



CARE AUSTRIA RESEARCH REPORT

Understanding the gaps between the water and sanitation service needs of the most vulnerable in rural communities and the policy response at the municipal level.

Bushbuckridge, South Africa.



December 2005

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Poverty and water

Providing water for productive uses can enhance people's livelihood options by making significant additions to household food security and nutrition, and generate income. Research by the Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD) in Bushbuckridge showed that where villagers had more water, the economic activities of many poor households in the village doubled (Pérez de Mendiguren and Mabelane, 2001). Typical examples of productive uses in those villages included brick making, watering of cattle and goats, small home-based industries such as hair salons, beer brewing and ice making, and backyard or community gardens.

The current reality is that poor people draw water from many sources which they use for many purposes as they seek to sustain their livelihoods. However service providers, coming from different tiers and sections within government, are concerned with their specific sub-sectoral mandates, and do not easily coordinate and integrate their activities and budgets. Even though there are new planning frameworks in place in South Africa whose purpose is to facilitate integrated development – Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) -, these are still weak and tried and tested practical tools to implement them and mechanisms are not yet in place. This leads to services which do not meet the multiple demands of people in a coordinated and coherent way. This in turn affects their livelihood options and also the management and sustainability of water services.

1.2 The development of SWELL

Within this context, AWARD has been supporting the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality¹, in its planning process through a number of methodologies and tools for a community based, participatory and holistic approach to water services. These have resulted in a methodology, called SWELL (Securing Water to Enhance Local Livelihoods). This seeks to provide a comprehensive framework and set of tools for the participatory assessment of the role of water in people's livelihoods and the planning of water resources and water services to enhance people's livelihoods. In this, it aims to link up with Municipal planning frameworks such as the IDPs.

SWELL is being developed into a ward level planning methodology. The process was carried out in seven villages of Ward 16 of the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality 2004 and early 2005, in close collaboration with a range of stakeholders. This resulted in an agreement on objectives and strategies for the ward, and some budgets were approved. A forum consisting of community structures, local government and locally based government departments was established for implementation, monitoring and learning.

¹ In the South African administrative system, the Local Municipality (LM) is the lowest administrative unit. Several local Municipalities form a District Municipality (DM). A province is conformed of several DMs. The specific division of responsibilities for water supply and sanitation between LMs and DMs differs from case to case.

1.3 A focus on vulnerability

Through the latter half of 2005 the SWELL programme, with support from Care South Africa, and with funds via Care Austria, undertook a water and livelihoods assessments in 4 of the remaining 5 villages of Ward 16: Seville B, Dixie, Lephong and Hluvakani . This was done as part of its ongoing SWELL programme, and working in villages that had not had participatory assessments before. This time the team sought to focus on the most vulnerable, and what their needs may be, and how these are being and could be responded to. This meant an adaptation of the methodology, and including new stakeholders in the process: the Department of Health and Social Development, and Home-Based Caregivers and related structures. The most vulnerable households in the villages were interviewed, not a cross-section as in previous assessments. In addition to this, a consultant carried out specific research into the institutional and policy environment, to strengthen the understanding of how municipalities and government sectors prioritise and respond to vulnerable people in their policies and programmes.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Overview

The *action research* approach underlay the methodology for this assessment. It built on processes and interactions developed within SWELL, and sought to work with and deepen these. Thus the action research worked with the various stakeholders in participatory and open-ended processes that sought to both collect information and to facilitate reflection and learning in order to inform future action.

There were three broad strands to the process, which needed to be woven together. (See Appendix 1. *Framework for Literature review and key Informant Interviews CARE Austria Project* for the detailed planning framework that informed these)

- i) The village water and livelihood assessments
- ii) A retrospective review service provider/ municipal planning and programming
- iii) Integrating an awareness of gender relations and vulnerability into the above methodologies, and also into the collective analysis of the outcomes of the above.

These were the activities in the order in which they occurred (note, some were parallel)

Preparation

- Preparing for the village assessments – meetings with stakeholders in villages, with Ward level structures, local government officials and councillors, departmental officials from the sectors of water, agriculture, social development and health, and locally based NGOs working on home based care.
- Preparation for the document review and key informant interviews – collecting documents, identifying and contacting key informants, joint planning between SWELL team and consultant.

- Adaptation of the design of the workshop and village assessments, to include the vulnerability focus
- Interview format and process planned and designed
- Gender consultant reviews methodologies and gives inputs to both processes.
- Workshop with the teams who would carry out the village assessments, form all the above stakeholders, for introducing new ideas, joint reflection and sharing information, joint planning and some training in methods.

Implementation

- Village level assessments in 4 villages (one village was to be assessed, but was not due to a conflictual situation)
- Key informant interviews
- Workshop with the teams to carry out household assessments: training care givers and doing joint planning
- Household level assessments with 71 households across the 4 villages

Analysis

- Initial data collation
- Collective analysis workshop, using a framework that is used to consider gender and dimensions of institutional change (Rao and Kelleher²)
- Reports prepared.

Communication

- Village synthesis process
- Feedback to stakeholders (both community level stakeholders and service provider level)
- Community feedback meetings (with villagers)

2.2. Village level water and livelihoods assessments methodology

2.2.1 Objectives

Understand water issues at the village level, and how many people there are with what vulnerability, how local communities support vulnerable individuals, households and groups and, finally, determine what the implications are for planning processes and strategies to address vulnerability.

2.2.2 Research Questions:

- A) What are the causes, nature and extent of inadequate water services at the village level?
- B) What are the types and scale of vulnerability in the villages of Ward 16, and what water issues are specific to vulnerable groups within those villages?

² See in *Is there life after gender mainstreaming?* Aruna Rao and David Kelleher, in *Gender and Development*, Volume 13, Number 2, July 2005. Also available to download on the website: www.genderatwork.com.

- C) What mechanisms are put in place by civil society and community structures to support vulnerable households' water-related needs?
- D) In practice, how effective are these mechanisms in supporting them?

The process for this followed, but further developed, the SWELL methodology for water and livelihood assessments at village level, drawing in stakeholders the SWELL team had worked with before and also new actors³.

2.2.3 Preparing for the village assessments

Stakeholders involved in previous SWELL processes were reviewed, and some adjustments and additions were made. Meetings were held to discuss this next phase and its focus, and these meetings were followed up with phone calls, and finally formal letters, to confirm participation and arrangements.

Regarding village meetings it was agreed that all structures should be invited to the meeting, so that there would be a board picture of how the whole project is unfolding, and that there be agreement about who would be representing the village in the workshop. The rep could be from any structure, but should be someone active and who has participated in previous SWELL workshops. The team also met with the Induna (traditional leader)

2.2.4 Training and planning for village assessments

A workshop was held with the stakeholders that run straight on from preparation and planning into doing the village assessments. For the purposes of this section on methodology, these aspects are separated. See the detail of the workshop in Appendix 2: *Swell Planning Workshop Report, Hluvukani Home Based Care Centre, 10- 21 October 2005*

Those that attended from stakeholders were:
Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) – 3 people
Department of Agriculture: 4 people
Department of Health and Social Development: 3 people
Bushbuckridge Local Municipality
Community Development Fora members from villages: 4 people
Hluvukani Home Based Carers: 8 people

The workshop was led by the AWARD SWELL team of two, plus two local facilitators contracted into assist the SWELL team.

³ A full description of the SWELL methodology prior to this pilot can be found in *Maluleke et al., 2005*.

2.2.5 Village Assessments

Assessments were first carried out at the community level, facilitated by teams made up of those who were in the preparatory workshop. The different levels of assessment were discussed with the assessment team during the preparatory workshop to highlight the issue of differences between communities, between households in a particular community as well as differences within households (between different members in one household).

Each assessment team (per village) consisted of +/- 8 people from the various stakeholder groups and this allowed the teams to carry out both the village level assessment process and the inter- household level process in parallel.

Village level

Information was gathered on the village as a whole, seeking to set out broad trends and patterns in the village across the socio-economic spectrum using the following tools:

- **Mapping** – of the village layout and water resources and infrastructure.
- **Historical profile** – to understand the history of the Community and the type of changes that took place over time and their impact on people's present behaviour. This tool was also used to further understand what people consider important events in their environment and community
- **Income and expenditure tree** indicating the sources of income and expenditure in the community and which of these activities require water.
- **Water Sources and uses table** - to set out the various sources of water for the village, and what water from each source is used for.
- **Water resources and water reticulation map**_a general village map was drawn and then water sources and related infrastructure was added. (the water resource map set the basis for the water resource timeline, the transect walk and focus group discussions.
- **Water Resource and water infrastructure time line-** To capture the trends and patterns of the village water situation
- **Transect walk** - To visualise the water infrastructure and water sources identified in the water resource and reticulation map
- **Focus group discussions with local water institutions** – to understand the water related tasks and the roles local institutions play in these as well as the power dynamics within these institutions
- **A timeline** of the history of the village water situation.

Inter-household level:

Here the aim was to understand socio-economic differences between households within the village and the following tools were used:

- **Social mapping-** Social mapping to set out basic social information, and the arrangement of households within the sections of the village, as an introduction to discuss inequalities, social problems and coping strategies in the village

- **Well-being ranking-** which drew on the social map, and used local criteria to categorise well-being groups. This enabled deeper discussion on inequalities and degrees of vulnerability, and some analysis according to well-being groups.
- **Activity profile-** To understand gender roles between households

2.2.6 Household assessments

A 2- day workshop was then held with the HBC supervisors who were part of the 10 day workshop, plus additional village based Care Givers. It was planned that 20 of the most vulnerable households in each village would be interviewed. Four groups of 2 people per group would interview 5 households per village. Each group had a caregiver who was well known or familiar to the households.

The Care Giver workshop was structured in a way that would enable the assessment team to first pilot the household assessment tool in one village(Hluvukani village) before covering the rest of the villages(Lephong, Dixie and Servile B). The workshop took people through the water and livelihoods framework, and then went into detail on what vulnerability meant in the village context. This provided the basis for selection of households in each village.

See Appendix 3: Draft *SWELL Care Giver Workshop*, for more details of this workshop.

In the event 71 households were interviewed by the teams, using a semi-structured interview (see Appendix 4, a typed up interview sheet as an example) by the four SWELL researchers working with village based care givers.

2.2.7 Recording and analysis

The workshops were recorded in writing, on tape and photographically, and reports are drafted. Each household interview is typed up, and a summary of these is partially in place. See Appendix 5 *Villages Household Assessments Summaries*. The team individually and collectively undertook structured reflection, as part of their workshop facilitation and also in preparation for the collective analysis workshop.

NOTE: The information is not yet on a data base, and this needs to be done so that further rigorous analysis can be undertaken with the data.

2.3 Service provider/municipal planning and programming review

This aspect was carried out by Umhlaba Development Services, working closely with the SWELL team. See the full report *DRAFT: Development and Water Service Planning in Bushbuckridge: An initial investigation*, submitted with this report.

2.3.1 Objectives

To determine if and how municipalities and government sectors operating in the Bushbuckridge (BBR) Local Municipality (LM) understand, prioritise and respond to vulnerable populations through their policies and programmes;

To verify who participated, and in what way, in the development and review of policies and programmes, specifically the municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP); and

To identify the structures put in place to facilitate participatory development processes at the municipal, ward and village levels and to understand their level of functionality.

2.3.2 Research questions

This study was guided by the following broad research questions:

- (i) Who participates in the planning and review processes for municipal-level policies and programmes related to water issues, specifically the IDP?
- (ii) To what extent do these policies and programmes provide support to vulnerable populations?
- (iii) What is the understanding of municipal officials of the problems of vulnerable groups and their WatSan needs and priorities?

These broad areas of enquiry were complemented by a list of guiding questions which assisted the researcher in their engagement with literature and stakeholders.

2.3.3 Secondary literature review

A list of documents was drawn up between the SWELL team and the consultant. The SWELL team then collected and sent these documents to the consultant who added some more general documents to this list. They included policy documents, the actual Bohlabela District IDP and WSDP, census data, and other local planning documents, plus various SWELL documentation. Documents from other research organizations working in the area were also collected. The consultant then did an analysis of these documents.

2.3.4 Key informant interviews

In addition to the documentation review outlined in the preceding section, this investigation of planning practices in Bushbuckridge also drew on a series of field

interviews with local stakeholders. These semi-structured interviews were guided by a series of pre-determined research areas/questions. The respondents for this research were:

Respondent	Position/Institution
Dolly Mathebula	Head of Social Development (part of the Department of Health and Social Development, which has offices based in Thulamahashe)
Norman Mukhawane	Water Services Manager, Bohlabela District Municipality (based in Bushbuckridge)
Zulu Seerane	Distribution Manager, Bushbuckridge Water Board (based in Bushbuckridge)
George Makaukau	Technical Services, Bohlabela District Municipality (based in Thulamahashe)
Thabo Molewa	Water and Sanitation, Bohlabela District Municipality (based in Thulamahashe)
Jack Maifala	PIMSS Manager, Bohlabela District Municipality (based in Thulamahashe)
John Shabangu	Social Development Officer, DWAF (based in Thulamahashe)
Peter Mhlongo	Technical Services, Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (based in Mkhuhlu)
Hlupi Tibane	DWAF (based in Thulamahashe)
Talita Madonsela	Head of Health (part of Department of Health and Social Development, interview done at Wits Rural Facility)

The following interviews, which had been scheduled and subsequently confirmed, fell through:

Person	Reason for cancellation
Theetsan Soeke, IDP/LED, Bohlabela District Municipality	-
Charles Mnisi, IDP/LED, Bushbuckridge Local Municipality	-
Dennis Chavane, IDP/LED, Bushbuckridge Local Municipality	Went on leave despite having agreed to meet with on 11 November. Only informed when we got to Nkhuhlu.
Paul Manaka, Technical Services, Bushbuckridge Local Municipality	Called to last minute meeting. Only informed when we got to Nkhuhlu.
Andries Mapaile, Community Services, Bushbuckridge Local Municipality	Called to last minute meeting. Only informed when we got to Nkhuhlu.
Sipho Mlambo, Municipal Manager, Bushbuckridge Local Municipality	-
John Ndlovu, Ward councillor	-
Molly Maluleke, District Manager, DWAF	-

Anthony Themba, Area Manager, DWAF	-
Solly Mathebula, CEO, Bushbuckridge Water Board	-

Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to two hours. The questions were used as a guide, and circumstances often resulted in interviews focusing in on particular issues to the exclusion of others. In other cases, it became clear early on in the interviews that the respondent had little or on knowledge of particular issues, making further enquiry on these issues redundant.

2.3.5 Analysis

A first level analysis of the data emerging from this research was prepared, using the AWARD Process Documentation Framework, see Appendix 6: *Process Documentation: Research text level 1, Water services and vulnerability in Ward 16, BBR LM, BDM*. The results were presented at the collective workshop.

A report was drafted by the consultant, as referred to above, as a stand-alone report but to be read in conjunction with this report.

2.4 Gender, vulnerability and dimensions of institutional change framework for analysis

2.4.1 Overview

In the WHELL project a working conceptual framework on the links between water and sanitation, gender relations, and HIV Aids was developed. However when it came to this SWELL work it was agreed to consider vulnerability more widely, and that the SWELL team would need support to take this further than they had managed to in the past. It was further agreed that it would be useful to have a facilitated workshop to look at the results of the various action-research processes carried out in this 5 months, in order to get some collective analysis. A facilitator, who is working with a conceptual framework developed by *Gender at Work*⁴, was contracted to provide this input and to run this workshop using this framework. A full workshop report is submitted as an accompanying document. *Analysis Workshop: SWELL assessment in 4 villages of Ward 16, Bushbuckridge; Understanding the gaps between the water and sanitation service needs of the most vulnerable in rural communities and the policy response at the municipal level.* 28th November 2005

2.4.2 Methodology

⁴ Gender at Work was created in 2001 to work with development organisations on the links between organisations, gender equality, and institutional change. See www.gendematwork.org

The facilitator read the background documentation, and the research tools, and gave some suggestions on these on questions to consider including. She then worked with a SWELL team member to design the analysis workshop, and gave the SWELL team and the Umhlaba consultant specific questions to answer in preparation for the workshop. The team then spent three days in the facilitated workshop, and were joined there by the Care WHELL Programme Coordinator. The analytic tool used was a framework that is used to consider gender and dimensions of institutional change (Rao and Kelleher⁵). During this time the group were also introduced to Capacitar⁶ methods, to assist them in managing the stresses raised in them through this work, and to assist them in future work with the most vulnerable.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

It needs to be noted that this action research was more demanding than expected, in two ways.

- Firstly in that the concept of vulnerability was dense, difficult and rich – more so than expected. There was controversy and there were more deep reflective conversations than we expected – thus there is research material that is qualitatively rich, and in terms of programming more complex issues emerged that impact on programming and our thinking of how to respond to what has emerged.
- Secondly the team was confronted by the very harsh realities of the lives and conditions of the most vulnerable, and this had an emotional impact that was exacerbated by the fact that the SWELL team was working long, demanding hours for weeks on end through October and November.

The results of this are:

- While there was a rich collective analysis there is much detail that has not yet been captured and analysed in a way that does justice to the quality of the material, and the complexity of it.
- The team felt the need to make some immediate responses to those they worked with, and this needs to be factored into plans for work following on from this step.
- This report therefore needs to be seen as the first level of analysis, which needs to be followed with more thorough capturing and further work by those who have got as far as they have. It does therefore not claim to be quantitative, or exhaustive, and should be read as preliminary.

⁵ See in *Is there life after gender mainstreaming?* Aruna Rao and David Kelleher, in *Gender and Development*, Volume 13, Number 2, July 2005. Also available to download on the website: www.gendertatwork.com.

⁶ Capacitar uses a popular education approach, rather than a therapeutic approach. Workshop leaders are educators, not therapists or counselors. Using wellness practices, such as Tai Chi, Chi Gung and acupuncture, Capacitar teaches "body literacy" to reconnect people to their own wisdom and capacity.

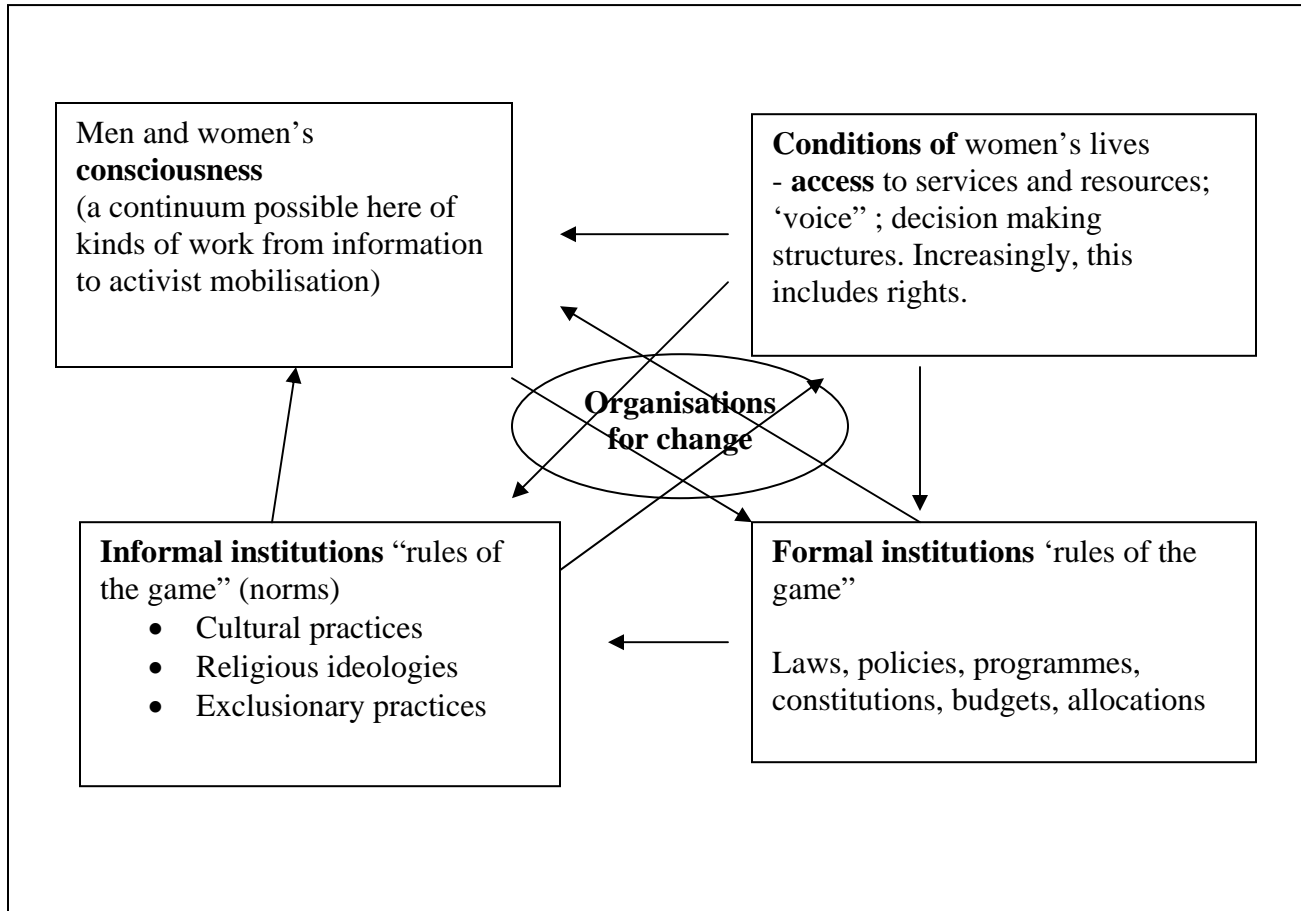
3.2 Framework for analysis

The framework used for analysis is one that considers *dimensions of institutional change* (Rao and Kelleher⁷). There is always a tension in any analysis, for in order to analyse we use tools that are necessarily more limited than the messy complex reality. However they can help us to make sense of that reality.

⁷ See in *Is there life after gender mainstreaming?* Aruna Rao and David Kelleher, in *Gender and Development*, Volume 13, Number 2, July 2005. Also available to download on the website: www.genderatwork.com.

An overview of the framework

Dimensions of institutional change: What are we trying to change?



All of the above lies within a broader context – including the economic context, which is within the context of globalisation. Power is an important component in all of this, in the construction of how things play out.

The relationships between the boxes, and the direction and strength of these, are critical.

The informal is often not given enough attention or recognition, and then undermines the work attempted at formal level. It can be used by elites to their advantage, and can also be a crucial part of poor people's livelihood strategies.

3.2 Collective Analysis

3.3.1 Dimension 1: Conditions affecting people in Ward 16 and their relationship to water

- *What is the situation of women/girls in comparison to men/boys*
- *Which women/girls and which men/boys are you talking about (People living with HIV/Aids and other vulnerability factors)*

Process Documentation- issues to consider:

Access to water
Allocation of water resources and services
Uses of water
Control, influence/ decision making, community institutions, management
Safety
Technology
Coordination between institutions

Access to water and allocation of water resources and services

Secondary data

There is information and statistics on Ward 16 and access to water from the 2001 census and the Local Area Plan for Ward 16. These may be questionable, and we need to check what questions they asked in order to understand the data properly. Thus the information below needs to be contextualised and checked and compared.

Sources of water

2001 census data

The main source of water is underground water.
There are occasional hand dug wells and springs.
Bulk supply system is installed but not working
There is some reticulation connected to a borehole
Borehole stand-alone (i.e. no reticulation, just a pump directly on the bore-hole)

From the Local Area Plan for Ward 16 (2003):

16 % have accessible to potable water in their houses
74% have access to communal taps
10% have no access to water infrastructure

From 2001 census data

50% of water supply is from community standpipes 200 m or more away
25% comes from community standpipes
12% are from standpipes inside a yard
2 % in the dwelling
5% from the river

From the SWELL Village Assessments

There is variation in the detail of each village.⁸ However in broad terms one can generalise to say that most infrastructure is not working. There are complex reticulation systems, with reticulation in place for bulk water but not working, so the reliance is on underground water. Except for Seville C, water is not reliable, which means frequent travelling to fetch water from another village. Most household connections do not work. While many people do have unregistered private connections (what the officials refer to as ‘illegal connections’) many of those have not been functional for 5 – 6 years. The majority of standpipes do not work - perhaps 25% do.

Examples:

Lephong, from household interviews:

Constant borehole breakdowns, 2/3 times a month. No diesel sometimes. Takes 2/3 days reaction time by government, unacceptable.
The borehole constantly breaks down, about 7 times a year. Reaction time by DWAF is sometimes short sometimes long, but usually long which is unacceptable

Seville B village assessment:

Insert photo of map

The main source of water is the borehole. One out of 5 boreholes is working. There is a reticulation system from this borehole, of which 9 out of 16 taps are working. The water quality is saline, but this water is used for drinking. Sometimes dam water is purified and used for drinking. Dam water is used for gardening.

It is quite random who can access the taps or who cannot, it depends on which taps are working and how close this is to a person’s house. There is mostly no pattern of privilege here. In some places refugees settled in villages after the water systems were installed, and then that section of the village will not have a tap.

People do collect rainwater – those with roofs, and those with containers.

Who collects water? It depends: In a household that has a bakkie it is usually a man who then fetches the water. If it is donkey cart, then boys will. If wheelbarrows are used, or water is carried, then it is usually women or girls – boys and men do not carry heavy things on their heads. If people can afford it, they hire a bakkie, or pay a water vendor. Thus access to money or equipment is important for what access means in practice: containers and wheelbarrows also determine water access, and the very poorest households don’t have these. Then they are unable to store water for the times the system is not working – this is a very bad situation for them. Social networks become important

⁸ A draft Village Assessment Report is available for each village

here – those that have someone who will help with wheelbarrow. However generally people need some kind of reciprocity to access social networks, which the worst off cannot provide.

Who is poor? People who have no income generating activities – who are totally dependant on grants. An old age grant is R780.00, and a child grant is R180.00. But then some households cannot even access grants as they have no papers. The majority of these poor households are women –headed. (note: in the household interviews we differentiated between *de jure* and *de facto* heads of household) Refugees: it depends on whether they have papers or not. Those without papers have less access to state support.

Use of water

The amounts of water people use are on average 100 litres per household per day. The detail can be found from the household interviews when these are analysed. We also asked people about possible uses if water were more accessible, e.g. from rainwater harvesting.

There is little use of water for gardening or income generating activities. In Seville B, one person has a garden, she is a poor woman without a grant, and she uses tap and dam water. A few people brew beer; one is a woman who is the household head.

Management, control, decision making

There are Community Water Committees. There has always been some sort of management. In Seville B there is a conflict about who represents who. This is party political.

3.2.2 Dimension 2: Informal institutions

Note: institutions are used here as in “rules of the game”, not as in organisations. It is important to understand how the ‘unwritten’ rules of the game, in the form of norms, attitudes, practices etc. shape who gets what, who decides what, who does what. Organisations – eg. state departments, families, local authorities and so on become the vehicle through which these rules are given expression.

Identify and describe cultural norms, customs, beliefs, practices, attitudes and behaviours (i.e., unwritten rules) that affect gender equality, people living with HIV/Aids and specifically vulnerable groups in relation to water. Are there any specific practices which directly or indirectly exclude particular groups of women or men from water access/use/decision making?

Process documentation – issues to consider

Access

Uses

Control, influence/ decision making, community structures,

Management

Coordination between departments

Technology

Project and planning cycles,

Accountability

Financing mechanisms

Access

It is a norm that women care for sick people. If a very sick person needs bathing etc, it will be the woman. However if its giving the granny water, or taking her to the toilet, then children help (boys and girls equally). It is possible for gender role activities to change, when circumstances demand it. But in general it is womens' and girls' gendered role to fetch water. This means they tend to carry the burden when there is a problem with water – i.e. it has to be fetched from far away

There are two views (in the group analysing):

- there are gendered roles and everyone has their part to play –
- there is an unfair burden on women and girls while men and boys get off lightly.

However it is agreed that in the current situation of poverty and HIVAids, poor women carry the burden disproportionately

Local government would rather have equitable distribution than unequal distribution. They see “illegal connections” as making the systems break. At local level these “unauthorised connections” are accepted, people do not consider them “illegal”, they see them as their right. And people say “why should I pay when it doesn't work all the time?” In some areas it is considered an advantage to have people with private connections as this is seen as an alternative source, enabling access for some closer to their own homes. There was only one reported negative expression and feeling. Those with unauthorised connections are the wealthier members of the community. The people who do it were often trained on water projects! “DWAF people” are accused of installing these connections. Predominantly it is men who are trained in such skills.

Note that being defined as “poor” can mean access to state support for poverty relief programmes and state grants:

A local govt official, in response to a question about vulnerable households– “we don't deal with households, we deal with communities, we get the community water, and the community must look after the vulnerable households”

Community level structures say they represent “the community” – but we saw in discussion with them that they have little recognition of special needs. This comes back to selection criteria for poverty relief. How this is seen affects how people get support, because departments ask the Community Development Forum (CDF) for lists of poor people.

Control, influence, decision making, community structures

The role of water committees from DWAF point of view is negligible – to report illegal connections. The reality is that their roles are not very clear to people. The past few years has seen many changes and it is still not settled. Their actual capacity to be effective varies, but it is often weak. To be on structures has status attached for community members, and is linked to local power dynamics.

Many women sit on village water committees. There are probably equal numbers of men and women. The decision making power of the women on these committees varies. Some women on the committees are articulate and powerful. Others are quiet and passive. We don’t know how people get elected to the committees – what the criteria are.

The Ward Committee is largely made up of men. These structures are sites of political power. The Ward Councillor selects them. Ward Councillors are selected by the party, not by people. The Ward Councillor selects a CDF, and emphasizes that it must be 50% women, but he does not translate this into the structure he is closest to, the Ward Committee.

Is the structure being valued and used by local govt? It does not look like it.

Is representation the best way of getting needs and interests represented in plans? The demands of sitting on meetings and on committees are high.

It was noted by home based carers (HBCs) that community meetings are held at times that certain people can’t attend (orphans , sick people), but the HBCs are also not seen as validly representing such peoples interests in such meetings.

The informal practice is that decision-making is not transparent at all. We need to understand the actual practice, and who makes the decisions, then we can lobby the right people, the right place.

Tom interviewed 12 people, 2 were women. 1 from Health and 1 from Social Development. The latter was the only one who expressed any concern and compassion for vulnerable people.

Coordination between departments

After the workshop the SWELL team held with various service providers/ stakeholders in preparation for the village assessments so many expressed that this was an eye-opening event, that they need to work in a more coordinated and integrated way. In interviews many people express this concern and need. One in BBR Local Municipality (LM) said it's a critical issue, but he's not sure if there is an initiative to drive it, or who should.

SWELL broke the 'rules of the game' by bringing people together.

One finds a great deal of common ground with the lower levels of officials, but getting the senior levels is very rare.

One manager said he finds himself sandwiched between Provincial government and villagers, but he has to respond to the higher levels.

Planning and maintenance of water systems

The water system is so fragmented in BBR that maintenance and planning is particularly difficult. The LM doesn't know what is in the ground and what belongs to who (which department).

There are women operators and men operators of pumps. Electric pumps just need to be monitored, and there are women operators on some of these, but all they do is clean them (!) and report problems. Diesel operators do have a bit more of a role in operating the engines, but these are all men.

Rules and polices are there. The formal does affect the informal, but people do not really understand them, and the power dynamics are complex, so the effects are not as planned. Rules are there, from national – but these are just circulating, they don't go to the field they delegate rules and roles to CDFs and water committees – but people make illegal connections, using their own money, and saying "pay me to disconnect". Rules will be broken up to the end of the world.

A dialogue of the deaf? Or just too many voices to be heard? So many institutions and groups, and everyone has something to say, and needs, and desires – either no-one is listening, or we are overwhelmed by the diversity of desires to met.

Diversity and dynamics are present, and if we try to understand there is a lot to see. Ward 16 does not necessarily have a "water – water" (water resource) problem, but does have a "water-people" (social/institutional/ management) and a "water- machine" (water infrastructure) problem

3.3.3 Dimension 3: Consciousness

Think of the women and men, girls and boys you are working with and analyse their levels of awareness and consciousness about their rights and understanding with respect to water. Are there are differences in people's values, knowledge, beliefs, political consciousness with respect to water... Again be clear about which women and which men you are talking about and both +ve and -ve aspects.

Process Documentation - issues to consider:

Multiple sources and uses

Allocation

Rights, Independence and agency (for change), self-confidence

Opportunities and blockages

Technology

Management

Project and planning cycles

Financing mechanisms

Organisational roles

Context of change

There is enormous CHANGE going on – norms, beliefs and culture are being challenged. Livelihoods are changing. Issues of HIV Aids, and masculinity, femininity. Politics have become more important too. In one village we spoke about the historical background, to old women in a group, (there was only one man). They were vocal about how things are changing – in the sense that there is no longer rain, that women no longer have to do things that they used to, in the garden and so on, as there is less rain. Fathers have lost their respect. Our new democracy is not making things easier – there is confusion. Some things stay, but there is a feeling of transition.

Thus awareness is influenced by life around – not just politics, the reality of what is going on is forcing change. Peoples' sense of identity is being challenged, not only by politics, but by the world around them.

Consciousness is linked to emotion – and this colours people engagement with change.

There is a lot of unevenness, and a lot of feeling-, which deeply informs consciousness. Various things impact people's consciousness: the reality of their lives, the messages from above, and the media.

Rights and self-confidence/ agency for change

The awareness and knowledge of different people to water and service delivery: Usually older people are grateful if there is water coming out at all. The younger generation are questioning the status quo – “why does it take so long?” The young have different kinds

of awareness about their rights and the obligations of the state. Women are more likely to be angry about water than men.

Communities are diverse within and between themselves. Whether people are aware or not, of rights, of traditions, – they are at different levels. People know it is not right that they do not have water – that is what people shout at operators. But the methods they are using are not necessarily working. People have tried, in their way, but have sometimes given up. We must be careful not to judge what people have and are doing – but also understand what they have and are trying to do. For example if men are accused of being authoritarian, maybe they don't see that as being wrong, they may see that as normal.

Blockages

People are discussing housing, water and education – the ones who are experiencing problems (unemployment, poverty etc...) but some men booze – they don't attend meetings, they just drink. If the head of a family brings this attitude of not participating, it affects all the household (women and children too). Drinking is a denial and a defence mechanism. Those who do participate are those who are not experiencing bad poverty, and those who are having information.

Comfort zones – be it alcohol, culture, all kinds of things. In societies and communities that are under transition, there is a tendency for us to withdraw to our comfort zones. But then people miss out of the beneficial aspects and opportunities change brings. The question is how to get people to see change and transformation as something to view positively rather than threatening. I wonder if the increase in violence against women and children is because of the fear that comes from the changes. Men in patriarchal society are threatened by the changes in South Africa, which question and take away areas of their traditional control, leading to these other ways of expressing control.

Looking at government officials: govt is trying to bring changes in gender equality – like in composition of committees. The official has a book that tells him he has to do certain things– but generally they see this as an addition of women, not understanding or seeing the reason for gender equality. Structures are formed, but without people understanding, just because they are told to. This creates confusion.

The messages of equality and rights in SA in particular – I feel we are bleeding under the assault of extremely violent messages – through soap operas, TV, all kinds of media, etc, that normalise violence. This is not being questioned at all. The huge amount of technology available to people even in the deep rural areas, must have an impact. These messages are not being questioned by our society.

During the week spent in Bushbuckridge conducting these field interviews we traveled a great distance. Municipal and water service institution offices and officials are scattered across the municipal area (which in itself is geographically large). On the whole, respondents were happy to meet with us and give us their time to conduct these interviews. Many respondents were clearly under stress and were carrying heavy workloads. Institutions are struggling under the weight of transformation and the ever-

widening nature of their mandates. The picture that these interviews painted was, not surprisingly, a gloomy one. The following key issues should be noted:

- None of the respondents/institutions engaged with undertake any real form of differentiation of community needs and priorities in relation water services. Moreover, there is no up-front knowledge of awareness of vulnerability or special needs in this regard. What distinction is drawn in relation to water services are technically motivated.
- In relation to the identification of needs and priorities, different institutions use different approaches and different processes to do this (if they undertake such exercises at all). Many respondents/institutions refer the identification of community needs and priorities to the local level (local municipalities, ward committees, etc). At the same time, however, many institutions expressed a scepticism in relation to the efficacy of these local level institutions. These are seen as weak and politically contested. From interviews it became clear that ward and community-level institutions have low levels of knowledge and capacity, and will require real support if participation is to be realised. It is important to note that the legal framework does require municipalities to make resources available to facilitate community engagement. It is clear that no such support is forthcoming in Bushbuckridge.
- Flowing from the scepticism of local institutions, it is evident that in Bohlabela District, local municipalities are the ‘junior partner’. Thus, rather than the district WSDP being informed and shaped by local level water service requirements, local water sector plans in IDPs need to be brought in line with the district WSDP. Similarly, the local municipality alleges that the district implements projects without communicating this to local municipalities where this is taking place.
- Finally, Bushbuckridge is characterised by a complex and fragmented water service system. Thus, there are a multiplicity of institutions involved in water service planning and delivery, and a multiplicity of water supply systems. A part of the problem of integration and coordination stems from this situation.

Opportunities

Then there are people at service provider level there are many really trying, and they are providing some help. The people we worked with – they were starting to say : in the past everyone was poor. Their selection criteria was *poor people with no income*, but with little awareness of other aspects. Our workshop challenged them to revisit the ways they are doing things.

Everything we do involves men and women, boys and girls – so gender is mainstreamed – but usually in ways that are not always fair or equal. What gender mainstreaming is really trying to get at is not about adding in something new as if it doesn’t already exist. It is rather about trying to transform the existing unfair way in which gender relations

already function, to something that is more fair or more equal. But gender equality does not mean one clear thing and different people will interpret this differently depending on their life experiences, their level of understanding and consciousness. The agenda behind interrogating “who are you talking about, men or women, which men and women?” is to bring to consciousness that this is sometimes significant, and allows us to see things differently (sometimes more clearly?) and to make conscious choices about what aspects of the existing situation we wish to change.

3.3.4 Dimension 4: Formal institutions

Identify the most important formal laws and policies (rules, roles, procedures including planning procedure,) and how these are implemented with respect to water and key linkages, that positively or negatively affect gender equality, vulnerable groups and people living with HIV/Aids. (The formal “rules of the game”.)

Process documentation – issues to consider:

Policy and regulation,
Planning, Implementation, Monitoring,
Management,
Capacity building,
Communication and coordination, understanding by stakeholders of own and others’ roles and responsibility
Definition of roles and responsibilities (mandates) of different stakeholders
Financial flows/mechanisms
Financial management
Reporting and accountability

Policy, planning, implementation

Local Govt was created through a suite of legislation, and the Municipal Systems Act talks about the roles and responsibilities regarding planning. Water planning takes place through the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), in which a Water Services Development Plan (WSDP) is formulated. If there are problems in IDP planning, this will impact on water plans. There are references to gender equality in the Water Act and in the IDP guide. The IDP guide is so thick that people do not use it as a guide to planning, but do use it to develop the headings

Local Govt officials do not have the conceptual or practical skills to do planning. The result is that every IDP ends up looking identical. Bohlabela IDP has not changed from one to the next - it is cut-and-paste job. The process that should be undertaken is set out – but each year the description of the process is the same, verbatim.

In reviewing the IDP documents of Bushbuckridge, it was clear that the planning process adopted for the municipality has been strongly influenced by the National IDP Guide’s proposed 5-phase planning process. Where the Bushbuckridge process differs is in its

emphasis on community participation. Legal and policy prescriptions (in particular the National IDP Guide) refer to participation throughout the planning process (including in the definition of the planning process itself). The National IDP Guide emphasises that community participation should not only be secured during the needs analysis phase. In the case of Bushbuckridge, however, none of the descriptions of this process in the IDP documents reviewed makes reference to the legal obligation to involve local communities in defining the planning process.

The IDPs and IDP review documents from Bushbuckridge look exactly the same as all the other Limpopo IDPs (and in fact most IDPs from across the country). The formulaic nature of these plans has clearly (and ironically perhaps) been shaped by the National IDP Guide. Although this an extremely useful guide, with new local government structures which are under-resourced and under-capacitated, the guide has in itself become a form of prescription. IDP planning, on the part of Bushbuckridge Municipality at least, has been reduced to filling in the boxes in the IDP formula. Thus, although the statutory planning obligations of local government are being fulfilled, the notion of planning as an iterative engagement with localised and complex realities aimed at real transformation, has not been fulfilled.

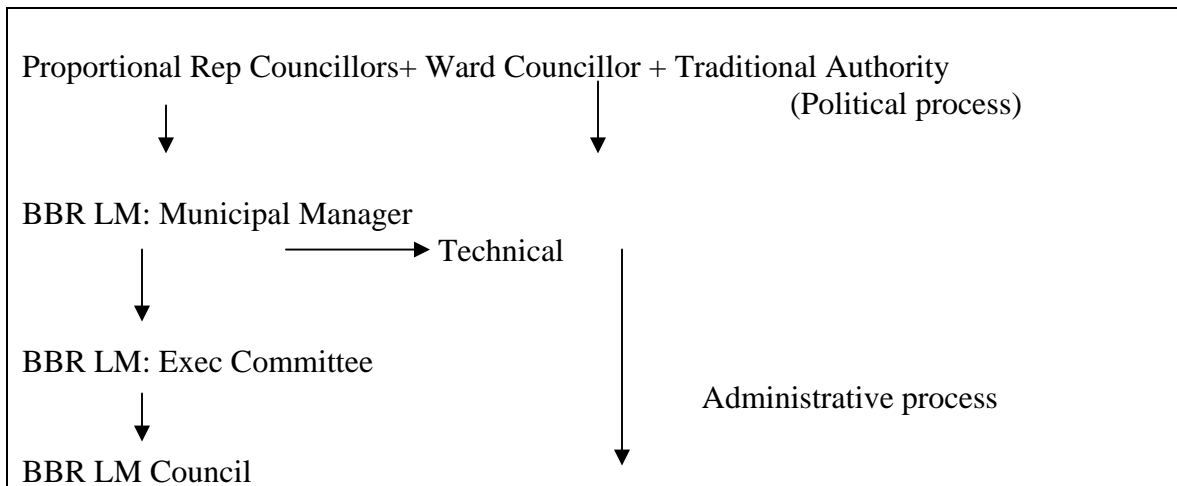
In the same sense that the overall look of IDPs is formulaic, so is much of the content. For example, the opening pages of all IDP and IDP review documents since 2002 are exactly (word-for-word) the same. Analysis, for example, is most often simply based on 2001 census data. The data is often drawn straight from census sources, which usually in the form of raw numerical data. This census information is simply slotted in – there is no analysis, or even a simple conversion of raw numbers into a form that provides greater insight. Moreover, the standard data categories from the census are simply pulled down. In other words, local development planning involves no local data gathering as part of the development planning process, and instead relies entirely on, at times suspect and out of date, census data. There is no local data gathering to assess change on a year-by-year basis, so any IDP review process is clearly not reviewing impact (since the necessary data is unavailable). In fact it is unclear what exactly is being reviewed during the IDP reviews.

The use of generic census data categories prevents an uncovering and assessment of real social differentiation (other than at the level of income, and general access to service infrastructure). The poor quality of data means one cannot further unpack the question in terms of differentiating vulnerable groupings or their needs within this broad category.

As a result, all of the documents reviewed are clearly a long way from achieving the ideal set out in legislation and in the national planning guide. Clearly, adequate community participation is not reflected in these documents, and there is a failure to adequately conceptualise integrated strategies for addressing local development challenges.

The Project approval process in BBR LM

Any proposed project is supposed to move through the following steps of approval:



Our questions:

How does tracking and accountability regarding these processes work? The SWELL forum has been waiting for 7 months for approval now, and AWARD is finding it very difficult to keep track

How does this process relate to the IDP, and the projects there?

Municipal implementation of DWAF’s gender policy is rote – it is about the number of women on Project Steering Committees and numbers of women who are employed on the project.

All IDPs provide some disaggregation of social and economic data (in fact many of the documents provide the same disaggregation), but it is extremely limited. The overall population is disaggregated by age (a high youth population is noted), gender (high proportion of women and women-headed households), wealth (massive poverty and unemployment), HIV/AIDS (as a percentage of the population and in terms of what age and social groups are most at risk).

Limited disaggregation of (questionable) data does not flow through into strategies and setting of objectives, or into a coherent defining and ‘mixing’ of projects. Projects are still defined by sector and are overwhelmingly focussed on service delivery

Communication and coordination, roles and responsibilities

There are supposed to be a series of structures for IDPs. The District officials deflect the issue of participation to a lower level – from BDM to Bushbuckridge (BBR) Local Municipality (LM), from BBR to Ward Councillors and Ward Committees. The fora are there, but what happens in them is not clear.

People were quite clear about what their roles and responsibilities are in relation to policy and water – in terms of being a Water Services Authority, or a Water Services Provider. Problems lie in interaction between different levels of organisations, and between sectors (e.g. water and agriculture). However the engagement with communities seemed to take place in a whole lot of different ways. The IDP is supposed to be a citizen participation process. A lot of assumptions are made about what happens at a community/ward level, and how this is transferred via Ward Councillors on the IDP Steering Committee into planning proceedings (especially the identification of needs, the setting of priorities, selection of projects, and allocation of budgets).

The policy framework does offer space for real participation. However participation in the formulation of IDPs is dominated by state agencies and institutions. Although each IDP presents a review of the participation process (all of the reviews are the same across the different IDP documents), it is clear very little community participation occurred. Furthermore, projects in these plans continue to remain ‘silo-ed’ along sectoral lines, and amount to wish lists rather than coherent project interventions. On the positive side, the municipality is developing a plan (as per law), and this plan does involve all government departments (however effective such participation may be). Moreover, the project lists reflect projects from a wide range of departments (and all of this is reflected in one document). Thus, although clearly inadequate at the current moment, there is an emerging degree of institutionalisation of integrated planning. It may provide a base, however weak, on which to build.

In the workshop with departmental people, the CDF and Home-Based Caregivers (HBCs), each organisation looked at programmes they offer, and what selection criteria they use, and how their programmes relate to water, and who do they partner with. Social Dpt said, e.g., “*we do it in partnership with CDF, DWAF, etc.*” It all looked beautiful. Then we questioned -- is this the reality? The reality was very different, and there was not a lot of coordination and communication, or understanding of each others programmes.

Most departments say they will go to the CDF and ask for a list of the “poorest of the poor” (which is their criteria). The CDF will have their own criteria or understanding, based on things like: which households don’t have houses, or grants, etc. The CDF may have a discussion and agree – they do not have set and explicit criteria. There could be issues at times that they are not consistent, and of favouring certain households, or giving to people they are related to. They may sometimes try to spread resources – if someone got a toilet last year, so give this next thing to someone else. Sometimes it will be through a community meeting for approval. Some people do not make it to their meetings and they get forgotten (the orphans, the sick). They may decide themselves, or they may call a meeting to approve it. The department will often contact the Ward Councillor – and he contacts the then the CDF with no time given to hold a process for providing a list “Agric needs this list in the morning”.

For the HBCs, their clients are neatly divided into categories: sick people, orphans, old, disabled, and the unemployed .

Municipalities (BDM, BBR LM, DWAF, BWB) target differently, They make no distinctions in vulnerability – expect for some technical distinctions.

- Communities that do and don't have water.
- Households with different water service desires (which is linked to capacity to pay)
- Communities with reliable water supplies (largely bulk schemes) and those with unreliable supplies (largely stand-alone schemes)

Learnings:

Different actors speak in different languages. There is not a mutual understanding between departments and CDFs – and this means the departments do not always end up working with the people they expect to.

We should really focus on the CDF, as they are the ones who really identify the poor and vulnerable.

We need to challenge CDFs to think about other people who could be vulnerable that they are not currently thinking of. First off they say, we work with the community as a whole, as it is a poor community. So we should take them to different levels of severity of problems.

We can also work more with departments, to make it very clear what they really want when they have something to offer. Some services require that people need some resources to make use of the service being offered.

Now that we have done this assessment we have more idea of the nature and scope of the situation regarding vulnerability out there. Now we need to move to awareness raising with community structures and departments and local government, taking into account their own criteria and programmes.

3.3.5 Linkages between dimensions



There were many arrows showing linkages, but broadly we saw that major ones were that consciousness impacts on “the rules of the game” at the informal and the formal levels, and that this impacts on the actual conditions men and women face.

4. INITIAL CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Strategies for programming

There are different areas of intervention to consider, at different levels: local – district (micro – meso). Also there is direct intervention, and indirect intervention

Direct intervention: e.g. rainwater harvesting or storage tanks and containers (direct service delivery)

Indirect: teaming up with others (service delivery with a partner)

Short term and long term intervention strategies. And crisis interventions – for an immediate response.

4.1.1. Strategy 1

Meet some of the immediate needs of the most vulnerable (water and livelihoods) to demonstrate how to do this in an integrated way

The team set out what they saw as the most pressing needs that came up from looking at each household, and what could be done. e.g. In the workshop we heard that the Dept of Agriculture has starter packs to offer (for gardens, or chicken projects) so we could pull out the list and give to the right department.

This needs to be hand in hand with the CDF. Our assumption is that if they have the information, they can go and deliver. This would need to be part of an action plan to take this forward.

The aim of this strategy would be to change conditions for the very vulnerable in the short term, and also the consciousness of CDFs and departmental actors. We want to demonstrate how to respond in an integrated way, and that it can be coherent, and sustainable.

This can be conceived of as an implementation project out of SWELL.

We already have a platform of community and government structures for Ward 16, this we would add as an aspect to that platform.

4.1.2 Strategy 2

Strengthening local organisations – including awareness raising and accountability:

This would be a programme of awareness raising with the Ward Committee, the CDFs and water committees, so that they can play their role more effectively and as they should – to be elected regularly, to represent community interests and needs (including vulnerable groups) and to support implementation of programmes.

An idea is that be a platform where the Ward Committee, and the water committees engage in a road show in the 12 villages, to familiarise themselves with the issues in each village.

The Ward Committee and structures need support to link this picture to understanding better what their roles are, and how to feed in to plans. This idea would be to change the dynamic between the structures and the ward councillor.

4.1.3 Strategy 3

Building capacity of the invisible silent voices to have influence in community structures

How are people able to hold local government accountable? And how to include people who are most marginal, invisible, silent in these processes? People need to have a sense that they have rights, and to have mechanisms to demand accountability

Tasks:

- Identify different ways to hold structures accountable. To see how others have used creative strategies to do exactly this.
- To understand the formal processes
- To understand the informal, actual practices

4.2 Actions

Short term

- Finalise the writing up of all the various bits of work and research
- A feedback workshop with all the people involved in this process, including for the four villages
- Go back to each village, to report and confirm the information
- Get together parcels for those households we interviewed who were really in a bad way – maybe water containers, – food parcels, clothes

Medium term

- Capture the information work in a data base to enable fuller and further data analysis
- Write up the work in various ways- for guidelines, learning support materials, and for papers and presentations. Find ways to do this that really capture the immediacy of people struggles and hardship
- We need to better understand how decisions are actually made – at the formal and the informal levels.

4.3 Concluding comments

The team and the work suffered from being under great time pressure – if we'd had more time the analysis could have been taken further. However we underestimated how demanding this work would be; how difficult at an emotional level, and at how it would challenge and enrich us. There are real challenges ahead – how to respond to what we have found in a meaningful way. We cannot continue as if meeting the general need will take care of the most vulnerable in the villages. We also cannot continue to expect that current approaches will be effective without some community mobilisation. The SWELL approach of facilitating connection between stakeholders is affirmed as important and useful. We need to work at the level of consciousness, at all levels, if we are to move forward.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Framework for Methodology: Literature Review, Key Informant Interviews And Village Assessments - CARE Austria Project

Appendix 2. SWELL Planning Workshop Report, Hluvukani Home Based Care Centre, 10- 21 October 2005

Appendix 3. DRAFT: SWELL Care Giver Workshop, November 2005

Appendix 4. SWELL and vulnerability assessment: Household Interview. November 2005

Appendix 5. SWELL –Vulnerability Assessment – Household Level: Summaries

Appendix 6. Process documentation: Research Text Level 1. Water services and vulnerability in Ward 16, BBR LM, BDM. Nov 2005

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CARE South Africa. Development and Water Service Planning in Bushbuckridge: An initial investigation (DRAFT DOCUMENT) December 2005 . Umhlaba Development Services.

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