

Governance Programme

The Governance programme of the Policy Unit aims to build greater involvement of citizens and communities in their development. There are three key areas of focus in the governance programme at the Policy Unit. These are

I. Regulation

The Policy Unit has an ongoing engagement in the national water services and water resource discourses on both national and local level regulation. The key outcomes of this involvement have led to:

- Mvula as the Secretariat for the National CSO Regulation Reference Group, set up in 2008 and currently comprising 15 organizations from across the country. Meets on a quarterly basis and has succeeded in widening the foundation of CSOs who are keen to play a local monitoring role in the water sector as well as provide input into national strategies addressing water and sanitation services.
- The Raising Citizens Voice in the Regulation of Water Services. This public education methodology delivered through ten modules at the community level aims to raise citizen's awareness on their rights and responsibilities around water and sanitation services. After the community training is completed, monthly user platforms are established and run by Executive Committees on a voluntary basis. The medium term objective is to enable local citizens to play a monitoring role regarding municipal water delivery. The long-term objective is to build the capacity of CSOs and civil society organizations to participate in the strategic planning and decision-making of water services at the municipal level. This approach has been implemented by the policy unit of Mvula in Ekurhuleni, and the Durban regional office eThekweni and Msunduzi.

Ongoing and future work focuses research on recourse mechanisms to strengthen the right to redress for citizens' whose service delivery concerns fail to be addressed by the public.

II. People Centred-Development

The Policy Unit has undertaken significant research on various approaches that can highlight the involvement of community members in the delivery of water services. This approach underlies a number of different research and pilot approaches of the Policy Unit, which have included:

- Mvula's 5-year collaboration with CARE-South Africa through the Water Health and Livelihoods Programme (WHELL) examining the nexus between water, gender and HIV/Aids.

- Research the role of CBO involvement in the operations and maintenance of water and sanitation services.

III. CSO Advocacy

- Mvula has been a founding trustee and active board member of the African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEW). In this role, the Policy Unit participates at a continental scale in providing strategic direction for ANEW's efforts in strengthening civil society advocacy on water and sanitation issues.
- The Turning Advocacy Into Action programme is the South African application of the ANEW initiative. The Policy Unit at Mvula has coached numerous civil society organizations across South Africa in their research on IWRM, developing a country-wide strategy for advocacy, using the media as an advocacy strategy for community leaders in informal settlement struggling to secure services for their constituencies and so forth.