



## **GWEBINDLALA: improving livelihoods through integrated planning**



*“Gwebindlala” means “chasing away poverty”*

### **Poverty alleviation**

The Eastern Cape Gwebindlala Programme of The Mvula Trust is an integrated development, poverty alleviation programme. It started in 2003 with financial support from the European Union (EU). It is being implemented as a community-driven programme of support to local government.

The Programme contributes to poverty alleviation by providing infrastructure for basic social services, supporting economic activities, and enhancing community participation in the development process and in the fight against poverty. A key development objective is the creation of human capital and the promotion of well-organised and empowered communities. While the Programme is poverty focused, it is aimed broadly at making use of and implementing best practices for integrated municipal planning in project implementation.

### **Sustainable livelihoods**

The Gwebindlala Programme uses the sustainable livelihoods' approach. It focuses not only on the development challenges that communities experience, but also on their assets and capabilities in ensuring more food on the table, and increased opportunities for local income generation. Communities plan and select interventions that make use of and add value to existing local expertise and resources. This approach enables communities to own their development interventions based on their particular circumstances.

### **Focus of the Programme**

The Programme focuses both on micro (village) issues and also on the local, regional, provincial and national issues that impact on development of communities. Participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) are used during baseline surveys to obtain information. Community members are enabled to formulate intervention plans (Village Action Plans [VAPs]) based on the PRA findings. The roles of the community, government and other institutions are identified in these Plans, and timeframes for implementation are identified. Community members are capacitated to monitor progress and impact of work.

### **Key deliverables of Gwebindlala**

- Provision of infrastructure in at least 50 communities through at least 100 projects, worth approximately R40 million, in the poorest areas of the Eastern Cape.
- Development of partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including provincial and local government, to promote coordination and integration, as well as co-funding.
- Strengthening of institutions and organisations at village level in the 50 communities.
- Community contribution of at least 15% (mainly in time and in kind) of the value of projects.
- At least 10% of project expenditure during the second year (2004/05) must be provided by non-EU sources (government and / or other donors).



Community  
garden at  
Lower Desi



Community  
meeting at  
Gubenxa

## Partnerships and coordination

Five District Municipalities – Alfred Nzo, Amathole, Chris Hani, OR Tambo and Ukhahlamba – are involved in the first phase. Mvula entered into joint ventures with these District Municipalities as well as Local Municipalities, provincial line departments (Social Development, Education, Agriculture, Health and Public Works), non-governmental organisations and communities, to develop best practices for implementation of projects, as well as to clarify the complex inter-relationships between the various sectors and role players.

## Benefits for municipalities of the sustainable livelihoods' approach

- Communities are viewed as holistic entities. Interventions are identified in order of priority, as well as people's ability to create other development spin-offs. Development challenges and interventions are identified, and linkages between development interventions assist municipalities to **develop appropriate integrated development plans and effective interventions**.
- Understanding the needs and assets that communities possess, and intervention strategies to meet these, enables municipalities to **use resources more efficiently**. This lowers the potential for duplication of projects or prioritising projects that will not have significant impact on poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods.
- Promotion of **partnerships between municipalities and local communities** is in line with developmental local government policy and legislation.
- Linkages between local and district municipalities and line departments provide information about other programmes, enabling **integrated planning by different levels** of the municipality and line departments.

## Benefits for communities of the sustainable livelihoods' approach

- Communities are enabled to identify and acknowledge their own resources. Understanding one's ability to contribute towards development is a step towards **taking responsibility for one's own development**.
- Communities use their resources to contribute towards project planning. When construction starts they will contribute by building structures and managing operation and maintenance. This contributes significantly to **local economic development and promotes a sense of community ownership**.
- Communities are supported in drafting VAPs – which identify stakeholder roles, time frames for implementation, and procedures and tools for community monitoring of progress and evaluation of impact. These Plans assist in ensuring a **shared vision and ability to monitor**.
- During PRAs communities are informed about how different government departments and NGOs can assist them. The VAPs promote a unified mobilisation of resources. Communities are now more aware about the role of different service providers, and how they can **access resources** at local and regional level.

## Lessons learnt

Joint planning and coordination is crucial to the success of development initiatives. Gwebindlala was expected to conceptualise, coordinate and implement the Programme within two years. This is a very short time frame to achieve the set objectives. Development is a slow process if it is to ensure sustainable products and services.

Below are examples of activities that are crucial, yet very time consuming:

- Building partnerships with local government, provincial line departments, communities and other stakeholders.
- Identification of capacity building needs for Multi-Purpose Centres (MPCs) to be built in communities.
- Linking of current community activities to the MPCs to ensure maximum use of the facilities, and possibilities for income generation.
- Development of a monitoring and evaluation strategy for communities, line departments, local and district municipalities, The Mvula Trust and the EU.
- Staff turn over within stakeholder institutions necessitates continuous discussions and negotiations to re-introduce the Programme and ensure common understanding of the methodology and objectives.
- Maintenance and nurturing of relations, despite pressure by District Municipalities to see "delivery".

## For more information contact

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