutions and hinders citizens' engagement in communal development projects. Against this backdrop, this research examines the impact of current information and communication practices in the rural municipalities of Avaradrano on citizen involvement. The central question is: *to what extent do these practices strengthen or hinder citizens' trust and participation in local development dynamics?*

Building on previous studies on communication for development (Servaes, 2010) and institutional communication in local governments (Zémor, 1999); (Piotrowski & Van Ryzin, 2007), this study employs an integrative theoretical framework to analyze the interactions between transparency, communication, and citizen engagement at the local level. The central hypothesis is that implementing a communication strategy that is clear, regular, transparent, and adapted to the socio-economic realities of rural areas is a fundamental lever to restore citizens' trust and enhance their participation in local development initiatives. By analyzing the methods, content, and perceptions of communication mechanisms in the rural municipalities of Avaradrano, this study aims to contribute to building more open, inclusive, and effective local governance. In this perspective, a field survey was conducted in three rural municipalities of Avaradrano to analyze concretely how information and communication practices influence or hinder citizen engagement in local development dynamics. The adopted methodology, described below, combines institutional and citizen perspectives on public communication using qualitative and quantitative tools adapted to the Malagasy context.

## II. METHODS

The study aims to analyze how information and communication practices, particularly transparency in message dissemination, influence citizens' engagement in local development dynamics. It was conducted in three rural municipalities of Avaradrano, Antananarivo: Sabotsy Namehana, Anosy Avaratra, and Ankadikely Ilafy. Located approximately ten kilometers from the capital, these municipalities were selected based on their status as category I rural municipalities, their geographical proximity facilitating data collection, and their socio-linguistic and socio-professional diversity. This diversity is essential to apprehend the complexity of communication practices in a rural context near the capital. The adopted methodological approach combines qualitative and quantitative tools to better understand the interactions between institutional communication, transparency of disseminated information and citizen participation.

A preliminary exploratory phase identified opportunities for community mobilization, such as market days and days dedicated to issuing administrative documents (copies, certificates), thereby ensuring optimal access to the population for the surveys. This phase also served to assess the practical conditions for message dissemination and reception in each municipality and to develop interview guides for municipal authorities, communication officers, and the population.

The main phase of the survey involved a purposive sample composed of municipal staff and citizens, selected according to criteria of gender, age, education level, and professional status to ensure representativeness and diversity of perceptions. Fifty (50) semi-structured interviews per entity and per municipality (Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Delegates, Communication Officers, each Service Agent, and residents) were conducted in Malagasy, with bilingual support (French–Malagasy) to ensure clarity and inclusivity of the exchanges, particularly in a context where French remains the administrative language. These interviews were complemented by non-participant observations and informal interviews, inspired by journalistic techniques, enabling the collection of rich and complementary qualitative data.

The collected data were subsequently processed using Sphinx (for data entry and descriptive analysis) and SPSS (for statistical testing). Univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses were performed, including correlation analyses and Principal Component Analysis (PCA). These statistical techniques highlighted the relationships between the structuring of public communication mechanisms, the quality of information transparency, and the level of citizen engagement in local initiatives. Transparency, understood as the clarity, regularity, and accessibility of disseminated information, is a central factor examined in this research for its role in fostering trust between institutions and citizens. The methodology relies on prolonged immersion in municipal realities and the engagement with diverse profiles, aiming to provide a nuanced understanding of communication practices, their impacts, and their limitations in the Malagasy rural context. This methodological framework thus seeks to accurately assess the effectiveness of public communication as a lever for inclusion, accountability, and citizen participation in a local development context.

## III. RESULTS

### 3.1. Obstacles to administrative transparency

The study identified several obstacles that hinder administrative transparency in the rural municipalities of Avaradrano

TABLE 1: Barriers to greater administrative transparency

		Commune
		Ratio (%)
Transparency obstacle	Financial constraints	12,5%
	Lack of staff training	12,5%
	Complexity of administrative processes	12,5%
	Lack of technological infrastructure	12,5%

Obstacles were mentioned in 12.5% of the observations, while a substantial proportion of the data remains missing

(87.5%). These obstacles highlight the main challenges associated with establishing transparency, including insufficient resources, lack of training, procedural complexity, and weak infrastructure.

**3.2. Types of information disseminated on local development projects**

The dissemination of information on local development projects appears to be characterized by choices that limit the

population’s access to a comprehensive understanding of the initiatives.

Communication with the population focuses mainly on project objectives and budgets (87.5%), while progress monitoring (62.5%) and information on expected feedback and impacts (50%) remain partial.

**3.3. Perception of communication skills by staff**

The results reveal a varied perception among staff regarding the effectiveness of their communication skills

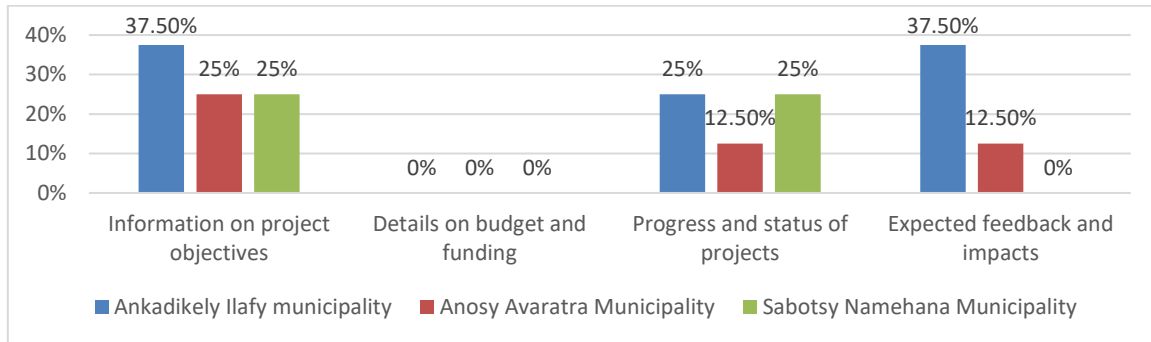


Figure 1: Types of information shared with the population on local development projects

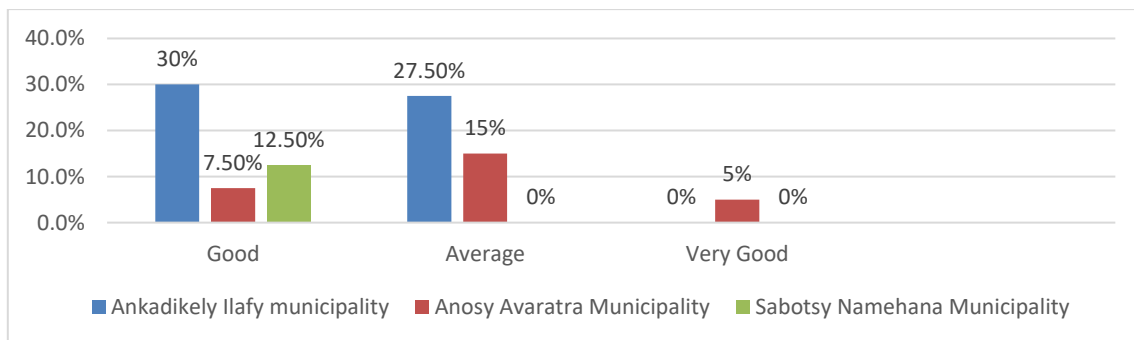


Figure 2: Staff perception of their communication skills

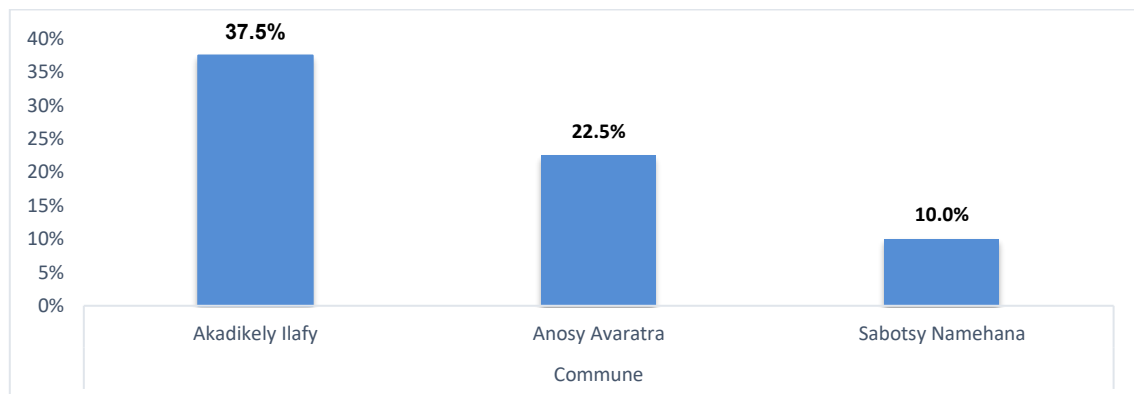


Figure 3: Communication training within the scope of the role

Self-assessments of staff communication skills show that the majority of staff in Ankadikely Ilafy (30%) consider themselves to have “good skills,” compared to 12.5% in Sabotsy Namehana and only 7.5% in Anosy Avaratra. Regarding “average” skills, 27.5% of staff in Ankadikely Ilafy and 15% of staff in Anosy Avaratra fall into this category, while no staff from Sabotsy Namehana are represented. As for “very

good” skills, they concern only 5% of staff in Anosy Avaratra and are absent in the other two municipalities.

**3.4. Communication training in professional practice**

The analysis reveals varied perceptions regarding the effectiveness of communication training attended by staff.

The majority of respondents (70%) have received communication training, although there are disparities between municipalities. Ankadikely Ilafy records the highest proportion (38%), reflecting better accessibility or a priority given to training, while Anosy Avaratra (23%) and especially Sabotsy Namehana (10%) show lower rates, indicating a gap in skills development.

**3.5. Impact of training on the improvement of communication practices**

The majority of staff (58%) believe that the training has significantly strengthened their communication practices, compared to 13% who report a limited impact. Overall, 71% of respondents acknowledge a positive effect, with variations across municipalities: pronounced in Ankadikely Ilafy (58%), moderate in Anosy Avaratra (30%), and almost nil in Sabotsy Namehana.

**3.6. Role of interdepartmental dialogue in performance in serving citizens**

Respondents were asked about the effectiveness of internal communication within their municipality. In Ankadikely Ilafy, 58% believe it should be strengthened to better meet the population’s needs, reflecting perceived shortcomings in information flow. In Anosy Avaratra (30%) and Sabotsy Namehana (13%), expectations are less pronounced, suggesting either relative satisfaction or a lower awareness of the strategic importance of communication performance.

**3.7. Perspectives for improving local governance**

The analysis reveals various improvements envisioned by staff, aiming to optimize coordination, communication, and the performance of municipal services.

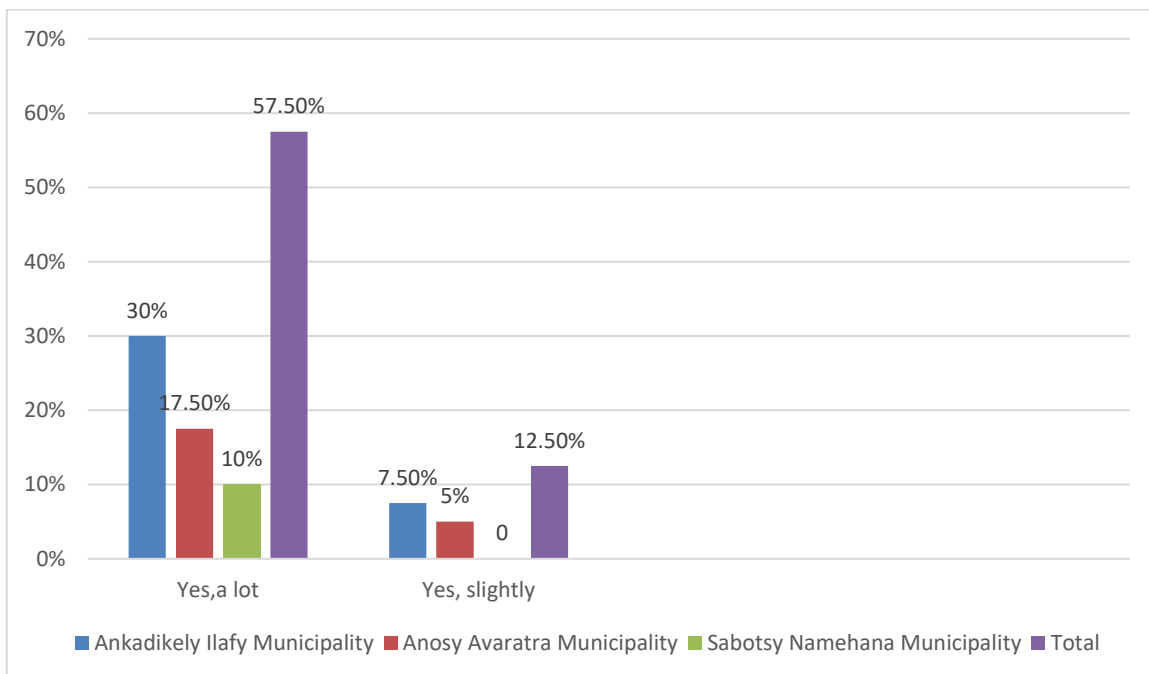


Figure 4: Improvement of communication practices thanks to the training received

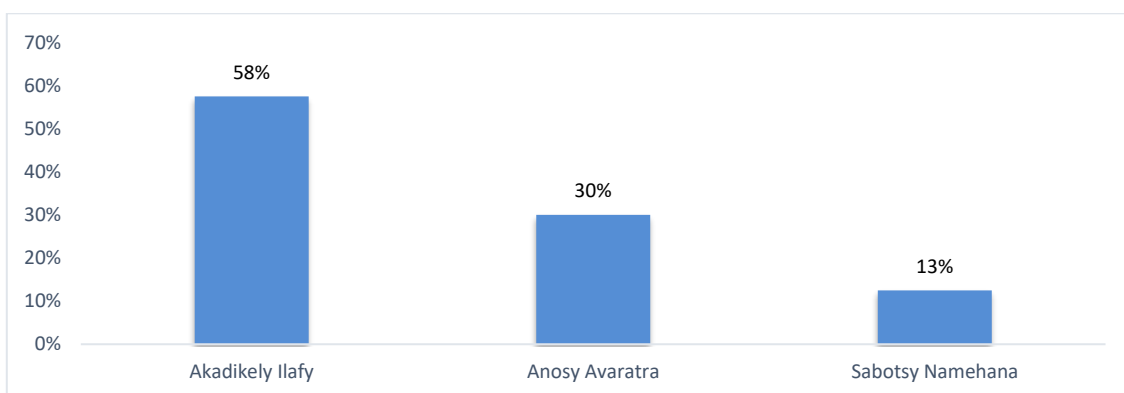


Figure 5: Dialogue between municipal services and performance in serving citizens

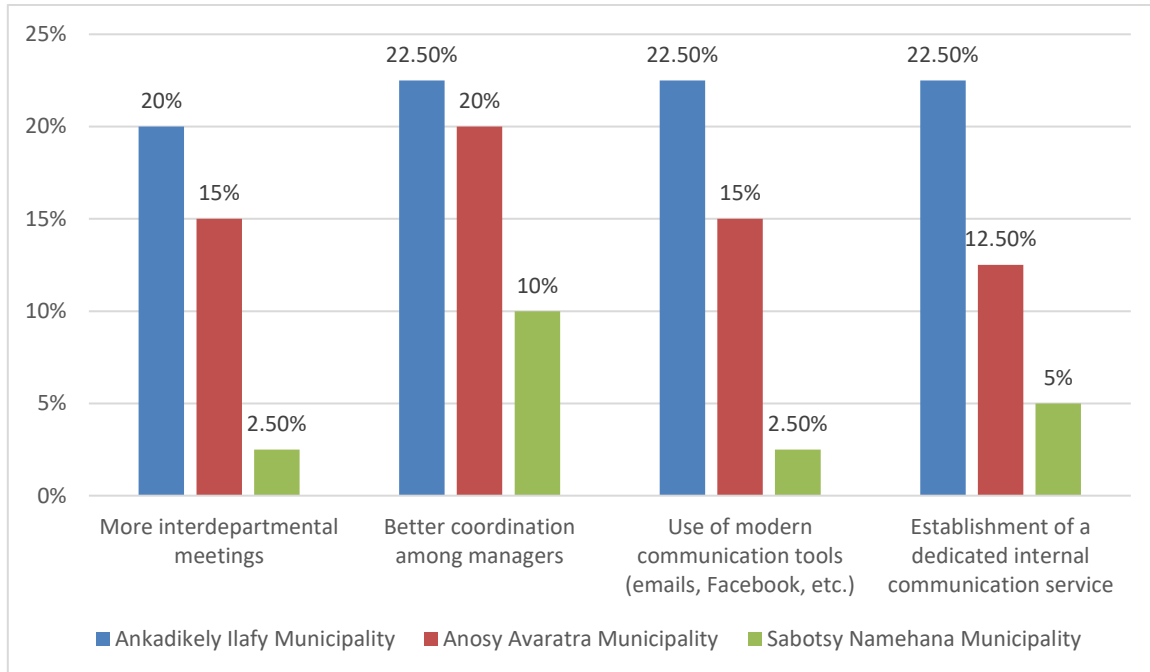


Figure 6: Proposed improvements for better local governance

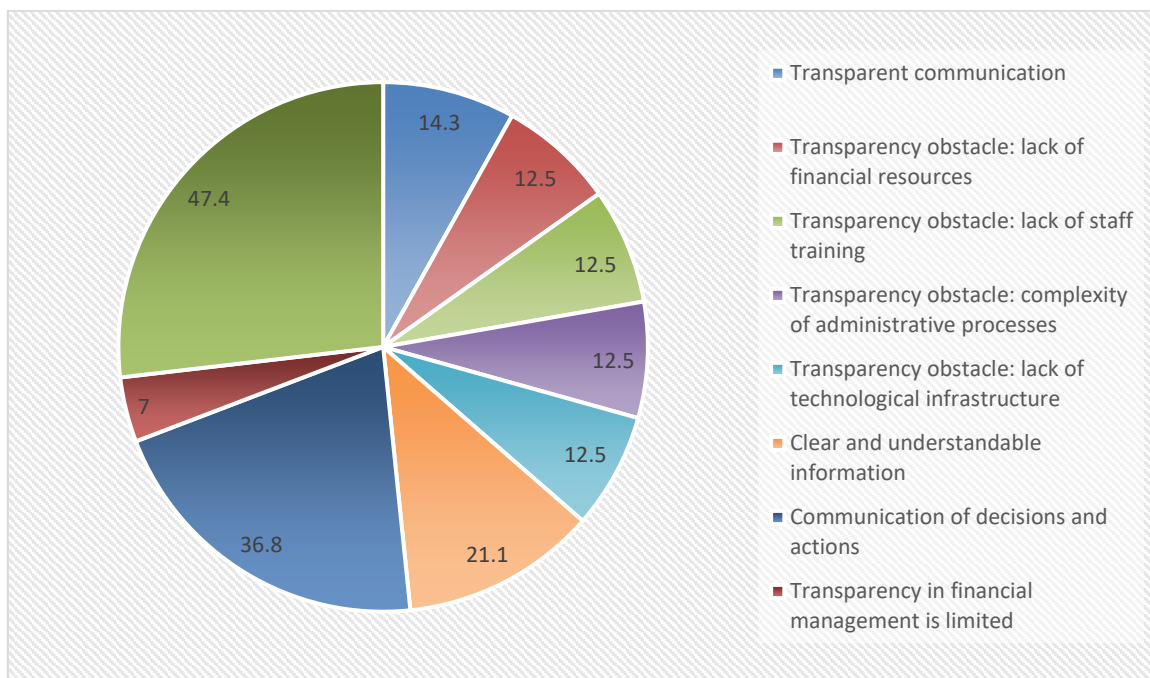


Figure 7: Communication transparency

The analysis of responses highlights four main proposals to improve internal communication. The most frequently mentioned concerns better coordination among managers (22.5%), closely followed by the use of modern communication tools such as emails or social media (22.5%), as well as the establishment of a dedicated internal communication service (22.5%). The proposal related to organizing more frequent interdepartmental meetings is also mentioned, but at a slightly lower level (20%). However, disparities appear across municipalities. The first records the highest proportions across all proposals (20% to 22.5%), the second shows intermediate

values (15% to 20%), while the third is characterized by significantly lower results, ranging from 2.5% to 10%.

### 3.8. Transparency of communications

The results reveal citizens' perceptions of the transparency of municipal decisions and actions, as well as the main obstacles identified to clearer and more effective communication.

In Sabotsy Namehana, 14% of citizens believe that communication regarding administrative decisions is not sufficiently transparent, while 86% consider it satisfactory. The

main obstacles to greater transparency include the lack of financial resources (13%) and staff training (13%), the complexity of administrative processes (13%), and insufficient technological infrastructure (13%). Nearly a quarter of respondents (21%) consider that the information communicated by the municipality is unclear, particularly in Ankadikely Ilafy and Sabotsy Namehana. Regarding communication on decisions and actions, 37% of respondents find it insufficient, with greater dissatisfaction observed in Sabotsy Namehana. Finally, the management of financial resources is perceived as little or not transparent by 47% of respondents, a sentiment particularly high in Sabotsy Namehana.

*3.9. Recommendations to strengthen governance and communication*

The proposals made by staff and citizens highlight concrete measures to improve governance and the effectiveness of local services.

TABLE 2: Improvement proposals

Proposal	Percentage
Improvements in communication within services	100%
Success of development projects	75%
Better training of staff in communication	61,5%
Communication training for all municipalities	57,5%
Better coordination among managers	53%
Use of modern communication tools (emails, Facebook, etc.)	40%
Establishment of a dedicated internal communication service	40%
More interdepartmental meetings	37,5%

The table shows that internal communication within services is unanimously considered an area needing improvement, with 100% of respondents highlighting its importance. A large majority (75%) believe that strengthening this communication is directly linked to the success of development projects, emphasizing the central role of communication in administrative efficiency and local development. More than half of the respondents also consider it crucial to improve staff communication training (62%) and to extend this training to all municipalities (58%), indicating that strengthening human skills is seen as a priority. Coordination among managers is also viewed as an important lever (53%) to streamline exchanges and prevent gaps. To a lesser extent, 40% of respondents consider the use of modern communication tools such as emails or Facebook, as well as the creation of a dedicated internal communication service, as relevant measures. Finally, slightly more than one-third (38%) highlight that increasing interdepartmental meetings can help improve communication, even though this solution appears less of a priority. Overall, these results reflect an approach focused first on enhancing skills and human coordination, before introducing technological means or specialized structures.

IV. DISCUSSION

*4.1. Administrative transparency and institutional communication*

The results show that administrative transparency remains limited in the municipalities of Avaradrano, largely due to

structural and organizational constraints. The lack of financial resources, insufficient staff training, complex procedures, and the absence of adequate technological infrastructure limit the clear dissemination of information and hinder both upward and downward communication. These findings confirm the analyses of Servaes. (2010) and Zémor (1999), who emphasize the role of staff communication skills and the simplification of internal processes to strengthen transparency.

In the context of the rural municipalities of Avaradrano in Antananarivo, these difficulties are even more pronounced. Geographic location, limited logistical resources, and restricted access to digital tools complicate project monitoring and the flow of information to residents. Malgaasy rural populations often receive little concrete information about public services or the progress of local initiatives, which hinders their participation and fosters mistrust toward local authorities. Some initiatives have attempted to address these challenges:

- The CIMSI project (Helvetas, 2017–2022) supported 24 rural municipalities by establishing mechanisms for disseminating information on budgets and projects, and by involving citizens in the monitoring and evaluation of local actions.
- The ProDecid program (GIZ) trained elected officials and municipal staff to better present municipal plans and to organize public meetings to inform residents regularly and transparently.
- Transparency International Madagascar (TI-MG) introduced tools to simplify budget documents to make them understandable for everyone, thus promoting equitable access to information.

These experiences show that, even in a context of strong constraints, it is possible to improve transparency through strategies adapted to rural settings, combining skills development, accessible communication tools, and citizen involvement. It therefore becomes crucial to support rural municipalities with appropriate resources, training, and tools in order to build more open governance and effective institutional communication, for the benefit of all residents.

*4.2. Types of information shared and citizens' perception*

The analysis of information disseminated on development projects in the three municipalities (Ankadikely Ilafy, Anosy Avaratra, Sabotsy Namehana) reveals a significant asymmetry between what is communicated and what citizens actually want to know. The population mainly receives information on project objectives and budgets, while progress monitoring and expected impacts are rarely shared. This situation creates a deficit in both upward and downward communication, limiting citizen engagement and weakening the perception of transparency, as noted by Thomas & Mefalopulos (2009). The limited dissemination of qualitative information, such as citizen feedback and concrete project outcomes, restricts dialogue between authorities and residents and heightens the sense of disconnect. (Müller et al., 2020; Sanchez, 2022). In the case of the rural municipalities of Avaradrano in Antananarivo, this communication deficit is even more pronounced. Residents rarely receive clear information on project progress or their concrete impacts. Geographic isolation, limited Internet access,

scarcity of accessible written materials, and the absence of formal consultation spaces exacerbate dissemination difficulties. Moreover, the lack of resources and trained personnel prevents local authorities from establishing regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms. This fosters a perception of opacity and reduces citizens' trust in their local institutions. Several initiatives illustrate efforts to improve communication in these rural municipalities:

- The CIMSI project (Helvetas, 2017–2022) enabled citizen involvement in project monitoring and communication on budgets and public services in 24 rural municipalities of Analamanga and Vakinankaratra. This project demonstrated that when residents have access to clear and understandable information, their participation and trust increase.
- The ProDecid program (GIZ) supported around one hundred rural municipalities in developing communication tools and training staff to present municipal plans in an accessible manner, including public meetings and postings in villages.
- The Transparency International Initiative Madagascar (TI-MG) trained staff to simplify budget documents so that citizens could better understand how local resources are used.

These findings suggest that a more integrated communication approach, combining financial information, progress monitoring, objectives, and citizen feedback, is essential to strengthen dialogue, trust, and participation at the local level. Investing in communication mechanisms adapted to the rural context not only improves residents' access to information but also fosters a stronger connection between municipalities and citizens, promoting more transparent and inclusive governance.

#### 4.3. Staff communication skills and training

Self-assessments by staff reveal significant differences between municipalities, with some, such as Ankadikely Ilafy, generally considering themselves to have better communication skills than others. These variations are partly explained by unequal access to training, with some municipalities benefiting from better-structured programs, which directly influences staff perceptions of their own abilities. (Mayadi et al., 2025). The majority of staff acknowledge that training has had a positive effect on their communication skills, but its effectiveness remains highly variable across locations, highlighting the need for context-specific approaches adapted to local realities. (Agusalim, 2024; Bessières, 1998)

In the three rural municipalities studied, these disparities are even more pronounced. Geographic location, lack of financial resources, and the absence of regular partnerships with training programs severely limit staff skills development. Municipal personnel, often understaffed and overburdened with tasks, have little time to train and improve their communication abilities, which widens the gap with better-equipped municipalities. Several recent initiatives illustrate the efforts undertaken to address these challenges:

- The CIMSI project (Helvetas, 2017–2022) supported 24 rural municipalities in the Analamanga and Vakinankaratra regions, strengthening the skills of elected officials and staff to better inform citizens about budgets, public services, and development priorities.
- The ProDecid program (GIZ) worked with around one hundred municipalities, many in rural areas, to develop the management and communication skills of elected officials and staff, with a focus on presenting municipal plans and conducting public meetings.
- The Transparency International Initiative Madagascar (TI-MG) trained staff in certain rural municipalities to make budget documents accessible and understandable for all citizens.
- Finally, local NGOs such as SAHA offer practical workshops on interpersonal communication, community mobilization, and the public posting of essential information.

These findings confirm the work of Servaes (2010) and Woodling (2022), who emphasize that strengthening communication skills is essential for improving the quality of services delivered to citizens. The importance of effective communication is also highlighted by Budiana et al.(2023), while programs focused on public speaking and interpersonal communication strengthen staff confidence and autonomy. These observations show that it is crucial to invest in concrete, context-adapted training to enable staff to communicate more effectively and ensure that all citizens benefit from clearer, more accessible, and efficient public services.

#### 4.4. Internal communication and organizational performance

The perception of interdepartmental dialogue reveals that, in some municipalities, notably Ankadikely Ilafy, a majority of staff believe that internal communication needs to be strengthened to better meet the population's needs. This variation between municipalities suggests that organizational performance in serving citizens is closely linked to the quality of exchanges between departments. The work of Chambers (1994) and Mefalopoulos (2009) confirm that internal communication is a key factor in ensuring the coordination of actions, institutional coherence, and, consequently, the effectiveness of services delivered to citizens. In the context of rural municipalities in Madagascar, these challenges are even more pronounced. Geographic isolation, lack of staff, and limited infrastructure complicate the flow of information between departments. Staff often have to manage multiple roles simultaneously, which creates communication breakdowns and delays in decision-making. In this context, the use of simple and accessible tools, such as face-to-face meetings or mobile platforms like WhatsApp, has proven effective in maintaining links between departments, even in settings with limited access to advanced technologies. (Salim, 2022).

Local projects and initiatives have demonstrated the positive impact of these approaches:

- CIMSI (Helvetas) introduced interdepartmental coordination and monitoring mechanisms in certain rural municipalities, facilitating the exchange of

information on projects and collective decision-making.

- ProDecid (GIZ) trained staff in the use of simple communication tools and the organization of regular meetings, helping to improve cohesion and responsiveness of municipal teams.
- In some municipalities, WhatsApp groups have been created for daily project monitoring, promoting rapid information exchange even in remote areas.

These findings show that improving internal dialogue depends not only on tools but also on the social and relational dimensions of communication. Investing in internal communication adapted to the rural context, with simple tools and strong relational practices, helps strengthen coordination, cohesion, and responsiveness within municipalities, which directly translates into higher-quality services delivered to citizens.

#### 4.5. Improvement proposals and strategic priorities

Effective communication in the rural municipalities of Avaradrano in Antananarivo, Madagascar, relies on several key factors that influence both information flow and citizen engagement. On one hand, communication infrastructure plays a central role: the establishment of appropriate telecommunication services is an essential condition for improving connectivity and access to information in remote areas. The use of simple digital media, mobile platforms, and social networks also helps connect rural communities to wider audiences and promote local products, as demonstrated by initiatives such as Creative Village. (Anwar et al., 2024) or budget simplification projects by Transparency International Madagascar.

On the other hand, the socio-economic context plays a major role: higher levels of agricultural or economic development facilitate information flow, while community empowerment promotes collaboration and the effectiveness of communication strategies. Active citizen participation and collaboration across different sectors – governmental, educational, and associative – are essential to support sustainable development and reduce disparities between urban and rural areas. Improvement proposals collected from municipal staff and officials highlight a clear priority: first strengthen internal coordination and organizational skills before investing in new technological tools. The creation of a dedicated internal communication service, increased interdepartmental meetings, and formalized information channels illustrate an approach focused on developing human capacities and facilitating smooth exchanges. These recommendations align with those of Servaes. (2010) and Thomas & Mefalopulos (2009), who emphasize the strengthening of organizational and communication skills before the acquisition of material or digital resources.

In the context of Malagasy rural municipalities, this strategic orientation is particularly relevant. The effectiveness and transparency of communication will depend as much on the internal structuring of services, staff training, and the establishment of strong relational practices as on access to modern technologies. Projects such as CIMSI and ProDecid,

which combined staff skills development, simple monitoring tools, and citizen involvement, demonstrate that even with limited resources, it is possible to significantly improve communication and community participation.

Thus, strategic priorities for Malagasy rural municipalities should include:

- Strengthening the communication and organizational skills of staff;
- Improving internal and interdepartmental coordination mechanisms;
- Gradual adoption of technological tools adapted to the rural context;
- Active involvement of citizens in the monitoring and evaluation of local projects.

This integrated approach would help build more transparent, effective, and participatory communication, based on strong relationships between staff and citizens and well-structured internal processes.

#### 4.6. Implications for local governance

The results show that internal communication is a major strategic lever for strengthening transparency, coordination, and the performance of municipal services. The quality of exchanges between staff and their communication skills directly influence the success of development projects, citizen satisfaction, and trust in local institutions.

In the context of Malagasy rural municipalities, these issues are even more critical. Geographic isolation, lack of trained personnel, and limited access to digital infrastructure make internal coordination difficult and restrict the dissemination of information to citizens. Initiatives such as CIMSI and ProDecid have shown that by combining staff training, the implementation of simple monitoring tools, and citizen involvement, it is possible to strengthen transparency and participation even in resource-limited rural contexts.

In accordance with the works of Servaes (2010), Chambers (1994), and Thomas & Mefalopulos (2009), the effectiveness of local governance relies on the synergy between human skills, organizational structuring, and the judicious use of technological tools. This integrated approach not only improves internal coordination and municipal performance but also promotes genuine and sustainable citizen engagement.

Recent research also highlights the specific challenges faced by Malagasy rural municipalities:

- Ratsarahasina (2025) shows that the increasing expertise of local actors and the role of intermediaries can reduce the decision-making autonomy of elected officials, creating tensions in local governance.
- El Bettioui et al. (2020) highlight that public communication is an essential lever for good governance, but that residents often remain insufficiently informed and involved in strategic decisions.
- Pascal (2008) emphasizes the importance of dynamic interactions between actors and institutions for the effective management of local resources.
- Talbot (2006) reminds us that the sustainability of local governance remains limited by structural constraints,

despite the partial application of principles related to sustainable development.

Thus, for Malagasy rural municipalities, strengthening local governance involves combining targeted staff training, interdepartmental coordination, citizen participation mechanisms, and the appropriate use of technology. Such an integrated approach would help build municipalities that are more transparent, responsive, and capable of meeting the real needs of their residents.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study on information transparency and communication in the municipalities of Avaradrano in Antananarivo highlights the central role of public communication in strengthening citizens' trust and support for local development projects in Madagascar. The results reveal that 37% of citizens consider communication on decisions and actions insufficient, 47% perceive financial resource management as poorly transparent, and nearly a quarter of respondents (21%) believe that the information provided by municipalities is unclear. Significant disparities appear between municipalities, illustrating inequalities in access to complete and understandable information. These limitations are further compounded by the lack of material resources, weak communication skills among staff, language barriers, and limited coordination between municipal departments. The research question, "*To what extent does the routine practice of information and communication techniques foster citizens' trust and support for municipal initiatives?*" is confirmed. The hypothesis that clear, regular, and contextually adapted communication is a fundamental lever for restoring trust and strengthening citizen engagement is validated. The study also shows that staff training, enhanced interdepartmental coordination, and the gradual introduction of digital tools are key factors for improving transparency, organizational performance, and citizen participation.

These findings highlight that local governance in rural municipalities should rely on an integrated approach, combining human skills, organizational structuring, and technological means to ensure more accessible, regular, and understandable communication. Establishing an interactive and participatory dialogue between authorities and citizens, as well as optimizing communication practices, emerges as a strategic lever to bridge the gap between municipal projects and the population, increase the legitimacy of public actions, and strengthen community engagement.

One question remains open for future research: "*how can participatory communication mechanisms be sustainably designed and implemented in ways that are adapted to rural and sociocultural specificities, in order to strengthen accountability, transparency, and engagement in local governance?*".

## REFERENCES

1. Agusalim, L. (2024). Training on Building Effective Communication to Improve Negotiation Skills for Industrial Relations Actors. *Science and Technology: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 1(4), 328-340. <https://doi.org/10.69930/scitech.v1i4.174>
2. Anwar, R. K., Rizal, E., Hafiar, H., & Sirait, R. A. (2024). Social Communication for Rural Development : Lesson Learning from Creative Village. *Nyimak: Journal of Communication*, 8(1), 123-140. <https://doi.org/10.31000/nyimak.v8i1.9579>
3. Bessières, D. (1998). L'institutionnalisation de la communication locale : Les cas des échelons décentralisés départementaux, régionaux, parisiens franciliens. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/L'institutionnalisation-de-la-communication-locale-Bessi%C3%A8res/563fa28d263ee17e607206bfb988f2f3d95f922>
4. Budiana, H. R., Koswara, A., & Syuderajat, F. (2023). Public Communication Training with a Public Relations Approach for Government Apparatus in Cigugur District, Pangandaran Regency. *ABDI MOESTOPO: Jurnal Pengabdian Pada Masyarakat*, 6(1), 92-101. <https://doi.org/10.32509/abdimoestopo.v6i1.2455>
5. Chafik, M., & Abbadi, A. E. (2023). La communication territoriale et les enjeux du développement local : Une revue de littérature. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 175, 01045. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202317501045>
6. Chambers, R. (1994). The origins and practice of participatory rural appraisal. *World Development*, 22(7), 953-969. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X.\(94\)90141-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X.(94)90141-4)
7. El Bettioui, R., Akrich, S., & Ben Dahhane, A. (2020). Bonne gouvernance participative de la collectivité territoriale et communication publique externe : Quelle relation ? <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4817611>
8. Garvanlieva, V., Nikolov, M., & Petrovska, A. M. (2017). Governance, Transparency and Accountability at Local Government Level: Budget Transparency of Macedonian Municipalities. *CEA Journal of Economics*, 12(1), 23-38.
9. Hoa, T. T. T., & Garcia-Zamor, J.-C. (2017). Citizen Participation in Vietnam's Local Government: Impact on Transparency and Accountability. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 7(4), Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jpag.v7i4.12044>
10. Kasymova, J. T., & Schachter, H. L. (2014). Bringing Participatory Tools to a Different Level : A Case Study of Local Participatory Practices in Kyrgyzstan. *Public Performance & Management Review*, 37(3), 441-464. <https://doi.org/10.2753/PMR1530-9576370305>
11. Kumar, N., & Vragov, R. (2009). Active citizen participation using ICT tools. *Commun. ACM*, 52(1), 118-121. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1435417.1435444>
12. Mayadi, M., Patiro, S. P. S., & Rekart, E. (2025). Strategy for Increasing the Effectiveness of Infrastructure Application Usage: The Role of Communication, Training, and Managerial Support in the Simeulue Regency Government Environment | *Jurnal Bisnis Mahasiswa*. <https://jurnalbisnismahasiswa.com/index.php/jurnal/article/view/257>
13. Mudacumura, G. M. (2014). Accountability and Transparency : Cornerstones of Development and Democratic Governance. In G. Mudacumura & G. Morçöl (Éds.), *Challenges to Democratic Governance in Developing Countries* (p. 37-55). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-03143-9\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-03143-9_3)
14. Müller, A. P., Züge, A. A., Klein, L. L., Vieira, K. M., & Pinto, N. G. M. (2020). Perception of municipal public transparency : Citizens' interest. *Research, Society and Development*, 9(9), e200996835-e200996835. <https://doi.org/10.33448/rsd-v9i9.6835>
15. Ndraha, A. B., Waruwu, E., Zebua, D., & Zega, A. (2024). Public Relations and Journalism Institutional Policies to Increase

- Transparency and Public Participation in Government. *Jurnal Ilmu Ekonomi, Pendidikan Dan Teknik*, 1(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.70134/identik.v1i2.37>
16. Pascal, B. (2008). De La « Terre des Ancêtres » aux Territoires des Vivants : Les enjeux locaux de la gouvernance sur le littoral sud-ouest de madagascar. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/DE-LA-%C2%AB-TERRE-DES-ANC%C3%8ATRES-%C2%BB-AUX-TERRITOIRES-DES-%3A-Pascal/c796a2c2c94bfdc894e0b074fd0c4a1086c1f1ea>
  17. Piotrowski, S. J., & Van Ryzin, G. G. (2007). Citizen Attitudes toward Transparency in Local Government. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 37(3), 306-323. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074006296777>
  18. Ratsarahasina, A. N. (2025). Reconfigurations du Pouvoir Local et Rôles des Acteurs Intermédiaires dans la Démocratie Participative : Une Analyse des Dynamiques de Gouvernance au Niveau des Communes Rurales Malgaches. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies*, 49(1), 245-254. <https://doi.org/10.52155/ijpsat.v49.1.6954>
  19. Salim, A. M. (2022). Internal Communications and Organization Performance in Zanzibar Public Institutions. *Asian Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajebe/2022/v22i2030670>
  20. Sanchez, E. M. (2022). Development of Citizen Participation in Municipal Management, a Systematic Review. *Business Innova Sciences*, 3(3), 42-60. <https://doi.org/10.58720/bis.v3i3.106>
  21. Servaes, J. (Ed.). (2010). *Communication for Development and Social Change*. SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd.
  22. Svidroňová, M. M., Nikolov, M., Andonova, V. G., & Kaščáková, A. (2023). Local transparency and participatory budgeting connections in the case of North Macedonia and Slovakia. *Ekonomika a Spoločnosť*, 24(2), 30-45.
  23. Talbot, D. (2006). La gouvernance locale, une forme de développement local et durable? Une illustration par les pays. *Développement durable et territoires. Économie, géographie, politique, droit, sociologie*, Dossier 7, Article Dossier 7. <https://doi.org/10.4000/developpementdurable.2666>
  24. Thomas, T., & Mefalopulos, P. (2009). Participatory Communication. *World Bank Working Papers*. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-8008-6>
  25. Wanjiku Ngunjiri, M. (2023). Citizen Participation in Local Governance in Africa : A Selection of Case Studies. *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)*. <https://doi.org/10.31752/idea.2023.26>
  26. Woodling, C. (2022). The Malagasy Ideal of Fihavanana and Western Ethics. *Comparative Philosophy*, 13(2). [https://doi.org/10.31979/2151-6014\(2022\).130211](https://doi.org/10.31979/2151-6014(2022).130211)
  27. Zémor, P. (1999). Community-Based Public Multiservice Centres : A Pipe Dream or a Fairy Tale about to Come True? *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 65(3), 410-421. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852399653009>
  28. Єрьомка, Д., & Табацький, М. (2024). The role of information and communication technologies in ensuring information protection at the level of territorial communities. *Herald of Khmelnytskyi National University. Economic sciences*, 332(4), Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.31891/2307-5740-2024-332-54>