

Masibambane Civil Society Support Programme: Good Practice of Civil Society Organisation Involvement in Water Services Delivery

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This document is written for water services sector practitioners, and specifically for those in national and local government. Although its focus is water services, it has application for development interventions beyond potable water and household sanitation.



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Abbreviations

BP	Business Plan
CBO	community-based organisation
CDF	Community Development Facilitator
CDW	Community Development Worker
CHW	Community Health Worker
CSA	Community Situational Analysis
CSO	civil society organisation
CSP	Community Service Provider
dplg	Department of Provincial and Local Government
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
EJNF	Environmental Justice Networking Forum
EMG	Environmental Monitoring Group
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programme
EU	European Union
IDP	integrated development plan
IDT	Independent Development Trust
ISD	institutional and social development
LED	local economic development
MCP	Municipal-Community Partnership
MCSSP	Masibambane Civil Society Support Programme
MIG	Municipal Infrastructure Grant
NDA	National Development Agency
NGO	non-governmental organisation
O&M	operations and maintenance
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SANCO	South African National Civics Organisation
SMME	small, medium and micro enterprise
SPSC	Sanitation Project Steering Committee
VWC	Village Water Committee
WIN-SA	Water Information Network – South Africa
WLP	Water Leaks Project
WSA	water services authority
WSDP	water services development plan
WSP	water services provider
WS-SSP	Water Services Sector Support Programme

1 Introduction

The government of South Africa is working hard to establish national, provincial and local priorities and programmes to provide basic services for all. Within that, people must be empowered to be involved in, and to take control of, their own development. National and international experience shows that development is far more sustainable if local people have a sense of ownership and participation in their own development initiatives. Also, sustainability is enhanced when other conditions in people's lives are properly addressed. "Human dignity is an expression used a great deal, but it is not something that can be granted on paper; it is something people must feel and experience." (Ronnie Kasrils, former Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, 2003.)

One way to strengthen community involvement is through partnerships. This requires, among other things, a common vision, hard work, consensus, courage and compromise. The outcome of a good partnership is generally worth the effort.

In South Africa, communities have often taken the initiative and have become involved in increasing their access to water and sanitation. There is an urgent need to promote and support community initiatives, and to integrate and institutionalise such initiatives within local government. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are often well placed to broker such municipal-community partnerships – because of their work with rural communities, and their not-for-profit approaches to development. NGOs have sound experience in facilitating and strengthening community participation and a sense of ownership.

There are many success stories of municipal-community-NGO partnerships, and these need to be shared, understood and replicated wherever circumstances permit. This document is one way of sharing success stories.

The document provides an overview of the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Programme of Masibambane. It articulates definitions for good practice in municipal-community-NGO Partnerships, looks at these partnerships at different stages of the project cycle (including ongoing operations and maintenance [O&M]) i.e. it highlights possible contributions by CSOs to the municipal function of water services delivery. Finally, it provides five case studies of good practice in municipal-community-NGO partnerships, and suggests recommendations for municipalities in exploring such partnerships.

2 Civil Society and the Masibambane Civil Society Support Programme

2.1 Definition of CSOs

“Civil society” can be seen as the network of organisations and institutions that mediate between the citizen and the State (Andersson, 1995). Andersson (1995) argues this excludes business organisations, since they operate very differently from non-profit organisations – and calls the CSO sector the “non-profit sector” or “third sector”. The Civil Society Strategy, as adopted by the Masibambane Civil Society Support Programme (MCSSP) National Steering Committee (2004), takes a common approach: “Civil society is that part of society that is not part of the state or of private / business sector.”

It states that CSOs are formed voluntarily by citizens to strive for public, community or group benefit objectives – not for private profit.

They generally fall into three categories:

- Organisations formed out of concern to assist vulnerable sectors, the poor or disadvantaged, including those formed for self-help purposes.
- Organisations that are formed on the basis of a common interest in and / or to take action on a particular subject or issue.
- Organisations through which people engage in a common pursuit.

The most common types of CSOs are community-based organisations (CBOs) (for example, residents’ associations, clubs, local development associations, project committees); charities; trade unions; faith-based organisations; and service delivery or advocacy NGOs.

The roles that CSOs play are important, and numerous: for example, they give organised expression to the needs of citizens, they hold government and elected officials accountable, and they support government to achieve its developmental democratic objectives. As Andersson (1995: 1) puts it: civil society is “the connective tissue of a democratic political culture”.

Some other, more specific, roles of the CSO sector he identifies are:

- Catalyzing the emergence of local level development initiatives.
- Establishing mechanisms by which government and the market can be held accountable by the public.
- Pilot innovations, which can be replicated at scale.
- Policy influence.
- Mediation and partnership building.
- Working within defined technical areas (as extensions of government line departments).

These and other contributions of CSOs are dealt with in Section 4 of this document.

The main focus of the MCSSP (see paragraph 2.2) is on NGOs and CBOs, and especially those that make themselves felt in the struggle against poverty and unequal access to resources. Andersson describes the difference between the two (1995: 2) as “NGOs usually provide services or technical support to others, whereas CBOs are commonly formed by people for their own advancement.” NGOs and CBOs considered for this research have been defined in more detail in the Civil Society Strategy (MCSSP, 2004). These definitions have also been adopted for this document (see Box 1 and 2).

Box 1: Definition of CBOs (MCSSP, 2004: 3)

CBOs
 A CBO is a not-for-profit organisation within a specific community, with community representatives, that provides a service to that community with the community’s mandate or is representing the overall interests of the community. The office bearers or staff of a CBO are generally people who live in the community and were elected or appointed by the community or sections of the community, to perform certain functions.

NOTE:
 Ward Committees are not CBOs, although they have CBO representatives on them. They are official municipal structures, and are thus not defined as a CSO.

Box 2: Definition of NGOs (MCSSP, 2004: 2)

NGOs
 NGOs are organisations within civil society that are autonomous from government and do not operate for profit. As with civil society, NGOs are not homogenous. They range from charity organisations, those who are concerned with more narrow interests, to those who are concerned with the development process in our country.

This [MCSSP] Strategy focuses on NGOs that work in the field of development and that work with people to help them improve their social and economic situation and prospects, and who display the following key characteristics:

- Not for profit / not self-serving
- Do not have shareholders, and whose Board of Directors is a body with purely governance functions
- Independent
- Value-based
- Promote active community participation in development
- Support government’s service delivery and social development programmes*
- Are registered as a Non Profit Organisation with the Department of Social Development*

* These characteristics do not apply to all NGOs, but are specifically listed in the Civil Society Strategy of the MCSSP.

The commitment of the South African government to “meaningfully involve civil society” (see Box 5 and paragraph 2.2) is based on the following principles (MCSSP, 2004: 6):

- It is politically desirable to encourage a strong civil society, and CBOs in particular, in order to strengthen our democracy.
- The active involvement of empowered communities and CBOs is necessary to ensure appropriate and sustainable service delivery and other development interventions.
- Due to their value-based approach and experience in working with poor communities, NGOs are well suited to assisting government to give effect to the first two principles, above. NGOs are also suited to playing an independent role in research, monitoring and evaluation.

The Strategic Framework for Water Services (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry [DWA], 2003) also outlines this approach, as articulated in Box 3.

Box 3: The role of civil society, Strategic Framework for Water Services (DWA, 2003: 25)

The role of civil society

A vibrant and durable democracy needs a strong civil society. Government is committed to promoting the active involvement of civil society in the provision of sustainable and affordable water services, in research and in other related activities. This will be done through:

- engaging civil society organisations in policy development, research and advocacy, and assisting with planning, implementation and management of programmes and projects at community level;
- supporting the development of capacity in civil society organisations;
- encouraging civil society organisations to help monitor sector performance at all levels;
- engaging civil society organisations in creating a link between government and local communities;
- engaging capacitated community-based organisations to manage water services projects at the local level, where appropriate;
- assisting in the mobilisation of funds for non-government and community-based organisations where appropriate.

2.2 The MCSSP

“Masibambane” means “Let’s work together” in isiZulu, and is the name given to the Water Services Sector Support Programme (WS-SSP). The Programme aims to “improve the quality of life of poor communities by improving their access to adequate, safe, appropriate and affordable basic water supply and sanitation services provided by effective, efficient and sustainable institutions that are accountable and responsive to those whom they serve” (MCSSP, 2004: 4). The Programme takes a multi-faceted approach and contributes to the overall objective mentioned above in the areas of sector collaboration, institutional support, transfers and cross cutting issues.

Civil society is supported under cross-cutting issues, aiming at “empowerment of CSOs to better perform relevant functions in the water sector; increased awareness, particularly among water services authorities (WSAs), of the capabilities of CSOs to perform services relevant to their functions; animation of the CSO sector by collaborative fora and other means to play a meaningful role in the development of the water sector” (MCSSP, 2004: 6). The Civil Society Strategy (MCSSP, 2004) has defined “meaningful involvement” more specifically (see Box 4). The MCSSP is the vehicle through which DWA is promoting greater involvement of civil society in Masibambane.

Box 4: “Meaningful involvement” according to the Civil Society Strategy (MCSSP, 2004: 7)

“Meaningful involvement” means –

- Strong awareness of and participation in water and sanitation planning and delivery processes by communities and CBOs;
- Increased numbers of NGOs, CBOs and community members actively engaged in local level planning processes for water and sanitation delivery;
- Increased numbers of NGOs and CBOs contracted for water and sanitation delivery services by municipalities;
- Greater proportions of water and sanitation programme financing flowing through and being managed by NGOs and CBOs;
- Increased numbers of NGOs and CBOs constructively involved in policy review and reformulation processes at provincial and national level; and
- High quality of services provided by NGOs and CBOs in service delivery contractual arrangements.

The Masibambane Programme is implemented by DWAF, the Department of Provincial and Local Government (dplg), their provincial counterparts, municipalities and other representative structures, collaborating with the European Union, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Ireland, France and the Flemish government. The South African government has committed to channeling 25% of the European Commission funds through non-state (civil society) structures.

The first phase of Masibambane ran from 2001 to 2004, and focused on the provinces of the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal. The second phase, running up to 2007, includes all nine South African provinces.

2.3 The community involvement component of the MCSSP

One of the challenges identified after the first phase of the MCSSP was the diminishing role of CBOs in water and sanitation delivery programmes, due to municipal emphasis on fast track, top-down delivery of infrastructure, at the expense of sustainability and community buy-in. The Business Plan (BP) for the second phase of the MCSSP includes a component focusing specifically on community involvement.

The activities under this component are to:

1. Support the rollout of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), particularly MIG policies on community involvement and people-centered approaches.
2. Promote community involvement in integrated development plan (IDP) reviews, section 78 assessments etc., through information and regulation.
3. Promote the appropriate use of CBOs in managing water services.
4. Conduct research and document good practice.

This document contributes to activities 3 and 4 above.

3 “Good practice” in Municipal-Community-NGO partnerships

3.1 Municipal-Community-NGO partnerships

A relatively great deal has been written on institutional arrangements for service delivery through or with NGOs. The MCSSP has simultaneously commissioned research and documentation on current contracting arrangements for NGOs, and good practice therein. This document focuses specifically on Municipal-Community(-NGO) partnerships. In these partnerships, the main partners are the municipality and the community (CBO). The NGO can play a vital role, but usually does this through some sort of a support mechanism.

The term “partnership” can be very broadly interpreted; the dictionary describes it as “parties associated with one another in some common activity”. In professional and academic literature there is no single definition available for Municipal-Community(-NGO) partnerships. So, although there are no strict definitions on how such a partnership should be formalised or institutionalised, there is however one important point: a “partnership” implies a move away from the municipality as the sole service provider and, instead, sees the municipality as “a community representative, leader and facilitator, working in collaboration with a multiplicity of partners” (Cranko and Kahn, 1999: v). It goes beyond the narrow understanding of “partnership” as community participation and employment programmes only – a common confusion, according to Cranko and Kahn (1999).

A useful definition is found in Box 5.

Box 5: Municipal-Community Partnerships in context (Cranko and Kahn, 1999: 33 – emphasis added)

Municipal-Community Partnerships (MCPs) in context

MCPs are an example of one institutional strategy that can help meet developmental needs at a local level. They should not be seen as vehicles purely for community participation nor as panaceas for extending infrastructural services to poor people. They are a service delivery and governance vehicle that, in the context of meeting developmental needs of poor people with respect to all municipal functions, sometimes demonstrate a competitive advantage over other approaches.

The Strategic Framework for Water Services (DWAF, 2003) promotes the use of CBOs in smaller, localised schemes (as water services providers [WSPs] or water services agents). It states that “DWAF will engage with other national government departments to secure the right of water services authorities to use community-based water services providers (as defined in this Strategic Framework) without undertaking competitive tendering.”

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and dplg also support this position. In effect, municipalities are encouraged to recognise and support a role for CBOs in water services delivery. This role can be within an internal or an external delivery mechanism – as defined in section 78 of the Municipal Systems Act (No 32 of 2000).

3.2 Motivating factors for MCPs

Cranko and Kahn (1999) conducted research to gauge stakeholder experience with MCPs and interest in MCPs. They found that there is a range of factors that motivate the establishment of MCPs, for municipalities, service providers and within existing MCPs.

However, they found widespread consensus that the main factors are their potential to:

- Supplement capacity.
- Create financial sustainability.
- Promote efficient and cost-effective service delivery.

Additional motivating factors are:

- Enhancement of accountability.
- Enhancement of empowerment.
- Enhancement of community 'ownership' of projects.

However, these last factors did not feature as prominently as might have been anticipated. Motivating factors from the perspectives of municipalities, NGOs and existing MCPs are listed in Box 6.

Box 6: Several perspectives on the motivating factors for establishing MCPs (Cranko and Kahn, 1999)

Municipal perspective

From a municipal perspective, the primary motivation for the establishment of MCPs is to supplement capacity or enhance the cost-effectiveness of services.

Municipalities show some interest in the potential of MCPs to support job creation and economic empowerment. However, community contact and improved services are not priority reasons to pursue MCPs.

NGO perspective

NGOs are primarily motivated by the benefits of pooling resources* and the need for financial sustainability. They are also motivated by the potential of MCPs to empower communities.

Existing MCP perspective

Motivating factors arising from existing MCPs are that they provide mechanisms for more effective communication and the resolution of development deadlocks.

They also enable cooperation, facilitate new understanding about roles, responsibilities, duties and obligations in service provision, and aid the pooling of resources*.

* "Pooling of resources" – the mobilisation of the distinct skills, expertise, competencies and assets of different stakeholders (community, service providers, local government) around a common development project wherein the whole is greater than the sum of the separate contributions.

3.3 "Good practice"

The following guidelines for good practice are kept broad deliberately: this way, they apply to both MCPs, as well as Municipal-Community-NGO Partnerships. Some of the guidelines could also apply to any successful partnership (also Public-Private Partnerships), but some are specifically important when considering MCPs.

In 1999, the former Department of Constitutional Development (now dplg) stated that successful MCPs as service delivery and governance mechanisms should include three key elements:

- Organisational effectiveness.
- Extending basic services to address areas of greatest unmet needs and poverty.
- Community empowerment and deepening of the democratic contract at a local level.

It listed the following general features of successful partnerships:

- Simple, focused proposals that are widely understood and accepted. As the project matures and capacity is built, interventions can be scaled up.
- Sustainability at all stages of the project by:
 - Developing entrepreneurship (and moving away from the traditional welfare approach).
 - Ensuring well-managed and independent organisational structures (with participation of stakeholders).
 - Encouraging enterprising leadership.
- Mature participatory frameworks, creating an environment where municipalities can work in respectful and supportive ways with CSOs.
- Formal contracts (when dealing with community organisations and / or CBOs).
- Officials capable of working with CSOs, who support and empower CSOs proactively and work closely with the community.
- Competitive determination of grant allocation and ‘matching grants’ to CSOs, which increase accountability and performance. CSOs compete for contracts with defined service outputs. ‘Matching grants’ (a community contribution) [although not supported by current government policy] can lead to greater community commitment, and it encourages greater participation and dedication in designing a feasible project.
- Information production and dissemination that promotes innovation to replicate good ideas, and to exchange knowledge and experiences.
- Learning capability of the partnerships, through which the partnership is able to learn from experience and consequently adapt.

Sithole (2004) broadly names the same kind of good practice guidelines, or success factors. She stresses that the project (or partnership) should be linked to the IDP and the overall goals of the local government. This will promote political commitment and an internal planning exercise from the municipal side. She also points to the importance of a ‘driver’ within the municipality, which goes further than “officials capable of working with CSOs” – it refers to someone passionate about communities and participatory approaches. She also stresses clarity: a proper planning process will lead to clear budgets, timeframes, monitoring and roles to be played by all stakeholders. Clear outcomes, in the form of key outputs and key performance indicators, enhance the success of the project.

The case studies presented in this document add more specifically to this theoretical inventory of “good practice” in CSO involvement in water services delivery.

4 Contributions of CSOs in all phases of water services delivery

4.1 Phases of water services delivery

For the purposes of this document, the different phases in the water services project cycle have been identified as:

- 1) Planning
- 2) Design
- 3) Implementation
- 4) Operations and maintenance (O&M) and mentoring
- 5) Evaluation

These phases are not necessarily clearly demarcated and often overlap in reality.

Activities that take place during the whole cycle and all phases are:

- Awareness raising and information dissemination
- Advocacy and communication
- Monitoring (of the process)

The planning phase, in particular, needs much attention. Planning takes place at different levels, and CSOs can be involved at these different levels. Firstly, there is municipal planning (“meso-level” within the WSA) – at the level of IDPs, water services development plans (WSDPs), etc. Secondly, when the decision has been taken to implement a specific project, there is individual project planning (the development of a project BP).

4.2 Contributions of CSOs

The Civil Society Strategy (MCSSP, 2004: 7) summarizes several roles for CBOs and NGOs to play in water and sanitation planning and service delivery. These, and others obtained from interviews with professionals in the sector, are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Contributions of CSOs in Municipal-Community-NGO Partnerships per phase or activity of the project cycle

Phase / activity	Contribution of CBO	Contribution of NGO (in Municipal-Community-NGO partnership)
1 Planning	<p><u>Meso-level (WSA)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work in partnership with municipality, directly or through Ward Committee, to organise the community to ensure genuinely consultative WSDP and IDP development processes. - Inform WSA on criteria for project prioritisation. - Inform WSA on appropriate levels of service. - Inform WSA on criteria for indigent policy. - Inform WSA in section 78 decision-making regarding appropriate options / mechanisms for water services delivery. - Act as consumer body to engage with municipality around service improvements. <p><u>Project level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advise WSA on selection of project implementing agents in terms of supply chain regulations. - Advise WSA and WSP, and participate in Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) infrastructure development projects. 	<p><u>Meso-level (WSA)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the participation of CBO in appropriate planning activities. - Work in partnership with municipality, Ward Committee and CBO to ensure genuinely consultative WSDP and IDP development processes. - Develop monitoring systems and approaches to revitalise failed or non-operational projects. <p><u>Project level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the participation of CBO in appropriate planning activities. - Provide institutional and social development (ISD) services, including training needs analyses, training and capacity building, setting up community-based institutions, communication strategies, etc. - Conduct EPWP training.
2 Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in design of appropriate technologies and levels of service (including multiple use systems and water for productive purposes). - Advise on designs that are sensitive to the needs of vulnerable groups (women, elderly, children, and people living with HIV / AIDS). - Advise on cost considerations in project design that consider cost to individual households and cost of free basic water and sanitation. - Participate in tendering process and awarding of contracts as part of Project Steering Committee (PSC) responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the participation of CBO in appropriate design activities. - Undertake design (including engineering and ISD components). - Assist CBO to participating in tendering processes and awarding of contracts.

Phase / activity	Contribution of CBO	Contribution of NGO (in Municipal-Community-NGO partnership)
3 Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in PSC activities. - Participate in skills development and capacitation initiatives for local community members. - Participate in local economic development (LED) deriving from project implementation. - Collaborate with project implementing agent to participate in EPWP activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the participation of CBO in appropriate implementation activities. - Implement projects (green fields, upgrading or refurbishment), particularly on small, low technology water projects and on site sanitation) - Facilitate and implement pilots, training, ISD work, etc. - Facilitate refurbishment. - Provide ISD services, including training needs analyses, training and capacity building, setting up community-based institutions, etc. - Provide or train Community Development Workers (CDWs). - Train and mentor emerging small scale contractors.
4 O&M and mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enter into WSP contract with WSA for appropriately sized water schemes. - Provide support services to WSP (e.g. tariff collection, customer relations and appropriate O&M). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the participation of CBO in appropriate O&M activities. - Enter into water services agent contract with WSA. - Provide post-implementation support to CBO involved in WSP arrangements (for example, mentoring, technical and financial support).
5 Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in statutory performance appraisal processes of municipal services delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advise and assist CBOs to participate in statutory Performance Appraisal processes. - Develop evaluation systems and strategies (particularly for ISD).

Phase / activity	Contribution of CBO	Contribution of NGO (in Municipal-Community-NGO partnership)
6 Awareness raising and information dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liaise and collaborate with Ward Committee on pertinent services delivery issues. - Raise relevant community concerns, issues and priorities in WSDP and IDP development processes. - Convene public and focus group meetings to inform stakeholders, raise awareness, and to support social behaviour change (by exerting peer pressure). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate the setting up of a CBO (if appropriate). - Promote and / or coordinate integrated development (LED, environmental management, etc.) to both community and municipality. - Support CBO in a wide variety of awareness raising issues (for example, health and hygiene education, the wise use of water, and the role of the community in the project cycle and in decision making). - Work with CBO and municipality to ensure the exchange of information. - Support the publication of relevant services delivery matters through the media, meetings and word-of-mouth. - Document, disseminate and promote cases of good practice. - Train CDWs.
7 Advocacy and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage public discussion and debate of municipal services delivery issues. - Act as community voice in relation to municipal services delivery issues. - Employ various communication strategies within appropriate means. - Identify problems and prioritise concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote integrated development (LED, environmental management, etc.) to both community and municipality. - Raise relevant services delivery issues in appropriate forums and with relevant authority. - Assist municipality and CBO to develop communication strategy. - Engage in policy research. - Advocate good practice. - Assist CBO and municipality to raise funds from donors.
8 Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Act as consumer body to engage with municipality around service improvements. - Report vandalism and unauthorised connections. - Check water quality and quantity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop monitoring systems and approaches to revitalise failed or non-operational projects. - Provide post-implementation support to CBO involved in WSP arrangements. - Ensure conflict resolution.

5 Five case studies focusing on municipal-community-NGO partnerships

This Section looks at case studies where municipalities and communities are working closely together, with the support of NGOs, to ensure sustainable service delivery in water and / or sanitation. The case studies offer a range of experience in terms of different municipalities, different geographical areas, and different roles and contributions of CSOs.

5.1 Gubenxa – community involvement in integrated development

This case study demonstrates that, given enough time and effort and a common vision a number of government departments, NGOs and communities can work together to ensure sustainable, integrated development for improved quality of life and livelihoods.

5.1.1 Background

Gubenxa is a remote village on a plateau in the Eastern Cape. It is situated 70 km from the small town of Elliot. It can only be reached by gravel road. Gubenxa is to be found within the Ngcobo Local Municipality, which falls under the Chris Hani District Municipality.

There are high levels of unemployment, and income levels are low. Most people are old, and rely on pension money from government. It is a remote and scattered rural settlement.

In August 2002, Gubenxa was identified as one of the poorest areas of the Eastern Cape when the MEC for Agriculture in the Eastern Cape embarked on an outreach programme to identify conditions in rural areas.

5.1.2 Description of the Gwebindlala poverty alleviation programme within which Gubenxa occurs

In 2003 the European Union (EU) approved funding of approximately R40 million to implement a programme of basic services and poverty alleviation to improve the lives of the poorest communities in the Eastern Cape. The first phase of the programme involved implementing about 100 projects in at least 50 communities over the period of two years.

The Mvula Trust was appointed by the EU to implement this programme. Mvula responded to needs expressed by communities, and ensured that all identified projects were approved by municipalities, and inserted within municipal IDPs.

5.1.3 Description of the project

Gubenxa is one of the 50 communities benefiting under Gwebindlala. As a result of the outreach by the MEC for Agriculture, the Department of Social Development began delivering food parcels to the poorest people in the Eastern Cape. In Gubenxa, 50 people started benefiting from the food distribution. Further, research was undertaken in

Gubenxa on the availability of water and arable land, and the conclusion was that poor soil conditions precluded the production of food at household level. Mvula assisted members of the community to start sheep breeding as part of the Gwebindlala programme.

Activities are now centred on the provision of infrastructure identified by the community such as the construction of a school, two crèches, water supply and sanitation infrastructure, a sheep shearing-shed and an improved access road from Elliot. Construction is accompanied by capacity building of community members so that they can participate in project management and O&M.

5.1.4 Description of the partnership

Partnerships at provincial and local level

The District Municipalities benefiting from the EU funding include Alfred Nzo, Amatole, Chris Hani, OR Tambo and uKhahlamba. Mvula set up strong working relationships with stakeholders such as provincial government departments, the Independent Development Trust (IDT), the National Development Agency (NDA), DWA, and the Department of Agriculture.

Partnerships within Gubenxa

Mvula is working in partnership with the Chris Hani District Municipality and the Ngcobo Local Municipality, with the community, represented by the Ward Councillor. The Ward Councillor chairs community meetings convened twice a month. He also reports back to Council on progress. The District and Local Municipalities provide political support and co-funding.

The Local Municipality will provide tractors for cultivation of fields during the ploughing season. They are also building a community hall in Gubenxa. Before the access road was given to the construction company, the Local Municipality used to upgrade the 5 km road in the village. They will now construct a 6 km road to the Sidikidini sub-village of Gubenxa while the District Municipality is co-funding a 3 km road with Gwebindlala (at a cost of R200 000).

Other contributing partners and their roles include:

- The National Wool Growers Association trained nine community members in wool sorting and shearing. They provided the design for the sheep shearing shed.
- The Department of Agriculture provided wool bales and initially delivered the bales to the wool market. They also allocated extension workers to provide technical assistance and training on soil testing for growing crops.
- Food and Trees for Africa donated 100 fruit trees and 400 indigenous trees to plant in the community.
- The Department of Social Development funded a local agricultural co-operative (Gingquza Co-Op) at a cost of R500 000. The funding was applied for jointly, with Mvula providing the Memorandum of Understanding and the BP.
- The provincial Department of Health is assisting in terms of vaccination of school children and implementing other related health activities in the village. They use the

Ngcobo mobile health clinic to access the village. A secondary school has recently been built – the first facility in Gubenxa provided by the new government.

- Through the HIV / AIDS training carried out by the Gwebindlala programme in Gubenxa a number of child headed families were identified, and the Department of Social Development is including them in their list for grant funding. The Department has also agreed to include the two pre-schools (Ku-Beki and Taleni) currently under construction on their beneficiary list. The two pre-schools have joined the Ngcobo Day Care Forum where there are funding benefits for all registered bodies.

Commitment from the community is enormous. The various activities, starting with sheep breeding, have ensured that many people work closely together in Gubenxa. The Mvula Trust facilitated the establishment of the association engaged in capacity building of PSCs, and facilitated relationships between the community and other stakeholders.

5.1.5 Benefits of the project

Signs of poverty alleviation

Signs of poverty alleviation are being seen in Gubenxa. In October 2004 78 sheep owners formed an association, with facilitation support from Mvula. A sheep-shearing shed was built from unused corrugated iron in the village. The association hired sheep shearers from a neighbouring village. In eight weeks they collected wool from 4 580 sheep. They sold the wool to a wool company in East London. The company sent a truck to collect the wool and paid them R27 000. Shared between them this is a huge improvement on the R6 per bag of wool paid previously by brokers to individual sheep owners.

Local training

All the members of the committees have received training from Mvula. Eight members of the PSC were trained for nine days in the village on project management and O&M of the various structures. Further, people have been trained in sheep shearing, health and hygiene promotion, and HIV / AIDS care giving.

Access road

A road construction company called Ntutu Civil and Construction was appointed to begin constructing an access road from the main tar road from Elliot to Gubenxa. This will create jobs for about 30 community-based people. The construction will take three months. A community liaison officer was appointed to work closely with the construction company and the community. Community employees will be reporting to this person, and wages will also be organised in the community. This road will make it easier for the people of Gubenxa to travel to town.

Two pre-schools

Construction of the two pre-schools is underway. Ku-Beki is almost complete. Both pre-schools have between 30 and 50 children. Parents contribute R10 a month to purchase meals for the scholars. The government pays the salaries of the teachers.

Junior secondary school

The Provincial Government has recently constructed a junior secondary school. There has been high attendance since the school was constructed. A school feeding programme and hygienic toilets contribute to this good attendance.

Mobile clinic

The Ngcobo mobile clinic is assisting in terms of vaccinating school children against diseases. There has been a reduction in terms of waterborne and other diseases.

5.1.6 Lessons learnt

- Political support and co-funding from the Ngcobo Local Municipality and Chris Hani District Municipality is necessary for sustainability. Where Mvula initially struggled to get meetings with municipal officials, it is now the opposite. The Local Municipality has taken ownership of the programme, and this is a sure guarantee for sustainability.
- Facilitation of partnerships in Gubenxa is slow; it needs constant checking that partners are on track, but it has been very effective for buy-in and commitment (“ownership”) from the vast range of role players and stakeholders.
- In fostering partnerships in the Ngcobo Municipality, The Mvula Trust learnt that openness is a big factor. Preparedness to go the extra mile ensured a lot of buy-in, and enabled the building of trust.

5.2 Ngcobo – community involvement in O&M

This case study demonstrates that communities with necessary support and mentorship are enabled to provide a cost-effective and efficient service, in partnership with local government.

5.2.1 Background

The Ngcobo Local Municipality, which falls under Chris Hani District Municipality, is situated in the Eastern Cape. The area is very dry, and communities find it difficult to obtain safe drinking water during the dry season. From 2001 rural community water schemes were rapidly deteriorating and becoming vandalised by angry communities.

The District Municipality appointed The Mvula Trust in November 2003 to:

- Refurbish about 35 rural water schemes falling within the Engcobo Local Municipality.
- Develop community-based capacity to undertake O&M of the schemes.

Both the District Municipality and the MoTT Foundation have provided funding for this work. Mvula has managed the refurbishment of schemes, which are now supplying clean, potable water to 48 020 people daily.

5.2.2 Description of the project

The Mvula Trust, together with the communities within Ngcobo, set up Community Service Providers (CSPs) in the targeted water schemes of Bokleni, Clarkebury,

Kalinyanga, Luwini, Mnyolo, Ntseleni, Sentube, Sithebe, Tshapile, Upper Manyisana and Upper Qolweni.

Mvula, having trained operators in all these areas, continues to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of each water scheme. This involves mentoring and support, and assessing the performance of the CSPs, the Village Water Committees (VWCs) and the operators. Further, communities assist Mvula to determine and record the number of illegal connections.

Both the District Municipality and the Local Municipality support the use of CSPs and community-based operators as a cost-effective solution to O&M of rural schemes, and the Municipalities are very satisfied with the service provided by Mvula and the CSPs.

5.2.3 Description of the partnership

In fulfilling its mandate as the WSA, the District Municipality formed this partnership with the Local Municipality as interim WSP, and with support from The Mvula Trust.

The District Municipality called for tenders as Support Service Agents (referred to in the Strategic Framework for Water Services as “water services agents”), and Mvula was awarded one of the contracts. A formal meeting between Mvula and the appropriate Councillors was an important starting point in building the partnership.

The Ward Councillors and Ward Committees convene community meetings and lead the process at community level. Initially meetings were held on a monthly basis and according to needs. The whole community was invited. Now meetings are held every two months to discuss progress and problems. An official represents the District Municipality.

5.2.4 Benefits of the project

- People now get water within 100m of their homesteads, and very few illegal connections have been reported.
- Seventeen ward-based CSPs have been trained and are being mentored by Mvula. There are Jojo tanks, reservoirs, pumping stations and an engine with human resources to operate the schemes i.e. capacity has been built in the community for O&M.
- Employment has been generated for 20 adult males and 18 adult females, and 10 male youth and four female youth. Each CSP has a number of trained local operators to operate and maintain the schemes. All the CSPs and operators are paid monthly allowances by the District Municipality.
- There are committed VWC members in all schemes. Most of the members have received training. A further training programme has been arranged for new schemes such as Bokleni, Kalinyanga, Luwini and Sithebe.
- All schemes enjoy the support of Council and Traditional Authorities, and there are good working relationships between and among communities, the Ward Councillors, chiefs and committee members.

- There was no operating budget and no cost recovery before the project started. Since then the District Municipality has developed and implemented a free basic water policy.
- More and more people are getting involved in vegetable gardens. They use wastewater to irrigate their gardens.
- The District Municipality is now in the process of empowering its Local Municipalities to improve their service provision capacities.

2.2.5 Lessons learnt

- The involvement of the District Municipality and the Local Municipality, together with the local community, makes it easy for operators to communicate problems encountered to the relevant authority. Repairs are done immediately, thus avoiding conflict within the communities.
- The CSPs are trained in conflict resolution. If a conflict arises the CSP assesses it, and deals with it immediately. If the problem is considerable it is referred to the Local Municipality or the water services agent before being taken up with District Municipality.
- The fact that the CSPs were trained outside their villages gives them status. (This is not to diminish the importance of on-the-job training and capacity building at project level – in fact the two are complementary.)
- There is community acceptance of the selection of CSPs in Ngcobo as it was transparent and democratic, with occurred with involvement of the community and local government.
- Report back meetings between the District and Local Municipalities and the community have been important to ensure customer satisfaction, along with frequent and accurate verbal and written communication.
- There is a very high level of involvement of women in all committees in Ngcobo – and this is crucial for long-term sustainability. The responsibility for water at household level generally falls to women, and they therefore have a greater interest in ensuring a regular supply.

2.3 Khayelitsha – community involvement in leak repairs

This case study demonstrates that well-informed communities are enabled to participate constructively in local governance issues.

2.3.1 Background

The Water Leaks Project (WLP) was conceived in 2003 to address water demand management in the Western Cape. It was initiated by the Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF) based in the Western Cape. Its members comprise CSOs working in the water sector.

The WLP was specifically created to offer local level solutions to issues of water scarcity, poverty, unemployment and poor education in previously disadvantaged communities, thereby contributing to the implementation of a sustainable development model.

2.3.2 Description of the project

The objectives of the project are to:

- Develop and implement a pilot project in Harare, Khayelitsha (Cape Town) which reduces the amount of water wasted through water leaks, unwise use, and lack of awareness; to increase community capacity for saving and managing their water; and to tackle issues around unemployment by training local community members.
- Replicate the initiative in other areas, sharing and exchanging knowledge, best practices and lessons learnt through the national community network.
- Facilitate the process of building relationships and partnerships among and between civil society and other stakeholders in the project areas.
- Develop guidelines for future projects and policy recommendations for water services.

In January 2005, the WLP Team, comprising the Ilitha Lomso Children and Youth Organisation, the Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG) and EJNF-Western Cape Water Caucus, were awarded a three-month contract by DWAF to develop and implement the awareness-raising component of the project.

The intentions of this three-month contract were to:

- Train and educate “water activists” in water demand management and other related issues.
- Train “water activists” in action research skills and deploy them in Harare, Section 34 to gather and disseminate relevant information.
- Develop and implement a general awareness-raising programme in and around Harare, Khayelitsha, addressing water demand management in the area.

Training, skills transfer and mentoring have all been part of the project. Action research has been undertaken, a community meeting held, and materials and resources developed for household visits. These included a household questionnaire, an introductory letter, a fact sheet, a list of qualified plumbers, and an events’ flyer.

2.3.3 Description of the partnership

Members and affiliates include CBOs in Khayelitsha; NGOs with experience in water policy, implementation and in facilitating dialogue between government and civil society; social and popular movements fighting against the privatisation of public services and evictions and for the right to housing and basic services; and labour organisations.

The WLP sought partnerships with key government agencies, in particular DWAF and the City of Cape Town. WLP is focusing more on the implementation on the ground, whereas EMG is dealing with project management issues.

The Cape Town Metropole gave its political support to the WLP. It also assisted in terms of providing a list of areas where leaks were happening, and general information about the area. This has been very useful. The City of Cape Town offered members of WLP

free basic water leaks fixing skills to about ten people. DWAF provided R120 000 from the Masibambane Programme.

2.3.4 Benefits of the project

- Training was undertaken for EJNF and community representatives (including a plumbing demonstration from the Khayelitsha-based plumber). Trainees have shown marked improvement in their knowledge and understanding of a range of water related topics, and in their ability to explain and discuss these topics with others. In addition, their confidence and engagement in the process has increased significantly.
- The collaboration between Ilitha Lomso (CBO) and EMG (NGO) encouraged and strengthened capacity building within Ilitha Lomso, and enabled efficient skills transfer.
- A strong management and mentoring component was required to coordinate and oversee further training; and to mentor trainees during the remainder of the pilot.
- DWAF (through the Masibambane provincial structure) has been exploring mechanisms for engaging with civil society in a meaningful way.
- Community members, the Ward Councillor and South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) have given their political support to the project – a very necessary ingredient of sustainability.

2.3.5 Lessons learnt

- The awareness raising campaign required a number of integrated activities with similar messages. This campaign was highly successful – the messages of the WLP reached many people in Harare and Khayelitsha, as well as the broader Cape Town Metropole. Activities included theatre performances and airtime on different radio stations.
- Good attendance at community meetings is one of the most useful means of communicating to the public. Here people were well informed on the issues, and feedback was sought from them in terms of possible solutions. The community meeting within this project was viewed as highly successful – both in terms of information provision and information sharing. Specifically, some of the highest water users in Harare (according to data provided) have since had their leaks fixed. The meeting provided the WLP with a good indication of the high level of interest from Harare households regarding paying for water and fixing their water leaks. It also gave the WLP team a good indication of how much it would cost households for parts to fix their household leaks.
- Because of political support from the City of Cape Town and the national Masibambane Programme, information and training has been free of charge, and enabled a high level of sustainability.

2.4 Ozwathini – community involvement in sanitation

This case study demonstrates that active community involvement, with appropriate political support can ensure a growing local economy and a quality service.

2.4.1 Background

Ozwathini Village covers an area of approximately 5 800 ha. The population is 17 786, with an average household size of seven people. Ozwathini falls within the jurisdiction of uMgungundlovu District Municipality, and within Ward 5 of the uMshwathi Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal. Ozwathini falls under the Mathulini Tribal Authority, and comprises seven traditional wards and Izinduna. The Inkosi is in charge of the tribal area with the seven Izinduna looking after the day-to-day affairs of the community. The Ward Councillor, together with the Ward Committee, plays a crucial role in introducing and coordinating development in the area. There is no threat of conflict.

Ozwathini was prioritised by the District Municipality, in consultation with the Local Municipality, for a new sanitation project. This project forms part of the uMgungundlovu District Municipality Area Sanitation Strategic Master Plan, and has been prioritised within the WSDP and IDP of both the District and Local Municipalities.

2.4.2 Description of the project

The community has entrusted decision-making powers to the Sanitation Project Steering Committee (SPSC). The SPSC is the sub-committee of the Ward Committee, and falls within the water portfolio of the Municipality.

The main objective of the sanitation project in Ozwathini is to improve the health of the communities. This has been done in the short term by improving sanitation facilities and hygiene practices within households. In the long term the project aims to impact on people's knowledge, attitudes and motivation towards health, hygiene and sanitation practices such that people are able to maintain a better level of health and hygiene beyond the closure of the project.

An ongoing sanitation, health and hygiene promotion programme has been established, and many existing toilets are being repaired. Where this is not possible, new toilets are being constructed.

Further objectives are the establishment of a system to assist households to provide themselves with improved sanitation facilities on an economical and sustainable basis by:

- Building the capacity of the SPSC with the objective of assisting in the planning, implementation and monitoring of their project, and being in a position to represent and report to the community on project related issues.
- Enhancing the capacity of the locally based bookkeeper and storekeeper in order to assist The Mvula Trust in the implementation of the project.
- Increasing the knowledge and awareness of sanitation related health issues, and enhancing individual and household hygiene behaviour.
- Equipping community members with skills for managing sanitation facilities.
- Equipping communities with skills for controlling and preventing sanitation related communicable diseases, with a special emphasis on cholera.
- Encouraging community members to identify and challenge negative gender stereotypes.

2.4.3 Description of the partnership

The partnership established includes key stakeholders such as the uMgungundlovu District Municipality (as the WSA / WSP), DWAF (funder), The Mvula Trust (implementing agent), the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health and Education, and the community.

All stakeholders participated in forming the SPSC. In the SPSC the community is represented by the quality assessor, builders, a bookkeeper, a storekeeper, and local suppliers of blocks and pedestals. Further, Community Health Workers (CHWs) and the Ward Councillor also form part of the SPSC. The SPSC displays high levels of commitment, as do all project stakeholders, including the Sanitation Officer from the uMgungundlovu District Municipality.

The District Municipality provides overall strategic guidance. Its SPSC representatives attend monthly steering committee meetings. It makes a cash flow available to Mvula, who assists both in the payment of community-based labour and procurement, and in solving community issues such as settling wage disputes and fixing the road after heavy rains to facilitate delivery of project components.

Mvula has trained Community Development Facilitators (CDFs) i.e. community-based people, and they are instrumental in driving the project. One of the ways in which the community demonstrates its commitment is through the contributions people make. Each household contributes by digging a pit, and collecting water to build the toilet. Some of the community members contribute by attending project meetings and ensuring the community stays well informed of regular decisions and progress.

The Department of Health is assisting with spreading health and hygiene messages at their mobile clinic that visits on a monthly basis, and through their CHWs.

The Department of Education is participating in the school programmes by developing education and school strategies that support health, development and the well being of the community, and by promoting school health programmes in the area.

The role of DWAF is to provide financial support, and to ensure that the project is being implemented in accordance with the Sanitation Programme Implementation Plan (in terms of cash flow, policy, monitoring and evaluation, etc).

2.4.4 Benefits of the project

- The local economy has been significantly boosted by the procurement of local skills, labour and materials. By way of example, small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in Ozwathini produce toilet blocks for R4 each, pedestals for R5, and wedge blocks for R1.26 per toilet. This means that, for each subsidised toilet, approximately R676 is spent within the community on supplies. Local transport for supply is utilised – further boosting the economy. R100 per completed toilet is also spent on paying the bookkeeper, quality assessor and storekeeper. SPSC members

are reimbursed for attending meetings. CDFs are trained to the point where they can find employment beyond the project. Excellent builders have the opportunity to be trained as quality assessors and, if good enough, may become builder mentors on other projects.

- Trained local CHWs are fully utilised – and this means reduction in terms of diseases, and many people are kept informed about health and hygiene messages.
- SPSC meetings are held monthly to make decisions around local supply issues; coordination of delivery, allocation of material and builders to householders; and general project management. The Mvula Trust remains a signatory on the project, and provides mentoring and other assistance to the SPSC.
- Community meetings are held to keep people informed and to report on progress.
- Women, in particular, are being empowered – they provide approximately 80% of the leadership to the project. Mvula has consistently promoted the participation of women in different roles and responsibilities. (By way of an aside – three young women who are actively making this a successful project have all started out on Mvula projects as CDFs: Malindi Chauke – who is now the Sanitation Officer from the District Municipality, Ntombi Mnguni – a Project Development Facilitator with Mvula, and Zanele Msomi – currently a CDF in Ozwathini, having started out as the SPSC Chairperson).

2.4.5 *Lessons learnt*

- The political support from uMgungundlovu District Municipality and the Mathulini Tribal Authority has been crucial for sustainability. In fact, the ongoing support and involvement of all stakeholders in the area means minimum delays through misunderstandings, lack of political support, budgets being re-assigned elsewhere, etc.
- The SPSC gives appropriate leadership e.g. the SPSC has developed a very cost effective system of arranging delivered material into packs and distributing to households. It is far better to build this capacity within the community, than constantly rely on outsiders to provide it.
- To ensure a consistently high quality of work, constant mentoring and monitoring by the SPSC and Mvula has been required.
- Communications channels are kept as open as possible between the Ozwathini community and all stakeholders. Good communication means that the clients are kept well informed of problems as well as successes.

2.5 Krantzkop Informal Settlement No 19 – community involvement in accessing water and sanitation.

The case study demonstrates that constructive and appropriately supported engagement between communities and local government ensures focused development interventions with good potential for sustainability.

2.5.1 *Background*

No 19 is an informal settlement near Krantzkop, and covers about 4 ha of land. It is situated about 120 kms north east of Pietermaritzburg, and 30 kms from Greytown. It is

on the escarpment overlooking the Tugela River. The area falls under the uMvoti Local Municipality, and within the uMzinyathi District Municipality. This settlement is a melting pot of people coming from various other areas. They are here in family clusters to live in peace with those around them as each struggles with day-to-day survival.

There are about 350 households with a population of around 1 200 people. It includes about 200 children and many elderly people. There are high levels of unemployment and related poverty. Most of the people earn a living doing informal trade on the streets.

The houses are predominately constructed from wattle and daub, with building rubble. The settlement is at present stable in the number of families, but expansion could be encouraged now following the installation of basic water and sanitation services.

Before communal standpipes were installed, people had to walk down the hill about 1 km to a very small stream where washing was done. The water here was already highly polluted with detergents, as the stream flow was not sufficient to flush the system. People also used to relieve themselves in the nearby forest. This polluted the two-springs lower down the slope from where water was fetched for household consumption.

Most households have to some extent relied in some way on rainwater harvesting to provide them with part of their water requirements. Wastewater is stored in drums, and used in mixing of mud for house building.

2.5.2 Description of the project

The project started in August 2004 and is still ongoing. It started when the Health Inspector (Mr Makamba) from the uMvoti Local Municipality approached The Valley Trust (an NGO) to provide assistance in addressing critical health hazards in the settlement by:

- Supporting the existing leadership structure to voice its needs.
- Lobbying the District Municipality for an emergency intervention.
- Doing a Community Situational Analysis (CSA) survey on health and hygiene in the area. (A CSA is a standard format to process, gather and record information.)

The leadership structure of Krantzkop was actively engaging with the Local Municipality by writing letters and visiting municipal offices in Greytown before the Valley Trust became involved. The uMvoti Local Municipality responded to their complaints by sending the Health Inspector. The meeting was set up between The Valley Trust, the Head of Planning and the Head of Housing from the Municipality and community representatives.

The Valley Trust created a supportive environment for people and government to start engaging. The uMzinyathi District Municipality pledged R250 000 at a community meeting to construct water pipes to the area, and to erect toilets. This was followed by a workshop to help community people understand health and hygiene matters and the wise use of water. The workshop assisted community people to begin to understand

some of the issues, and to start contributing by excavating pits to construct their own toilets.

The first ventilated improved pit (VIP) toilet was installed in November 2004 as a demonstration toilet. The Valley Trust, the District Municipality, the community and a local constructor were involved in installing 20 toilets in the settlement. The toilets were completed in May 2005, and community people now share these toilets.

In terms of water supply, the water system was agreed to with the responsibility delegated to a respected local operator to control. The single standpipe first installed in 2004 was locked, and only opened at designated times in the morning and evening. The person with the keys was paid for his service from a monthly household collection. Each household contributes R2 a month, and the operator is paid R600 from that money.

2.5.3 Description of the partnership

A local leadership structure has emerged that is mandated by the broader community to engage on its behalf, and is delegated to resolve family and community issues. It is this informal committee that has driven the engagement and liaised directly with government structures. The committee is structured with an inner core of mature men and an outer circle of interested and active people who meet as a group to consult on issues. They meet once a month.

The Valley Trust supported local leadership to interface with the officials of uMvoti and uMzinyathi Municipalities. It compiled documents, with supporting letters written by community leaders, highlighting the urgency of the matter. The site visit was undertaken whereby the uMzinyathi District Municipality and uMvoti Local Municipality were represented. The survey was undertaken to look at conditions in the settlement, and by interviewing households. The Valley Trust assisted in compiling the detailed participatory CSA to be used as a lobbying tool. The Valley Trust has documented the project on video, and communicated with the SABC to check whether the footage is suitable for broadcasting.

The local community committee provided the lead in advocating for their rights and organised money for O&M. The uMzinyathi District Municipality provided the lead in undertaking the installation of water and sanitation services (including funding).

2.5.4 Benefits of the project

The situation has vastly improved, with people from No 19 now having access to water and sanitation. This is only the beginning, and further support is needed with special attention to health and hygiene promotion. People are washing containers and storing water in their homes – both the availability and quality of the water has greatly improved. With more water already there are indications that some households want to start vegetable gardens.

People now have a sense of dignity, as they are able to have privacy when using toilets. Diarrhoea was a common problem, which people have said has been notably reduced.

This intervention created an opportunity for the Local and District Municipalities to interface, and to resolve some of their “power issues”.

Because of successful interactions between the community and the District Municipality the community has a vision for continuing the relationship in terms of other developmental initiatives, for example, waste management. With no waste management system litter is a growing concern as it provides an ideal habitat for pathogens to multiply. A number of households have dug incinerator pits, but this is restricted by the limitation of available space. The Valley Trust is discussing with Council to assist this settlement in terms of waste removal.

2.5.5 Lessons learnt

- No 19 settlements is often clear on what interventions it requires, and can organise itself and provide its own leadership. Outside assistance from The Valley Trust enabled them to clearly articulate their needs to uMvoti Local Municipality.
- Publicity for this community was useful in ensuring the attention of those in power.
- Arrangements for shared responsibility work well in situations where the community looks after community level activities, and the NGO maintains and facilitates access to support and the building of partnerships.
- The VIPs built in the settlement were not designed for human dignity and are not user friendly according to The Valley Trust. They will not break the cycle of disease; flies have easy access in and out of the toilets. Toilets have been scattered around the settlement; they are not owned by households. The lesson is household responsibility for toilets in this settlement is a surer way of having hygienic toilets.
- There is a notable shift from the side of The Valley Trust in thinking about the role civil society can play in supporting government – there is a great potential for meaningful engagement and support rather than confrontation and competition.
- Letters that the committee wrote needed to be formulated ways that are tactful. The approach used in No 19 is that The Valley Trust assisted in writing correspondence that was sensitive and objective, and to which the community input was attached.
- It is best that people voice their own issues rather than have an outside organisation speaking on their behalf. Second hand information is usually corrupted with personal perceptions and interpretation of facts.

6 Recommendations

This Section looks at recommendations in relation to partnerships between CSOs and local government.

6.1 Sustainable development is slow!

What is perhaps most important to remember in any development intervention, and particularly one in which the building of partnerships is crucial, is that time is required to set up and maintain these partnerships. The time invested in ensuring that the partnerships are healthy and bear fruit is well spent, and municipalities and others must not underestimate the importance of this.

6.2 Political support

Political support on development interventions is perhaps the most important ingredient for sustainability. Political support means the support of local government (to the most senior level within both District and Local Municipalities), provincial government line departments and regional offices of national government departments, as well as traditional leadership. It also means involvement of the municipality (most often by the Ward Councillor) by visiting communities and convening meetings within communities, along with tribal authorities.

Municipalities will ensure that projects are listed in IDPs, and will update IDP monitoring systems. They are best placed to ensure links and new interventions within different branches of the municipality, and assist communities with further potential funding opportunities.

So too with traditional leadership – where the Chief and Izinduna are involved, conflict is almost always lower, and communication is effected through community meetings – often called by the Chief.

For political support to work, municipalities should have a “driver” – someone who is passionate about community involvement and participatory approaches, and someone who works in respectful and supportive ways with communities.

6.3 Broad stakeholder participation

For development interventions to work optimally, there should be broad stakeholder participation from the start, and communities should be viewed as one of the most important stakeholders. This will ensure wide acceptance, commitment and a shared vision, and will make it easier to deal with conflict as it arises.

For stakeholder participation to work optimally it is important to jointly formulated precise objectives for participation and support of all partners, and for partner organisations to ensure the support of senior management (principals).

6.4 Regular, open communication between all stakeholders

Good communication often means that there are clear channels for reporting problems (including conflict), and there are minimum delays in sorting out problems.

Communication works best when the communication functions are allocated to specific people within the participating organisations, and the functions are budgeted for, and carried out as an integral part of any development intervention. Roles and responsibilities must be clarified and agreed up front, and an understanding built of the limits and constraints of each participating organisation.

It is important to investigate and understand existing communication structures and channels in participating organisations and communities. Where necessary, appropriate new communication mechanisms may need to be put in place and regularly reviewed, and different mechanisms must be identified for different stakeholders. For example, municipal representatives must report back to and ensure support of principals (through Standing Committees and Council), must update progress on IDP tracking systems, and may consider site visits by other officials and councillors. Community representatives should use community meetings, influential members of the community, theatre, radio, house-to-house visits, and pamphlets and posters in local languages to ensure clear communication and understanding of messages through awareness creation initiatives.

6.5 Role of CSOs

When communities are integrally involved in their own development interventions their sense of “ownership” means that they have a vested interest in ensuring a sustainable service – they therefore are truly at the heart of any partnership.

Section 4 of this document clearly articulates roles for CBOs and NGOs. CBOs and NGOs work well in relation to each other: it is necessary for CBOs to speak in their own voice(s), and NGOs can support and enable that through taking the initiative in making linkages and building partnerships, assist in the articulation of community challenges and problems, and in finding possible solutions.

CBOs can contribute in any number of ways, either in voluntary or in paid capacities. These ways include “sweat equity” (labour), carrying out awareness creation, sorting out conflicts, organising project logistics, providing land, collecting data and monitoring activities, running the labour desk (appointment, supervision, payment and settling of disputes), providing local materials (sand, rocks, timber, etc.) and providing security for materials still to be used in construction. They can also be involved in monitoring vandalism and unauthorized connections, enforcing payment (where applicable), facilitating decision making, ensuring citizen satisfaction, and representing community interests in the partnership.

6.6 Organised communities with access to resources

Communities who are organised and capacitated through active participation in partnerships are well-placed to use past and current development interventions to continue to mobilise for further interventions – often with little or no outside support.

6.7 Planning

Partnerships with levels of government (and well-resourced organisations) require considerable resources for CSOs. Overstretched resources will be a continued hindrance unless additional resources are budgeted for and put in place at the start of any project.

Proposals should be clear and simple, and can be up scaled as the development intervention matures, and community capacity is built. Budgets must be clear, as must time frames and responsibilities. Monitoring systems must be agreed, and responsibilities assigned at the start.

6.8 Contracting and management

The most important reason for participation of NGOs in partnerships is their ability to reflect the needs and wishes of communities, independently of pressure brought by formal contractual accountability. In order to realise this benefit, NGOs should be contracted directly and independently, and not sub-contracted to other parties.

As with contracting any service provider, formal contracts are necessary in contracting CSOs. The minimum legal requirement for contracting CSOs (and CBOs in particular) is a formal Constitution. The Constitution outlines the objectives, structure, powers and functions, etc. (If a municipality requires a CBO to register in terms of the Nonprofit Organisations Act this can be arranged with assistance from the municipality or an NGO.) A simple service agreement (contract) between the WSA and the CBO is sufficient for contractual obligations to be carefully spelt out. The agreement should define penalties for non-compliance.

CBOs may be subjected, in terms of the Municipal Systems Act, to competitive procurement processes. DWAF recognises that CBOs act in the public interest, and should therefore have special status when considered as a service provider, such that provisions applying to SMMEs, or persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination, should apply fully to CBOs (see Section 3 of this document – extract from the Strategic Framework for Water Services).

Where the necessary management systems and support mechanisms are in place, there should be no more risk in appointing a CBO as a service provider than there is in appointing a private sector entity. It is more cost effective, and turnaround times on problems are much quicker. (Note that both model CBO Constitutions and CBO model contracts are available from DWAF.)

6.9 High levels of involvement of women

The responsibility for water at household level generally falls to women, and they have a greater vested interest in ensuring a regular supply and a functioning sanitation system. Women tend to bring in the needs of children, caregivers of the elderly and the sick (including those infected and affected by HIV / AIDS) more so than men.

Almost without fail, when women take the lead in development interventions, sustainability is greatly enhanced. In our experience this applies both to women in

communities where development interventions are taking place, and where women represent partner organisations in a development partnership.

6.10 Documenting and sharing

In all the development work the sector does, it is important to learn from mistakes, replicate good practice, and exchange experiences and knowledge. So it is important that activities for advocacy, communication, documenting lessons and information dissemination beyond development interventions are budgeted for by participating organisations. It is also important to make use of existing information and knowledge support mechanisms such as the Water Information Network – South Africa (WIN-SA). WIN-SA collects and disseminates lessons, facilitates inter-municipal visits, and is working to support a “learning culture” within municipalities and the sector.

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