

**THE IMPACT OF THE SECTOR WIDE APPROACH ON THE DELIVERY OF
WATER SERVICES: A CASE STUDY OF UKHAHLAMBA DISTRICT
MUNICIPALITY IN THE EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA.**

by

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Declaration

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I declare that **THE IMPACT OF THE SECTOR WIDE APPROACH ON THE DELIVERY OF WATER SERVICES: A CASE STUDY OF UKHAHLAMBA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY IN THE EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA**, is my own work and that all the sources that have been used or quoted from have been acknowledged by means of complete references

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Abstract

Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) can be defined as collaboration between governments, development partners and civil society. It promotes coordination of various donor funded programmes to align with a common sector vision. In the case of South Africa, a water sector SWAP was introduced in 2000. Funds were directed to municipalities that were providing water known as Water Services Authorities (WSAs). This study examines the impact of the SWAP on tangible water delivery issues in Ukhahlamba District Municipality, Eastern Cape. The literature reviewed focuses on rural development in South Africa, and abroad. The quantitative aspect of the research considered various sources including primary data from municipal records of water services provision. Interviews were held with community members, municipal and provincial government officials. Analysis of information from these sources indicates some aspects of water delivery were positive and some negative. Recommendations for improvement and further research are made in the last chapter.

Key-Terms

Sector approaches, budget support, sector coordination, water delivery, water authority, rural development, illegal water connections, community participation, rights based education, access to basic water.

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List of Acronyms

CHDM	Chris Hani District Municipality
COGTA	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCOG	Department of Cooperative Governance
DLA	Department of Land Affairs
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
DM	District Municipality
DRDLR	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
DWA	Department of Water Affairs
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
EC	Eastern Cape
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographic Information System
HDI	Human Development Index
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IDT	Independent Development Trust
IRWSS	Integrated Rural Water Supply and Sanitation
ISRDS	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy
IWSMF	Integrated Water Services Management Forum
MAAP	Multi Annual Action Plan
Masibambane	IsiZulu for “Let’s work together”
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIG	Municipal Infrastructure Grant
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SFWS	Strategic Framework for Water Services

SLA	Service Level Agreement
SWAP	Sector Wide Approach
UKDM	Ukhahlamba District Municipality
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UWASNET	Ugandan Water and Sanitation Network
VIP	Ventilated Improved Pit
VWC	Village Water Committee
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation
WC/DM	Water Conservation/Demand Management
WIN-SA	Water Information Network-South Africa
WS	Water Services
WSA	Water Services Authority
WSA BP	Water Services Authority Business Plans
WSDP	Water Services Development Plan
WSP	Water Services Provider
WSSP	Water Sector Support Programme

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Sector Wide Approaches focus on providing assistance at sector and national levels in order to support economic development and alleviate poverty. This is in response to the limitations of the project-by-project approach, whereby individual projects are supported by different donors. A Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) “is a process aiming at broadening government and national ownership over public sector policy and resource allocation decisions within the sector, increasing the coherence between policy, spending and results and reducing transaction costs” (European Union Water Initiative Working Group 2009: 1).

SWAPs come from a realisation that project-based approaches, in most cases, result in fragmentation, and therefore have a limited service delivery impact. This study intends to investigate the impact of the Sector Wide Approach on water services delivery in the Eastern Cape municipality known as the Ukhahlamba District Municipality (UkDM) in terms of the extent to which it has or has not improved the lives of residents through access to water during the period 2000-2008.

1.2 Background to the study

Sector-wide approaches developed in the late 1980s and 1990s as a challenge to project by project approaches by donor communities (Foster 2000:34). This ensured that development aid was channelled into sector-wide, as opposed to individual projects in recipient countries, also referred to here as partner governments. This introduction of SWAPs has led to a new modality of interaction between partner governments and donors, because resources are allocated to national state budgets and distributed to various ministries for administration and project implementation.

In the period following the first democratic elections in 1994 in South Africa, the then national Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF), currently known as the Department of Water Affairs (DWA), had the sole responsibility for water services provision to the South African public. This was changed in 1996 with the introduction of the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, which gave a mandate for the provision of basic services to local government. Following this, the Water Services

Act, 108 of 1997 established Water Services Authorities (WSAs), which were institutions that were set up within local authorities, in order to ensure water services delivery to communities. Later, in the year 2000, local government held elections and demarcated municipal boundaries, which resulted in local authorities taking responsibility for jurisdictions that were not previously within their boundaries. Some local authorities had to take responsibility for large rural areas with little or no sources of revenue. It has to be mentioned that the affected municipalities were those with the highest service backlog and human and financial resource capacity constraints.

It was against this background that the SWAP was introduced in the water services sector in the year 2000, with a specific focus on three provinces - KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Limpopo - with the highest service delivery backlog and largest rural population. The programme that was implemented as a result of the donor funding that the country received is known as Masibambane ('let's work together') (European Union Financing Agreement 2000:5).

The pillars of this programme were sector orientation, service delivery and institutional development (European Union Financing Agreement 2000:6). The SWAP was not seen as a separate programme, but as a form of support to sector members in order for them to deliver on their own strategic priorities, which were commonly agreed on through planning and budgeting processes. Through sector orientation and the fostering of collaborative working relationships, SWAPs foster closer intergovernmental relations among the three spheres of government and key sector partners such as civil society and the private sector. The common policy framework and sector vision were articulated in the (SFWS) Strategic Framework for Water Services (2003), which was a policy framework guiding the provision of water services over a ten year period. The framework was developed collaboratively by the water sector, led by DWAF, but monitoring progress during its implementation is the responsibility of the water sector as a whole.

Linked to the broader development goals of national government are municipal planning processes in the form of integrated development plans (IDPs), which are plans that underpin service delivery and municipal development for a 5-year period. The water component of the IDP is known as the Water Services Development Plan

(WSDP). This study assessed the impact of the SWAP on the implementation of the goals and objectives, as articulated in these municipal planning tools.

1.3 Problem statement

The South African water services sector introduced its first SWAP to deal with the numerous challenges of service provision and backlog eradication. It was introduced in the three provinces with the highest backlog and most service provision challenges. In 2004, the sector still faced serious challenges in terms of backlogs and service provision. Therefore, donors, through the European Union, approved the expansion of the SWAP to all 9 provinces in 2004 (European Union Financing Agreement 2004: 13).

This study aims to explore the extent to which the SWAP has succeeded in bringing water services to the people of the Ukhahlamba District Municipality (UkDM) in the Eastern Cape. It focuses on critical constraints, challenges and successes related to service delivery in the municipality. Although this study draws from a wide variety of literature on the subject, it is of limited geographical size, with a focus on one rural municipality in the Eastern Cape Province.

1.4 Research Questions

This study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is the impact of the sector-wide approach on service delivery in the UkDM?
2. What factors hindered and enabled sustainable water provision in UkDM during the period of study?

1.5 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are the following:

- To conduct a literature review on the topic of the sector wide approach to development, both within and outside South Africa.
- To outline the impact of the sector-wide approach on the delivery of water services to the people of the Ukhahlamba District Municipality in the Eastern Cape.

- To analyse the factors that have promoted and hindered the sustainable provision of water services during the chosen period in the Ukhahlamba District Municipality.

1.6 Background to the selected project site

The Ukhahlamba District Municipality (UkDM) is a rural district municipality in the Eastern Cape. It is situated in the north-eastern region of the Eastern Cape Province, and is bordered by Lesotho in the east and the Free State Province in the north. It is a largely mountainous district, with the most densely populated areas of the former Transkei homeland. According to the Department of Provincial and Local Government (www.dplg), the area is characterised by a high level of poverty, a low level of food security, and an uneven and dry topography that does not support subsistence farming while most of the flat and arable land belongs to commercial white farmers.

The municipality assumed the role of a water services authority in 2003, and by 2004, only 25% of its rural population of 106 000 had access to water (Timm 2006:3). The district municipality is still struggling to provide adequate access to water, manage cholera outbreaks and eradicate the bucket system of sanitation in its towns. This study will review the period 2000 to 2008. Field research was only conducted in the Ukhahlamba DM and Department of Water Affairs, East London offices, whereas the literature review focuses on South Africa and beyond its borders.

1.7 Importance of the Study

This study on the impact of the sector-wide approach on water services delivery is relevant, since the South African context does not include many SWAPs. The water and justice sectors are the only sectors that have formally adopted SWAPs. The water sector SWAP has received international acclaim as one of the best SWAPs in the world (Department of Water Affairs, Masibambane 1 Evaluation Final Report 2004:20). The focus of this study is on the period of service delivery from 2000 to 2008. This was an era of transition, during which time responsibility was progressively transferred to municipalities. It is thus essential to critically assess the role played by the SWAP during this period, identifying correlations between and

making assumptions about the SWAP and service delivery. The researcher strongly believes that the ultimate aim of this study is to acquire a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of collaborative funding mechanisms and processes. This will hopefully influence development thinking and decision making within other sectors in South Africa.

1.8 Limitations of the study

During the time that the data was collected for this study, there was a high staff turnover rate in the municipality, and the people who were instrumental to the provision of water services in 2000 were not available at the time of this study. Most of the people who were interviewed were not yet in the employ of the municipality at the time of the inception phase of the Masibambane support programme. Primary sources of information that covered this period of study were used.

The findings of this study are limited to the UkDM, and should not be generalised to a larger context, as water services provision is context-specific. Lessons that were learnt from this study can, however be shared within a wider context than this municipality, especially amongst South African rural or district municipalities.

1.9 Literature review

The literature review in this study starts with a broad overview of poverty and development. This will be informed by various studies that investigate rural development policy and its evolution over time. The main source in this regard will be rural development literature accessed in the UNISA library. Chambers (1983:8) assesses the importance of personal, professional and institutional change in the quest to change the realities of the rural poor. He calls for self-critical awareness and changes in concepts, values, methods and behaviour, in order to facilitate meaningful empowerment. This is a crucial area to assess when dealing with SWAPs and their approach to development. He addresses the realities of poor rural communities and some of the issues that can be identified with regard to the UkDM. Chambers (1997:35) looks at a fundamental reversal in terms of people's learning, values and behaviour, if they are working towards rural development, in order to truly address and understand the needs of the rural poor.

Rondinelli (1978:2) calls for new approaches towards development planning, approaches that will facilitate innovative thinking, and decision making processes that will combine learning with action. In the South African context (Wilson 1989:4), provides a clear depiction and analysis of poverty in South Africa, and argues that it should be treated as a unique phenomenon. This is because of “the width of the gulf between rich and poor, the degree of inequality and the deliberate policy design that sought to promote this” (Wilson 1989:4). The sources mentioned above are not exhaustive, and will be complemented by other sources on rural poverty in South Africa and abroad.

Brown, Foster & Naschold (2001:10) examine sector-wide approaches to human development, and their work will provide a good foundation for an analysis of the South African SWAP. Booth (2000:4) provides an analysis of the Swedish Tanzanian Development Corporation’s effectiveness in fighting poverty in Tanzania. Brown et al (2001:13) assess current issues in sector-wide approaches to health development, and even though their focus is on the health sector, the lessons learnt will provide a basis for strengthening the impact analysis of the South African water sector SWAP. This study will also include other literature that deals with SWAPs in developing countries.

The primary literature review in this study will look at factual and statistical information. This includes meeting documents, evaluation reports, and assessment reports. However, this still leaves a gap in terms of determining the impact of the SWAP. In order to fill this gap, the field research will seek to explain the impact of the SWAP and conduct a qualitative assessment of the subject of the study.

1.10 Research Methodology

This study will analyse and assess the process of the SWAP implementation over a period of time, within the parameters of the selected municipality. It will interpret the data and information available, in order to make accurate statements regarding the impact of the SWAP on water services delivery. The focus of service delivery is on the development and improvement of people’s lives, and a qualitative analysis will therefore assume more importance. A part of the study is empirical, and its design is based on the analysis of a representative sample, namely a South African rural

municipality. This analysis is in-depth and makes deductions about the impact of SWAP on water services delivery.

In addressing the research problem, this study uses qualitative field research and quantitative secondary literature research. As part of the qualitative research, fourteen people were interviewed. The first sample is made up of key personnel in the municipality and Eastern Cape provincial offices. These are semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with four individuals. The second sample comprises community members who are the direct beneficiaries of water services, and involves a group interview with ten community members. A level of triangulation was introduced into the field research, since group interviews were conducted per village. The quantitative part is the literature review combined with secondary sources of information such as municipal reports, meeting reports, research case studies, annual reports et cetera. Similar examples were drawn from African countries such as Uganda, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, and the Philippines in Asia. The research methodology included an analysis of the following secondary sources:

- Multi-Annual Action Plans for the municipality
- Water Services Development Plans
- Municipal reports
- Provincial progress reports
- SWAPs and development in developing countries
- SWAPs and rural development
- Case studies on SWAPs in the water sector and other sectors
- Literature on rural development in general
- Literature on rural development in South Africa

In the process of identifying and collecting sources for the quantitative research part of this study, the Unisa Library and a wide variety of Internet sources were consulted. The services of the subject librarian and key people within the Development Studies Department at Unisa were used for the purpose of sourcing relevant information.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter began by providing an overview of the issues that are central to the topic of this study. In outlining the rationale for the SWAP, it looked at such issues as decentralisation and sustainable livelihoods, and the role of civil society in monitoring and evaluation. It then focused on the South African water sector's SWAP, highlighting the historical background, rationale for implementation and achievements, particularly in the Eastern Cape. It concluded by summarising some of the key issues related to rural development and water services delivery in the Ukhahlamba District Municipality. The chapters that follow will provide a detailed analysis that draws on the issues raised in this chapter with regard to the literature review, research design, methodology and questions, findings, suggestions, recommendations, and conclusions.

The layout of this study is as follows:

Chapter 1: provides an introduction based on the background to and aims of the study.

Chapter 2: discusses the reviewed literature and other relevant sources.

Chapter 3: gives a historical overview of Sector Wide Approaches

Chapter 4: discusses the research methodology and research questions.

Chapter 5: presents the findings of the study.

Chapter 6: makes suggestions and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

Chapter 2

A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The first section of this chapter begins by giving an introduction to rural poverty and rural development; it then focuses on the theoretical framework and dimensions of poverty. It further outlines broad challenges of rural development. An overview of the South African context is given. Further to this, an outline of the key elements of sustainable rural development is given. The chapter concludes with a summary of key issues raised in the chapter.

Hill (2002: 30) argues that in the early 1990s, progress in reducing rural poverty stalled, it fell to less than one third of the rate needed to meet the United Nations commitment to halving poverty by 2015, in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He further argues that in order for poverty reduction efforts to be effective, they have to focus on rural areas. The 1995 World Social Summit placed poverty reduction on the global development agenda. The development community called for the halving of global poverty by the year 2015, the centrality of poverty eradication was reconfirmed at the Millennium Summit on Sustainable Development in 2000. Baldwin & Brown (2002:8), argue that growth can only be truly sustainable in an economic, political and social sense, when poverty is explicitly taken into account.

Rural poverty can be described as a “socio economic phenomenon whereby the resources available to a society are used to justify the wants of the few, while the many do not even have their basic needs met” (Chambers 1983:8). It is pointed out that “85-95 per cent of the 310 million people living in Sub-Saharan Africa live in poverty and deprivation, most survive on a per capita income of less than 100 USD that is based on low productivity in agriculture and livestock farming” (Lele 1975: 20). Rural development can therefore be defined as “improving the living standards of the low income population residing in rural areas and making the process of their development self-sustaining” (Elbadawi 2000: 23).

2.2 The theoretical framework for rural development

Chambers (1983:36) puts forward three perspectives, which constitute the theoretical framework for rural development. The first of these is the physical ecologist view, which argues that population growth and pressures on the environment result in land scarcity. This view draws a correlation between uncontrolled population growth, an increasing exploitation of resources, wars, civil disturbances, droughts, natural disasters, and the escalation of poverty.

The second and, arguably, the most common view is the political economist view, which sees rural poverty as a “consequence of processes which concentrate wealth and power at three levels, the macro, meta and micro levels” (Chambers 1983:37). At a macro or international level, there are richer nations that have made poor countries poorer through colonisation and economic exploitation. At a meta level, one finds discrepancies and imbalances internally, that is, within a particular country. This is often characterised by a tension and imbalance in the allocation of resources between urban and rural sectors. At a micro level, it happens within communities where there is an imbalance of resource allocation between local elites and the poor majority. He argues that it is a combination of these forces that combine to make the poor poorer. However, it must be pointed out that these causes cannot be treated as independent factors, but must, to varying degrees, be viewed as interdependent.

The third view is the pluralist view. The pluralist view contains elements of both the physical ecologist, political economist views. It presents the causes of poverty as stemming from economic exploitation by the elite and physical ecologist factors such as droughts and natural disasters that lead to displacement of people thereby exacerbating conditions of poverty. It is not separate from the previous two perspectives, but rather merges with them and asks questions that are relevant to both the abovementioned views. It seeks to achieve a more balanced understanding of the issues and dynamics of poverty across the political, economic and physical ecologist views.

2.3 Dimensions of poverty

The International Fund for Agricultural Development IFAD (2001:10), refers to an interlocking logjam of disadvantages, making an example that most rural poor would inhabit remote areas, are likely to be affected by ill health, illiteracy, unemployment, and work in insecure and low productivity occupations. The report further makes an example of Nepal, where “gross primary school enrolment rates between 1984 and 1985 for girls and boys in poor rural households varied from 14% and 83% respectively” (IFAD Rural Poverty Report 2001:12). Poor girls had less enrolment chances than boys, due to societal perceptions, and imposed roles upon girls in an already poor environment.

Derman & Poultney (1984: 9) argue that poverty has both physical and psychological dimensions. Poor people themselves strongly emphasise violence and crime, discrimination, insecurity and political repression, victimization by corrupt public agencies as poverty. The IFAD Rural Poverty Report (2001:16) points out that poverty assessments conducted in four regions, namely, Asia, Central Africa, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa in 2001 revealed that poor people report their condition largely in terms of material deprivation, such as not having enough money, lack of employment, food, clean water, clothing, housing, healthcare, combined with non material factors such as peace, power, security as factors affecting their lives.

De Valk & Wekwete (1990: 12) argue that, to be successful, poverty-reduction policies must focus on rural areas. To overcome disadvantages stemming from remoteness, lack of education and health care, insecure and unproductive jobs, high fertility and (often) discrimination as women or ethnic minorities, the rural poor need: legally secure entitlements to assets (especially land and water); technology (above all for increasing the output and yield of food staples); access to markets; opportunities to participate in decentralized resource management; and access to microfinance. Such policies not only promote economic growth but also help alleviate poverty.

A sustainable reduction in poverty calls for the creation of a pro-poor policy environment, and allocation of a greater volume of resources targeted to the poor with

greater effectiveness. This needs to be complemented by better partnership among government, civil society and the private sector so that the poor are empowered to take responsibility for their own development.

2.4 Challenges of rural development

Korten (1990:3) argues that in trying to eradicate poverty and bring about rural development, the mistake that has been made is to advocate a growth-centred view of development. He argues that continued growth is not the only hope for the poor, the flaw in growth-centred development is that the “existing economic and political structures receive the majority of the benefits of growth; these benefits accrue to those who are least in need” (Korten 1990:3). Chambers (1983:9) argues that the foundation for the success of people-centred development is “putting the last first”. Sustainable development entails efforts to ensure that poor people are fully empowered to move out of the various dimensions of poverty.

When putting the poor in context, “the poor are in most instances not “analysed” in a way that is useful to development, they are static links to be manipulated not humans caught in systems and processes in need of liberation and empowerment” (Gran 1983:204). Derman & Poultney (1984: 15) argue that poverty reduction is multi-dimensional; therefore poverty reduction strategies have to be multi-targeted and should show diverse dimensions. The authors argue that assets, and access to infrastructure to promote development are essential, this should be coupled with land redistribution, access to water, and other material resources to enable the rural poor to forge sustainable livelihoods. If a single dimensional approach is followed, it would impact negatively on the desired outcomes of any development initiative.

Ineffective community participation and involvement in project design, implementation and evaluation is another challenge, it is essential for the success of any development initiative to ensure that this challenge is addressed. Chambers (1993:13) points out that in most cases, sustainable and effective solutions to elevate poor people out of the deprivation trap are stopped by the very people who are entrusted with this task. These would be the policy makers and development practitioners themselves. Community involvement and empowerment should take the attitudes and biases of the researcher who is responsible for influencing policy or

project implementation into account. There are numerous biases through which the outside researcher sees the poor and marginalised in rural development. Amongst some of the biases is project bias, in which development goes to projects already in place, elite bias, in which projects target the elite, and male bias, which does not consider women and children (Chambers 1993:14).

Powerlessness is an impediment to the development process. Empowerment can be defined as the building of people's capacities in order for them to take full responsibility for their own development, in a manner that enhances their human dignity, and when assessing empowerment initiatives, it is essential to differentiate between poverty alleviation and longer-term sustainable development (De Beer & Swanepoel 1998:3). Poverty alleviation initiatives, whilst arguably necessary for short-term relief, cannot be said to bring about effective and sustainable development.

Brinkerhoff (1991:169) argues for a need to improve development programme performance. Promoting participation in project design is one of the mechanisms to ensure that the problem of poverty is clearly understood before development is addressed. This involves a process of ensuring that project beneficiaries are equipped with the necessary skills and attitudes to participate in the design of their own development projects. A trickle-down approach should be avoided at all times when dealing with the poor (Gran 1983:262).

Enhancing participation in project implementation is another mechanism used to ensure that sustainable development initiatives take place. This entails efforts to eradicate the procedural and structural elements that hamper participation in development implementation. The systems, procedures, and institutional arrangements should be part of an enabling implementation framework that constantly attempts to meet the needs and requirements of project beneficiaries (Gran 1983: 263)

In a centralised environment, there is often a poor understanding of local constraints, poor planning and budgeting, and poor communication. In a decentralised environment, planning is bottom-up and the challenge is often that of a lack of implementing capacity. The main objective of decentralisation is to establish transparency, build capacity and develop strong local governments that are

accountable to the people. In a decentralised context, decision making rests with the people, provided that procedures are simple and do provide an enabling environment. In cases where local level involvement is not promoted, decentralisation may prove to be ineffective in addressing the problem of rural development (Lele 1975: 152).

Arrehag (2010:6) argues that community empowerment initiatives should be gender sensitive, he points out the importance of recruiting females at project design levels, conducting skills development and empowerment, advocacy and capacity development initiatives for women. He further argues that constraints such as inadequate financial resources, lack of landownership rights, and illiteracy impede adequate women empowerment and involvement in development initiatives, therefore effective empowerment and capacity development initiatives aimed at the benefit of women are essential.

Lack of sustainability is a challenge to development. Korten (1990:3) opposes the assertion that growth leads to development, he argues that massive, accelerated growth-led initiatives, in most cases, become unsustainable once they are created. One of the principles of authentic development is sustainability, which is about ensuring that each generation recognises its obligation towards stewardship over the earth's natural resources and the ecosystem, on behalf of future generations. Giving an example of growth-led initiatives that did not succeed as originally anticipated, he refers to the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s. He argues that these SAPs only dealt with structures that promote growth, and partially or totally neglected those that determine whether or not growth will be just, sustainable and inclusive.

2.5 An overview of rural development in the South African context

Modern day South Africa is characterised by huge development gaps between rich and poor people in both urban and rural areas. Inequality between rich and poor people is particularly acute in those parts of South Africa that were previously classified as homelands during the apartheid dispensation. Motteux, Binns, Nel & Rowntree (1999: 262), point out that 70 per cent of former homeland residents are classified as poor. This figure rises to 92 per cent in the case of former Transkei, now

incorporated into the Eastern Cape Province. Borat & Cassim (2004: 10) state that in 2002, 52 per cent of households in South Africa consisted of unemployed people.

Meth (2009:3) points to a dissonance between key strategic development documents of the South African government, the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (AsGisa) report of 2006, stated that the aim of the government is to radically reduce inequality and virtually eliminate poverty, in another document developed in 2009, the Green Paper on National Strategic Planning, it is stated that “challenges remain monumental, unemployment remains unacceptably high, poverty is rife and opportunities are still skewed” (Meth 2009:8).

The issue of HIV/Aids has to be considered when looking at poverty in the South African context. Arrehag (2010:6), points out that HIV/Aids and poverty are mutually reinforcing. HIV /Aids acts as a forceful vehicle for impoverishment at the individual and household level and can lead to increased income and asset inequality. He argues that HIV/Aids can lead to increased destitution if the breadwinner in the family dies from Aids. He further raises the pertinent issue of gender and the linkage to HIV/Aids, as lack of power and choice coupled with material needs leave girls and women exposed to sexual exploitation and often force them into unsafe sexual behaviour and transactional sex as a survival strategy. If HIV/Aids, affects a poor family, their ability to cope with the disease is compromised, due to other negative factors affecting their livelihood. Therefore, genuine efforts to promote equality and women empowerment are a prerequisite for fighting HIV/Aids and addressing its consequences.

Kamara & Hilmy (2004:371), in an article on water management options for food security in South Africa, argue that the number of South Africans who are vulnerable to food insecurity due to a lack of productive resources is estimated at 14 million. Rural people and rural women in particular bear the largest burden of poverty in the country.

2.6 Key elements of sustainable rural development

2.6.1. Empowerment

Empowerment is a key element of rural poverty eradication that needs to be taken into account, in so far as it includes the rural and urban poor, particularly women and girls. Rural women are often the hardest hit by poverty conditions due to their responsibilities as wives and mothers. Sotshangaye & Moller (2000:118) argue that poverty eradication measures should aim at improving the livelihoods of women in order for effective and sustainable development to take place. This would range from ensuring adequate participation to ensuring that development outcomes are assessed in terms of women empowerment.

Swanepoel (1992:3) points out that there is a difference between empowerment and involvement. Empowerment seeks to change the whole human being, whereas involvement seeks general acceptance. Community development efforts therefore need to take cognisance of the nature of the projects to be implemented, and the planning and consultation processes that form part of them. The planning and consultative process should be inclusive and be directed at changing the life conditions of beneficiaries in holistic and sustainable as opposed to a superficial manner.

2.6.2 Increased local accountability

Decentralisation is a major theme in policy discussions of countries characterised by centralistic patterns of governance. This happens to varying degrees, and will differ from country to country, as well as from sector to sector. The main objective of decentralisation is to strengthen local administrations and local authorities so that they are able to improve and enhance service delivery, and to increase their level of accountability to the people.

Land & Hauck (2003:3) argue that since the beginning of the 1990s, a large number of developing countries has adopted decentralisation as a key policy objective. This is particularly the case in many parts of Africa, where decentralisation is often part of a wider process of institutional reform associated with democratisation and performance improvement in the public sector. In South Africa, the democratisation process that

began in 1994 has had significant milestones in terms of institutional reform and increased public sector accountability. In 2003, the national government proclaimed the devolution of powers and functions to local government. This has had various implications for the role of local government in service delivery in particular and public accountability in general.

Land & Hauck (2003:4) point out that one cannot generalise about the forms and objectives of decentralisation, it is generally recognised to be a relatively confusing and intangible topic. It is not about grand ambitions, and many of the reforms involve a painstaking and complex process of translating policy objectives into law and then into action.

Decentralisation of service delivery does not necessarily mean success in the implementation of development projects at local level. There is still a need to support implementation and ensuring that there is adequate participation and that plans are relevant to local needs. In an assessment of pro-poor service delivery in South Africa, Land & Hauck (2003:14) argue that decentralisation and participation have not necessarily eradicated the historical distribution of privilege. Ideally, service delivery should link directly to poverty alleviation. However, most decentralisation policies have failed to take the characteristics and skills of specific service sections into account, resulting in sub-optimal solutions. There is a need for community development efforts to address the issues of real empowerment, so that development can meet the real needs of the people.

Rondinelli (1978:11) assesses whether spatial planning and decentralisation in developing countries is advocating for the distribution of resources to rural areas. He points out that spatial planning in South Africa is founded on a spatial rural urban dichotomy and not the social and economic reality of the poor. The central question in this argument is whether or not decentralisation of planning and implementation is effective in improving service delivery, thereby promoting poverty eradication.

The merits of decentralising sectors as part of a broader process of devolution need to be carefully considered in relation to the particular characteristics of sectors, sub-sectors and functions (Brinkerhoff Derick quoted in Land & Hauck 2003: 18). In the

South African context, one needs to ask if the devolution of powers is going to bring about the desired change in eradicating poverty and improving rural development. It can be argued that the shifting of power competencies, responsibilities and resources from central government to local levels affects the way in which basic services are delivered, either in a negative or positive manner.

Central to the issue of devolution is that of local level capacity in terms of leadership and transparent management. Later sections will go into more detail about this issue, particularly as it relates to the budget support process in South Africa in a devolved context, where local government is faced with tremendous capacity constraints.

2.6.3 Community participation

As has been previously pointed out, there is a strong relationship between decentralisation and efforts to improve accountability to people at the local level. The objectives of decentralisation cannot be realised if the community voice is non-existent or weak. As argued in earlier sections, communities have a meaningful role to play in the design, implementation and monitoring of their own development initiatives.

In South Africa, the issue of community participation is even more crucial, considering the background of past inequities. This often leads to accelerated growth and the redressing of initiatives, which aim to bring about rapid development in communities that have faced a long history of deprivation. The problem that arises with poor community participation in such cases is the lack of ownership and various complications, such as vandalism and projects that end up becoming redundant (white elephants). Poor community participation has an impact on the equity and sustainability of development initiatives (Goldman 2003:3).

Goldman (2003:4) argues that there is a need for a systematic process to link citizens with local government, in order to ensure that decentralisation efforts bear fruit and that development is indeed sustainable and equitable. South African local government uses integrated development planning (IDP) as a planning tool. It is a planning system whereby local government is required to develop five year IDPs with community participation and frequent reviews of the participatory process and mechanisms used

by the municipality. Ward committees are supposed to be the basic communication platform for communities, and are the smallest and closest democratic structure to them. These committees were established in 2001 - however, there is no effective way of getting these committees to participate in the IDP process.

2.6.4 Sustainability

Sustainability and equity are key elements of a successful development initiative. This issue is central to an assessment of the impact of Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) in general, and in the South African context in particular.

Given South Africa's apartheid legacy of a deeply divided economic structure, sustainable rural development must focus on reducing inequality in the ownership and effective control of both productive assets (Kepe & Cousins 2002:1). Land-based livelihoods are associated with many poor rural households. The issue of equitable redistribution of land still remains central to efforts to address poverty and to bring about sustainable rural development in South Africa.

2.6.5 Linkages to water services delivery

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) estimates that in 2001, more than 40% of the rural population did not have access to safe drinking water supply, and a significant number of people did not have access to the minimum required levels (International Water Management Institute 2001:56). Besides the imperative of ensuring water delivery for domestic consumption, the challenge of ensuring water for productive livelihoods, and subsistence agriculture remains. Ensuring availability of water for productive livelihoods would promote overall food availability for rural households and a reduction in rural unemployment. One can argue that reduction in rural employment and ensuring food availability would assist rural communities to exit, and remain outside the poverty deprivation trap.

Despite notable improvements in rural water supply in South Africa's poor communities since 1994, there are still grave risks that require attention in terms of ensuring good quality water services. Hemson (2006:2), points out the urban poor have benefited from the Free Basic Water provision because it is relatively easier to

put infrastructure in urban areas. He further points out that “half of the 170 Water Services Authorities (WSAs) are not meeting water quality standards” (Hemson 2006:2).

One can argue that for the delivery of water in South Africa to address the needs of rural communities and promote sustainable rural development, work needs to be done by local authorities and all concerned parties to ensure that firstly, basic services are provided to communities through setting up proper bulk and retail infrastructure, for water to come out of the tap. Secondly, once the service has been provided, local authorities in partnership with the communities have to ensure that the service is sustainable. Key elements to ensure sustainability of the service are empowerment of communities to make their own decisions on the type of service, and the appropriateness of the technology used, establishment of functioning local structures to attend to basic operations and maintenance of infrastructure.

There is also a need for adequate water education to ensure that communities appreciate the costs of water service provision and play their part in paying for the service in cases where the free basic water limit of 6kl per household per month is exceeded. Local community structures need to address problems such as water theft through illegal connection. Addressing these key issues to ensure sustainable water service provision will ensure considerable progress and a continued increase in access to water services.

2.7 Conclusion

The physical ecologist and political economist views of rural development are relevant in so far as they relate to the specific contexts in which they are applied. It has been shown that they cannot be viewed in absolute terms - in this regard, the pluralist view, which combines both, becomes relevant. All the three theoretical frameworks do provide some clarity with regard to the causes of rural poverty. However, the political economist view is particularly relevant to South Africa, with its history of structural inequalities.

In the context of South Africa, there are general and fundamental aspects that need to be taken into consideration when addressing the issue of rural poverty. Empowerment,

in so far as it takes the rural poor, including women and children, out of the poverty and deprivation trap, is essential. The issue of decentralisation and its role in addressing rural poverty needs to be considered. Some of the issues that can be highlighted are the lack of capacity and systems to ensure effective local governance. Coupled with the issue of decentralisation is that of effective community participation. Can decentralisation bring about an effective local governance system that will bring true meaning to the IDP process and other local democratic processes, such as the ward committee system?

These questions are relevant to the issue of effective water services delivery in South Africa. The issue of how effective donor coordination, budget support and decentralised service delivery in the form of the SWAP have been in eradicating rural poverty is central to this study.

In the South African context, the linkage between water and food security in terms of poverty alleviation is important. Deepened democracy and a stronger community voice in the context of effective service delivery are also important. The sustainability of service delivery efforts and the role of the SWAP need to be further examined. Further chapters will deal with the Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) and its impact on water delivery in the Ukhahlamba District Municipality (UkDM). Issues raised in this chapter will be discussed again in the analysis and recommendations sections in chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 3

HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF SECTOR WIDE APPROACHES

3.1 Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimated that 1.1 billion people are without access to clean water, and 2.6 billion are without access to sanitation in 2006 (UNDP Human Development Report 2006: 12). Sector Wide Approaches or SWAPs support the achievement of goal number 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which is focused on reducing the number of people without safe water and sanitation by half by the year 2015.

SWAP is a process in which all significant funding for the sector or area whether internal or external supports a single policy and expenditure programme under government leadership, with common approaches across the sector. It is accompanied by progressive reliance on government procedures to disburse and account for all funds. There is a debate about the value of having a single definition of a SWAP, since there is no SWAP blueprint. The structure, shape and pace of the SWAP are determined by the nature of the sector, the composition of stakeholders and the political, social and economic conditions in the country concerned (Norton & Bella 1998:10)

3.2 Definition of SWAP

There is general consensus among SWAP experts that SWAP is a process and not a blueprint. SWAP “is an approach not a blueprint and it is guided by a set of principles that each country will aim to move towards” (Foster 2001: 42). However, there are common threads or elements that are characteristic of all SWAPs that are considered as enabling conditions for the implementation and success of SWAPs.

Neseni (2009: 5) points out that some of these key elements are an approach that involves a different type of relationship between governments and development partners, a mechanism through which support for public expenditure programmes can be better coordinated, and a means of improving aid effectiveness by improving the efficiency and effectiveness with which all resources are used and accounted for. The

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) outlines some enabling conditions for a SWAP, namely, political and macroeconomic stability, broad and effective government ownership, broad consensus between government and donors on sector policy and management (Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development 2005:14).

From the year 2000 onwards, the European Union and other development agencies established and agreed on key features that have to be in place in order for a SWAP to be viable, namely a macroeconomic framework, sector policy and national strategic framework, a medium-term expenditure framework, accountability and public finance management systems, donor coordination systems, performance monitoring and client consultation systems, institutions and capacities (Mphuthi 2006:29). This was a more structured approach, which has guided the implementation of SWAPs over the past decade. There have been some additions to these with the evolution of SWAPs, among which are the following : a stronger focus on sustainability issues such as gender, civil society, appropriate technologies, environment and HIV/AIDS, decentralised planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, and a high proficiency in the utilisation of management information systems (Mphuthi 2006:31).

3.3 Rationale for SWAPs

By the year 2000, a total of 78 SWAPs had been financed in Africa, Asia and Latin America. They were found exclusively in highly aid dependent countries. The majority, 85 per cent were in Sub Saharan Africa, 12 per cent in Asia and 3 per cent in Latin America. Further to that SWAPs were approved in middle income countries such as Brazil, Mexico and Poland in 2004 (Gilling, Jones & Duncan 2001: 10). This indicates that most governments and their development partners were looking into SWAPs as a means coordinating development funding and meeting country development priorities.

Neseni (2009:6) argues that some problems in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector could benefit from SWAP, and some of these problems are: the inability to meet the water and sanitation needs of populations, particularly in developing countries; based on the fact that more than 2 billion people were affected by water shortages in over 40 countries in 2009; which diminishes the likelihood of these countries meeting MDGs

by 2015. The author further points out that Africa and Asia are the most affected continents, and therefore not likely to meet the MDGs related to improved access to water and sanitation.

There is a strong need for improved collaboration and coordination on resources, in order to eradicate water shortages and bring development to people. There are major global events that have supported the implementation of SWAP, namely the 2003 High Level Forum on Donor Harmonization, the 2004 Roundtable on Management for Development Results in Morocco, and the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (Neseni 2009:9). These events have led to improved coordination and collaboration between donor agencies and governments, in order to accelerate the move from project-by-project approaches to SWAPs at the beginning of the 21st century.

3.4 Historical overview of the South African water sector (SWAP)

In the new democratic dispensation in South Africa from 1994, government was faced with the huge challenge of delivering sanitation services to “21 million South Africans, and water to 15.2 million South Africans” (Mphuthi 2006: 32). There was limited capacity within local government to deal with these challenges, and there were huge capacity constraints in the nine newly created provinces. The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry therefore took the responsibility for providing water and sanitation services to people. It proposed a multifaceted sector support programme aimed at integrating processes and resources for effective service delivery.

The first funding agreement between the European Commission and the then Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) was entered into during the 2000/2001 annual period. This agreement initially focused on three provinces - Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. Service delivery targets were met during the first 3 year cycle in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry Masibambane Annual Report 2002/3:72)

The main focus of the Water Sector Support Programme (WSSP) or Masibambane SWAP is on the achievement of decentralisation and sustainable development in the water sector. It provides for the consolidation of roles and responsibilities,

strengthening of sector partners, and progress towards addressing water and sanitation service delivery backlogs. Hence, three themes were proposed when the programme was first implemented in 2000, namely sector orientation, institutional development and service delivery.

The first theme focused on the review, alignment and development of policy in the light of new legislation and changes to the municipal statutory framework. The second theme focused on the provision of water and sanitation services to communities in the selected provinces, and the main goal was to ensure an increase in the Human Development Index (HDI) in the targeted provinces through the establishment of sustainable water and sanitation services. The third and last focus area involved strengthening the capacity of public and private institutions to fulfil their water and sanitation delivery role. It dealt with the clarification of roles, powers and functions, in order to enable the DWAF to fulfil its regulatory and support functions (European Union Financing Agreement 2000:21).

During the 2003/4 annual period, significant strides were made in the programme with regard to theme 2, which focused on service delivery. In the Eastern Cape Province, the delivery of water to RDP standards exceeded the original 3 year targets by 17%. In 2004 alone, the Eastern Cape served 700 000 people (Department of Water Affairs Masibambane 1 Evaluation Final Report 2004:30). Coordination is a major challenge for South Africa, and the SWAP approach has facilitated better coordination between the donor community and stakeholders, and has fostered a focused approach towards meeting the water services strategic objectives of South Africa (Department of Water Affairs Masibambane Annual Report 2002/3:4)

3.5 South African poverty reduction strategies

The Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) for South Africa was developed in 1999. Its vision was to “attain socially cohesive and stable rural communities with viable institutions, sustainable economies and universal access to social amenities, able to attract and retain skilled and knowledgeable people, who are equipped to contribute to growth and development” (Department of Land Affairs: ISRDS 2000:1). The key elements of the strategy are sustainable rural and integrated rural development. Rural development focuses on improved service provision,

enhanced opportunities for income generation and local economic development. The sustainability element is emphasised in so far as it contributes to increased local growth and access to resources, in order to ensure ongoing development. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was implemented after the democratic government came to power in 1994. The ISRDS points out that the priority of the RDP was to reduce poverty and inequality through a revival of economic growth, human resource development and broadly-based ownership of assets (Department of Land Affairs ISRDS 2000:17).

The strategy also emphasises the principle of equity because of the legacy of planned and deliberate poverty, sub-standard housing and the migrant labour system, and the lack of opportunities and access to basic services. More than 85 per cent of the country is settled by commercial farmers, and it is impossible to sustain subsistence agriculture in most former homeland areas, where the natural resource base is depleted (Department of Land Affairs ISRDS 2000:7).

Having highlighted the key elements of the ISRDS, one can conclude by pointing out that its success depended on effective participatory governance procedures, an enabling policy environment and adequate access to resources. Everatt, Dube & Ntsime (2004:18) conducted an evaluation of the strategy implementation in 2004 on behalf of the Independent Development Trust (IDT). Firstly, the strategy had to address the almost crippling capacity gaps that local government is faced with. It is said that 59 per cent of the local government respondents who were interviewed stated that there was insufficient capacity to implement the strategy. Strengthening local democratic processes through IDP forums and ensuring a horizontal communication and consultation process is thus essential (Everatt et al 2004:18).

Further to the ISRDS, the then Department of Land Affairs introduced the War on Poverty Campaign in 2008; this was a service delivery orientated campaign that aimed to eradicate poverty at a household level. The limitations of the War on Poverty campaign were mainly that it was an unfunded programme, and it had to be integrated to other programmes of government. However in 2009, a new programme was started, under the custodianship of the new Department of Rural Development and Land Reform namely the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP). This

programme is funded and there is commitment to address problems at rural level, and putting infrastructure on the ground such as roads, water schemes et cetera (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform CRDP: 2009: 5).

3.6 SWAPs contribution to sustainable livelihood approaches

There has been a debate since the implementation of SWAPs as to whether or not SWAPs are making any contribution to sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation, which is the ultimate aim of any development programme (Gilling et al 2001: 10). The authors argue that SWAPs should provide an entry point through which government and donor initiatives can be supportive of the livelihoods of the poor. These authors acknowledge that in order for a SWAP to effectively address the needs of the poor, it must be linked to the political will of government to eradicate poverty. The state must have a good understanding of the nature, causes and dynamics of poverty, in order to inform policy formulation (Gilling et al 2001:11). SWAPs would then be an effective vehicle for governments to address poverty challenges and ensure sustainable livelihoods, provided that the SWAP is linked to the objectives of the recipient government

It is therefore appropriate to question whether or not SWAPs do make a lasting impact on improving livelihoods in beneficiary countries. Having been involved in the water sector herself, the researcher believes that the pillar of any SWAP should be based on the sustainable livelihoods approach. The sustainable livelihoods approach reflects a bottom- up sensitivity to the needs of poor communities on the ground. There are various ways in which the needs of poor communities can be reflected, and one of them is the adequate involvement of civil society structures such as community organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). A general observation that can be made is that civil society participation has been low, in the evaluation of the South African SWAP, from 2000 to 2008. A concern was raised that civil society has not played an effective role (Department of Water Affairs Masibambane 2 Full Term Review 2009:30). This could be attributed to various factors, but the main one is the lack of coordination and clarity of roles between advocacy and service provision amongst civil society organisations. The fact that funding is channelled through government can sometimes result in cumbersome bureaucratic processes which negatively affect smaller civil society organisations.

The rationale behind SWAP implementation is for sectors to work in a cohesive manner and in collaboration with donors and civil society, in order to achieve a commonly agreed set of development goals. This issue is central to the key question of whether or not SWAPs have any direct impact on improving service delivery and changing the lives of the poor. The Ugandan water sector is one example, where civil society institutions are well coordinated through the Ugandan Civil Society Network (UWASNET). As a result of their internal coordination, their involvement in service delivery monitoring is high. However, even in countries such as Uganda, where civil society organisations play a significant role in ensuring service delivery, there is still a need for improved service delivery surveys and poverty assessments. In order to ensure transparency, Uganda has tracking studies that monitor whether or not funds are being used as intended. This promotes increased transparency, better monitoring and shorter funding routes (Foster 2001:40).

While it can be argued that most SWAPs operate in environments where there is a certain level of fiscal and political decentralisation, it has not been properly established whether or not SWAPs have any direct positive impact on the decentralisation processes. In the South African context, SWAP implementation coincided with the creation of new local governments in the year 2000, and was followed in 2003 by the devolution of powers and functions to local authorities. It is a common trend that governments, inter-ministerial committees, civil society and the private sector collaborate in SWAPs, with government taking the lead.

3.7 Benefits of Sector-Wide Approaches

SWAPs enable governments to take ownership of the sector, introduce reforms and guide the policy framework. In Zimbabwe, the SWAP is supporting the implementation of the Integrated Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (IRWSS), a 20-year programme (Neseni 2009:5). In South Africa, the SWAP supports the Strategic Framework for Water Services (SFWS), a 10-year programme.

Neseni (2009:7) further argues that donors see the increased development benefit from SWAPs, since they gain a voice in the direction of the sector in that particular country. This results in strengthened service delivery partnerships, which are a major

shift from donor-led development. Through SWAPs, governments become accountable to citizens, not donors.

Norton & Bella (1998:13) outline further benefits of SWAPs to be improved policy dialogue amongst government, development partners, civil society organisations (CSOs) through the collaborative engagement processes and structures in which policy issues are discussed and increased government leadership of policy development and aid management, and better predictability of sector funds as a result of longer term MTEF planning processes.

3.8 Challenges of Sector-Wide Approaches

Norton & Bella (1998:15) cite broad SWAP challenges to be as follows; weak institutional capacity in lead and partner institutions, since the management and implementation places an additional workload on human resources. This is a challenge not only in lead institutions, but in the partnering institutions as well. There is also a risk that SWAPs are only viewed as innovative funding mechanisms rather than opportunities for genuine sector reform and changes in institutional structures and systems. SWAPs are time consuming, the planning processes take time before programmes are implemented, and this may lead to SWAP fatigue before implementation begins. In some instances, SWAPs lead to centralization of policy processes, at the expense of genuine participation at local levels. Weak downward accountability and lack of meaningful participation by the ultimate beneficiaries, that is community members is a challenge.

Neseni (2009: 20) further points out that weak government leadership often creates donor dominance, citing the example of the Zimbabwean water sector which is currently dominated by donors and at the risk of succumbing to different goals due to weak government leadership and the unstable political environment. The other challenge is a lack of support from the Ministry of Finance, which then results in the SWAP not being integrated into the national budget cycles. Poor sector coordination often results in lack of consensus and lack of trust amongst key sector partners. Lack of transparency and accountability and an inability to demonstrate tangible gains are also cited as challenges.

Brown et al (2001:14) state the following as the key challenges with SWAP implementation; some SWAPs are slow to shift their focus from donor coordination towards service delivery, poverty alleviation and monitoring of performance. Sometimes ownership and commitment towards implementation is dependent on individuals, therefore it is fragile since this diminishes when the individuals leave particular institutions. There is still a level of management that has to be directed to the donor with the most money, as in most cases they tend to dominate the SWAP. SWAPs are not a replacement of government responsibilities towards poverty alleviation, despite SWAPs, governments still have to provide universal access to services.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has shown the importance and rationale for sector wide approaches (SWAPs) in development. Linkages to SWAPs and MDG goal seven have been made. The rationale for having SWAPs has shown the need for SWAPs and the associated benefits and problems of SWAPs. From this information, it is clear that SWAPs are not a solution by themselves, the political will, country stability, broad macro economic framework, common sector strategy are amongst others, the key determinants of the success and effective implementation of SWAPs. The South African context shows that the basic enabling conditions for implementation were there at the inception of the SWAP in the year 2000, further chapters link these to the impact on service delivery in a smaller, localised context, Ukhahlamba District Municipality (UkDM) in the Eastern Cape.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide a systematic description of the nature of the research inquiry, by locating the study in the tradition of the interpretive paradigm, which sets out to give meaning and understanding to the interpretation of individuals' own experiences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007: 9). The observations and insights that were made in this study were used to describe and explore the phenomenon in question. This chapter describes in detail the research methodology, various steps and procedures that were followed. It also contains the research questions, which describe the extent of the problem under investigation, and which helped the researcher to examine the selected issues in depth, openness, and detail, and which eventually provided comprehensive descriptions of the participants' experiences, identities, values and relationships in dealing with this situation. The research design focuses on the plan and sampling procedure, and this chapter includes the research methods and type of data collection instruments that were used to gather information, as well as looking at how the data was analysed.

4.2 Research Questions

The following questions were identified in this study:

- What is the impact of the sector-wide approach on service delivery in the UkDM?
- What factors hindered and enabled sustainable water provision in UkDM during the period of study?

4.3 Research Design

A research design highlights the plan which specifies how the participants are going to be obtained and what is going to be done with them, with a view to reaching conclusions with regard to the research problem. This research design therefore specifies the number of people or groups that were used in this study, and how they were drawn from the population. The design also indicates the statistics of the population in the specified geographical area and the water coverage during the

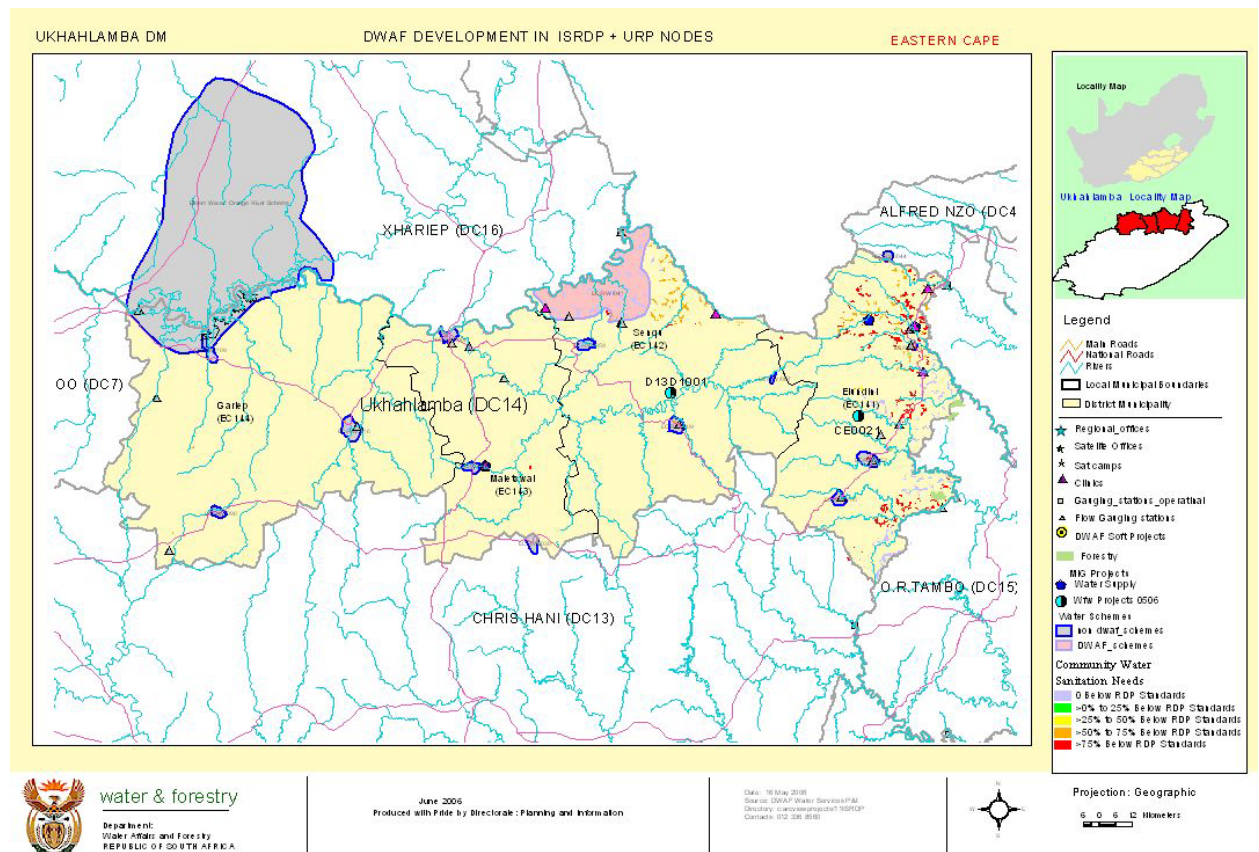
specified time. In the case of this study, the participants were divided into three major categories. These categories reflected the structures that exist in the municipality, i.e. managers, the municipality and communities. The selection of these people was important because of their exposure to the issue of water delivery in the municipality, and their centrality in decision-making regarding support provided to the municipality. The range of community representatives was selected on the basis of their position as recipients of water services within municipalities.

4.4 Research Methodology

Quantitative research tends to emphasise numbers, measurements and statistics, whereas qualitative research focuses on understanding the meaning through verbal narrations and observations. Qualitative research further involves learning about the views of individuals, assessing process overtime, generating theories based on participants' perspectives and obtaining detailed information about a few people or research sites (Cohen et al 2007:10).

This study was aimed at obtaining detailed information about factors that impact on the water sector-wide approach to water service delivery in the Ukhahlamba District Municipality (UkDM). The participants were drawn from three categories: municipal managers, provincial representatives and community representatives. Observations were made in a naturally occurring environment, whereby the participants were interviewed at their place of work and in their villages. The map and statistics of the population indicated the areas and the measurements according to which the areas of research were covered.

4.5 Map of the Ukhahlamba District Municipality (UkDM)



(DWAF: National Information System, 2006)

4.6 Research Sample

Sampling is the “process of selecting a part of a whole group with a view to obtaining information about the whole” (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995: 13). For the purposes of this study, the sample was developed in the area of the UkDM, which is one of the largest district municipalities in the Eastern Cape Province. The purposive sampling method was the most appropriate to the research study because it was the most accurate manner of collecting views from a targeted and representative sample of the population. Key characteristics of a good sample are that it is truly representative, economically viable, reliable and similar to the target population (Lindlof & Taylor 2002:194). This method ensured that the response is more focused and it was the most cost effective and time saving method. The sampling method enabled the researcher to make an inductive analysis which is reliable in the sense that results can be applied to a wider section of rural municipalities in South Africa. The participants occupied various positions in the municipality and the Department of Water Affairs provincial

office, from managers and councillors to community members. In the mentioned categories two respondents were interviewed from the provincial office occupying the positions of Masibambane Coordinator and Water and Sanitation Coordinator, in the municipal category two respondents were interviewed, namely, a water portfolio councillor and a water manager. In the community category ten respondents were interviewed in two villages.

4.7 Research Instruments

The data gathering instrument used in this study was the semi-structured interview, this type of interview was chosen as a research technique because it is flexible, and allowed for new questions to be brought up during the interview process. The questionnaire was designed with open ended questions which guided the conversation along pre-identified thematic areas. This type of questionnaire is designed to promote easy flow of dialogue and build rapport between the interviewer and respondents. Lindlof & Taylor (2002:195) point out that the benefits of semi-structured questionnaire are a relaxed and comfortable conversation which allows respondents to express their views in their terms and not lead them towards preconceived ideas. These interviews were recorded, and the participants agreed to the use of a tape recorder. Some of the participants, however, preferred to be interviewed in their mother tongue (IsiXhosa) and the researcher obliged them in this regard. Secondary data was collected through annual reports, municipality service reports, and DWA reports, as well as site visits for direct observation.

4.8 Data collection tools

The interview questionnaire, is a set of questions that was prepared to solicit information on key aspects relating to the topic in a semi-structured interview with all selected interviewees. This questionnaire was the basis of the interviews the researcher had with all selected interviewees. The questionnaire covered the following areas:

- Access to water and sanitation (service standards) (including water coverage, uses of water, major users of water, and types of services).

- Customer care mechanisms (including quality of service, level of disruptions, and engagement with communities).
- Access to and use of SWAP funding.
- WSDP planning.

The questionnaire given to the provincial representatives covered the following areas:

- Access to water and sanitation (service standards) (including water coverage, uses of water, major users of water, and types of services).
- Customer care mechanisms (including quality of service, level of disruptions, and engagement with communities).
- Access to and use of SWAP funding.
- WSDP planning.

The questionnaire given to the community representatives covered the following areas:

- Access to water and sanitation (service standards) (including water coverage, uses of water, major users of water, and types of services).
- Customer care mechanisms (including quality of service, level of disruptions, and engagement with the municipality).

The preliminary literature review was conducted after the identification and selection of appropriate documentary sources, in order to construct a theoretical framework according to which the research findings could be understood, as well as to provide appropriate background information on service delivery.

4.9 Site Visits and interviews

The following seven site visits and interviews took place during this study. In some cases interviews were held in municipal or provincial government offices, however in most cases the interviews were done during the site visits. Community interviews were done with a group of ten community members in the chosen villages.

- Interviews: the municipal offices in Barkley East

The purpose of this visit was to interview the water services councillor and the water services authority manager, and this took 3 hours. The outcomes of the interviews were recorded, and are analysed in a later chapter.

- Site visit: state of wastewater treatment works in Barkley East

The purpose of this visit to observe the state of wastewater treatment works close to the municipal offices. The observation was aimed at gaining an understanding of some of the water quality challenges faced by the municipality. This visit took 2 hour.

- Interviews and site visits: access to water in Sengqu village

The purpose of this visit was to observe the level of illegal connections in the village, as the municipal officials had highlighted this as a significant challenge. Five community representatives were interviewed. This visit took 8 hours.

- Site visit: infrastructure development projects in Sterkspruit

The purpose of this visit was to observe the state of water infrastructure developments in the form of new and refurbished schemes, the areas that would be supplied with water upon completion, and to what extent these would address the water supply backlog. This visit took 3 hours.

- Site visit: infrastructure development projects in the Ugie area

The purpose of this visit was to observe the level of growth in the presidential nodal project of Ugie and the role played by water infrastructure in promoting economic growth in this area. This visit took 2 hours.

- Interviews and site visit: access to water in Elundini village

The purpose of this visit was to interview community representatives, a group of five representatives, in order to assess the level of access, water quality, and challenges. This visit took 8 hours.

- Interviews: The provincial office of the Department of Water Affairs in East London

The purpose of this visit was to interview the coordinator of municipal support in the Department's provincial offices, in order to understand the nature and impact of support provided to the UkDM. This visit and interview took 6 hours.

4.10 Data Analysis

It has been mentioned in previous sections that this study was both exploratory and descriptive in nature, and was therefore not guided by an explicit theoretical framework. It used both field research and quantitative research, which are complementary. The content analysis was qualitative, with the aim of making inferences and drawing conclusions based on the collected data. It was guided mainly by the inductive strategy of data analysis. Mouton (1998: 103) appropriately states that in an inductive strategy, the researcher attempts to discover relationships or patterns by means of close scrutiny of the data, as well as by generalisation and inductive abstraction. The end results provide a systematic explanation that attempts to draw logical inferences in the final chapter.

Some of the questions that were asked during data collection were enumerative in nature, in order to draw certain conclusions about the level of service delivery in the municipality. Some of these questions were open, seeking to elicit more qualitative information about the respondents' general quality of life and the consequences of having or not having access to a basic water and sanitation service. Some of the quantitative data was presented in a table format, while the qualitative data was grouped into themes.

In general, the procedure for data analysis was based on the nature of responses to the items. These responses were analysed using qualitative strategies such as categorisation, interpretation, and noting patterns or themes and clusters of beliefs and values. Triangulation methods based on qualitative research processes were used, and countries outside South Africa, such as Zimbabwe, Uganda, Philippines and Ethiopia, were included.

4.11 Time frame

This study focused on the period between 2000 and 2008, as this was a very crucial time period, during which the sector-wide approach had undergone its first and second

phase of implementation. The assumption was that a fair assessment of the level of progress could be made, since the first phase had been completed. This would then allow for a detailed analysis and give a comprehensive picture of the level of impact achieved through implementation of projects for SWAP funding.

4.12 Conclusion

The research methods used in this study gave a rich description of events, which led to a clearer understanding of some of the issues in water delivery. The insights gained through the adopted methodology prepared the researcher adequately to deal with the further analysis and recommendations chapters. The observations made as part of the adopted research methods, brought clarity to pertinent issues raised in the research questions. The openness and transparency afforded by semi-structured interviews, and observing challenges directly through site visits, added value to the work being undertaken. The next chapter deals in detail with the findings from the interviews, and raised the key issues for discussion.

Chapter 5

FINDINGS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The Strategic Framework for Water Services (SFWS), a legal framework guiding the provision and supply of water and sanitation in South Africa, sets out nineteen goals that are in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of reducing poverty and promoting sustainable livelihoods. The two goals of basic sanitation and water delivery have received particular attention in the SWAP. These goals state that “All people in South Africa have access to a functioning basic water supply facility by 2008, and all people in South Africa have access to a functioning basic sanitation supply by 2010” (Department of Water Affairs & Forestry Strategic Framework for Water Services 2003: 10). The SFWS was developed by different partners in a consultative process, and is designed to support the sector vision of “water is life, sanitation is dignity”. Progress regarding service delivery is measured in terms of the main service delivery targets, as envisaged in the SFWS.

5.2 Background to Ukhahlamba District Municipality

This section is compiled from primary data sources collected from the municipality and the provincial office of DWA during the interviews and site visits. The UkDM is a Category C municipality, as defined in Section 155 (1) of the South African Constitution. As a Category C municipality, its area of jurisdiction encompasses four local municipalities, namely Xhariep, Maletswai, Elundini and Sengqu. The District Municipality received powers and functions, as proclaimed by the Minister of Provincial and Local Government, in 2003. These powers and functions gave the municipality a Water Service Authority (WSA) status, which meant that it had to take full responsibility for the delivery of water and sanitation within its jurisdictional area.

Timm (2006:2) states that according to the 2001 census, there were approximately 345 000 people living in the District Municipality, of which 80% lived in the deeply rural and mountainous Elundini and Sengqu municipalities, and 20% in the Xhariep and Maletswai municipalities. The predominantly rural areas comprise areas that used to fall within the previous Transkei homeland, and they consist of communal land that

is not being used for commercial farming purposes. The proportion of females exceeds males by approximately 54%, due to the migrant labour system and male emigration to the metropolitan areas of the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Gauteng (Timm 2006:3). Approximately 54% of families living in this municipality are female-headed households, and 26% of these families have people living with HIV/AIDS. The IDP Review of 2006/7, further states 32% of these households have no income, 50% are without sanitation, and 58% need water (Ukhahlamba IDP Review 2007:2).

The number of people served to RDP standards dictates that people are served if they receive piped and borehole water within 200 m of their place of residence. If they have to source water from springs, rainwater tanks, streams, rivers, dams or water vendors, they are deemed to be unserved (Ukhahlamba IDP Review 2007:4).

One of the findings that the researcher observed in this study is that the major challenges facing the municipality are non-functioning water supply schemes and illegal connections where the water supply schemes are functional. In the researcher's opinion, there is a need to develop and extend sub-regional schemes and to develop longer-term project plans in line with the allocations of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG). Human resource capacity constraints hamper efforts of the District to plan, manage and implement projects. There is a need to attract and retain technical skills and provide water and sanitation facilities to schools and clinics, and the skills retention challenge is articulated in the peer review report (Palmer Development Group: 2008:9). The formula for the allocation of funds needs to take into account the high cost of infrastructure development due to settlement patterns, distances and the lack of road infrastructure, as echoed in the (Ukhahlamba IDP Review 2007:7).

It was also evident that the biggest challenge is the lack of proper economic development opportunities, which then results in increased poverty levels. Some of the biggest water services delivery challenges facing UkDM are the eradication of the bucket system, water services provision, improved operations and maintenance of infrastructure, extension of water services to areas where there is a high risk of waterborne diseases, improved sanitation provision and drought relief (Ukhahlamba Water and Sanitation Policy 2003:12).

Significant progress was made in the period under review, as two new water services business units were created, namely a Water Services Authority (WSA) the unit responsible for setting service standards, regulation, financing for water services, and a Water Services Provider Unit (WSP), the unit responsible for service provision, customer care and billing. As from July 2003, 90-95% of municipal infrastructure grants were spent on eradicating backlogs in the rural areas (Ukhahlamba IDP Review 2007:4). It has been shown that according to the Department of Water Affairs (Masibambane) reports, the Eastern Cape Province was on target for the first 3 years of water and sanitation delivery to its communities. However, the progress in terms of water and sanitation delivery in the UkDM has been slower than overall progress in the province. At the end of 2005, half of the population in the area still did not have access to water and sanitation services.

Most of these observations were confirmed by the respondents during the interviews. These responses are reported in three categories, and are discussed later on in this chapter.

5.3 Responses from municipal representative interviews

Below are the responses from the interviews held with the Water Manager and Councillor.

5.3.1 Access to water services

The UkDM is made up of four local municipalities. Two of these are deeply rural and the other two are a combination of rural and urban. In addition, 43% of the backlog in the municipality as at December 2008 was in the rural areas, namely the Sengqu and eLundini areas.

Farm dwellers are found in all four local municipalities. However, they are excluded from the backlog calculations, since the municipality has not taken responsibility for extending services to privately owned land, which could be a significant number considering the fact that 50% of the land is used for commercial agriculture.

Water is largely used for domestic purposes, subsistence food production and for commercial purposes.

There are 3 types of services that are provided, namely:

- **Lifeline support:** Below RDP (spring protection): this service is when a spring or natural resource is protected for domestic water consumption in cases where there is no other source of water
- **RDP:** 200 metres from a house to a standpipe: this is the standard set by the Reconstruction and Development Programme that water standpipes must not be further than 200 metres from households so that people do not walk long distances to fetch water
- **Private connections and legal yard connections:** this is by far the highest level of service where households that can afford to pay for the connecting infrastructure get water in their homes for domestic or production purposes and are billed to pay at the end of each month

In each of the two rural municipalities, there are two water supply schemes that supply all the villages. There are 20 villages in the Sengqu Local Municipality, and 26 villages in the eLundini Local Municipality. All of these villages are supplied water from the two schemes. However, the two water supply schemes are not sufficient, therefore some villages are supplied from lifeline support and boreholes as explained above. In the villages where water is supplied from water supply schemes, one noted that there were household and yard connections to households.

The challenges experienced with the type of service of private and yard connections, and RDP service, is that of illegal connections, political interference with technological choices and demands for higher levels of service even in cases where there are no water supply schemes. The other challenge is maintaining the good quality of drinking water throughout the UkDM. Human resource capacity and lack of resources are other big challenges, and these, coupled with the poor overall operation and maintenance of infrastructure result in the non-functionality of existing water schemes. This non-functionality is observed in cases where there are water-cut offs because schemes are overloaded or not working or there is dirty water coming out of the tap due to old infrastructure.

Drinking water quality monitoring was being done on an ad hoc basis before the baby deaths of 2008, when 80 babies died as a result of poor drinking water quality management (Palmer Development Group 2009:32).

Service disruptions are still a challenge due to water demand increases from illegal connections, and the problem here is that schemes were generally designed for an RDP level of service, which is a basic level of service (200 metres from a house), as defined by the Water Services Act, 108 of 1997. Currently, the infrastructure cannot cope with the demands of the mostly illegal and unbudgeted for connections.

Having outlined the challenges, the municipal representatives emphasised that refurbishment of the infrastructure is taking place, and that leak detection technologies have been introduced. In terms of improving the quality of drinking water, management equipment has been purchased, and drinking water quality has been highlighted as a key performance area in every senior manager's employment contract.

5.3.2 Customer engagement

There is a pilot project for a call centre in Sengqu Local Municipality. Currently, there are no platforms to engage communities in ongoing projects - it happens on an ad hoc basis. It is envisaged, however, that through WC/DM programmes, such as community education and community involvement, community engagement will improve. The municipality is also planning to pilot the project of establishing Village Water Committees (VWCs), which will deal with all water-related issues and therefore strengthen the voice of communities in water delivery and overall service provision.

The VWCs are going to be in existence at the end of 2009. Their value is that they provide a mechanism through which communities can engage with the municipality, and be able to communicate their water challenges at a village level. This can be beneficial in addressing customer complaints on time or passing educational messages on water that communities need. The committees deal mainly with awareness raising on water conservation and demand management and water quality issues. They also deal with operations and maintenance issues in so far as they result in water cut offs

and service disruptions. They are meant to improve the communication and ensure that the municipality improves the quality of service it provides at village level. However, it has to be acknowledged that the relationship between the municipality and the VWC is a partnership which would require commitment on both sides. If the VWCs raise issues, the municipality must respond timeously, and keep the promises made to communities. If this is not done, it will mean that the relationship between the VWCs and communities will break down, and this can have negative consequences on improving the quality of service delivery.

The other issue is that VWCs would require some kind of stipend payment for the travelling, the educational work, and the basic operations and maintenance if they are given these roles. The danger is that the municipality then starts to see VWC members as its employees, instead of community representatives, and VWC members themselves may start to see the municipality as an employer, and therefore not be able to hold them accountable for service delivery improvements. The issue of roles and responsibilities and clarification of accountability lines therefore has to be handled carefully at the initial stages of the partnership.

In the urban municipalities, the basic operation and maintenance of infrastructure, such as replacement of pipes, is still a challenge, as well as water conservation and demand management (WC/DM), since some water sources are drying up. The municipality acknowledges the fact that people cannot easily distinguish between a WSA and a WSP, (see 5.2, paragraph 6 above) and will therefore address their concerns mostly to the WSA office, instead of a WSP which is responsible for customer care. The WSA offices are situated in Barkley East, therefore more accessible since it is a commercial centre of the municipality. WSP offices are situated in the various local municipalities, in smaller towns. This requires community education and clarity of roles amongst municipal officials.

5.3.3 Access to SWAP funding

SWAP funding is accessed through a Water Services Authority Business Plan (WSA BP), which was previously known as the WSA Capacity Building BP. In 2006/7, the annual business plans were converted into 5-year plans. These plans are then presented to the Water Sector Support Unit at the provincial offices of the Department

of Water Affairs (DWA). The focus of the WSA BP for the Ukhahlamba District Municipality includes the following issues:

- Institutional capacity: this assists the municipality with the challenges of sourcing and retaining good technical skills.
- Improving water quality management programmes: from 2005 to 2009, sampling points had been increased and the purchasing of equipment and building of laboratories, as well as the doubling of sampling points from 25 to 50 training programmes for process controllers, plumbers and plant operators, had been achieved. The current incumbents of the positions had been doing the work without formal qualifications, the municipality gave specific focus to skilling those people mainly and putting additional ones where applicable. They managed to get qualified incumbents for all these positions.
- A study on the monitoring of water sources: this was aimed at assessing surface and ground water. An amount of R 670 000 was used for this purpose in the eLundini Municipality in 2008, and the study included an assessment of the level of the water table in each borehole in the municipality.
- Establishment of a geographic information system (GIS): the aim of this project is to assess existing infrastructure per scheme and village. GIS support helps with planning and quality of service, while also enabling the municipality to budget for proper infrastructure asset management and operations and maintenance.
- Review and promulgation of bylaws coupled with community education: this included a councillor and community training programme which is deemed by the municipal councillor as effective in raising awareness of issues around bylaws, asset management, hygiene education amongst councillors. The outcome of the training is that councillors were able to take decisions in council meetings on the issue of bylaws, asset management and funding for hygiene education.
- Legal support: the municipality hired commercial lawyers to draft WSA and WSP (Water Services Provider) contracts, and customer service level agreements.

- Sustaining drought relief programmes: this includes water tankering, spring protection, and drilling of boreholes in Bekkersdorp (Xhariep LM).
- Establishment of a Customer Care Centre to deal with customer queries directed to both the WSA and the WSP

5.3.4 Using WSDP as a planning tool

In 2000, the UkDM was using water sector plans, since it was not yet a WSA. Powers and functions that enabled the municipality to be a WSA were instituted in 2003. The first Water Services Development Plan (WSDP) was therefore drafted in 2005, and was reviewed in 2007. The WSDP for 2005 was used more as compliance than a planning tool. The Water Services Act, 108 of 1997, mandates WSAs to develop a WSDP before services are provided to communities. The WSDP should indicate the major water infrastructure plans, institutional issues, customer services, type of service, funding allocations, et cetera. The issue with the WSDP is that it is written in technical jargon and may not be accessible to the politicians and even the officials who are supposed to use it as a reference tool. It is therefore tempting for a WSA to develop a WSDP only in order to comply with the Water Services Act, and put it on the shelf for the water regulator to tick that it is there. This is a matter that the Department of Water Affairs (DWA) is addressing to ensure that there is ownership of the WSDP at local level, officials and councillors are assisted to understand the contents of the WSDP since it is for the benefit of the water business at municipal level to ensure it is utilised as a planning rather than compliance tool.

5.4 Responses from provincial representative interviews

Below are the responses from the Masibambane Coordinator and Water and Sanitation Coordinator Department of Water Affairs (DWA)) in the Eastern Cape.

5.4.1 Access to water services

The two officials from the provincial Department of Water Affairs who were interviewed emphasised the fact that the UkDM is still faced with the challenge of providing water services to communities. As at December 2008, access to piped water was 59 per cent and 41 per cent of the service delivery backlog was in the rural areas of Sengqu and eLundini. This should be viewed against the background that eighty

per cent of the population lives in rural areas (Palmer Development Group 2008:23). The UkDM is the WSA responsible for service provision in its jurisdictional area. The four local municipalities (Xhariep, Maletswai, Sengqu and Elundini) provide water services to the towns in each of their respective areas.

The Department of Water Affairs has developed guidelines for service provision on privately owned land. However, the implementation process has been slow, and municipalities with privately owned land are therefore still facing the challenge of effective service provision in these areas.

The two DWA officials who were interviewed emphasised that the basic level of service, as per approved RDP standards, is 200 metres from a house to a standpipe. However, because of the huge service backlog in the Eastern Cape Province as a whole and in the UkDM in particular, measures such as lifeline support were promoted in order to avoid the undignified situation whereby people have to drink from river streams, as animals do.

Funding has been provided by the Department to assist the municipality with service delivery challenges. However, this funding is only earmarked for strengthening institutional capacity to deliver, and not for hard infrastructure such as building new structures or enhancing the capacity of existing ones. The responsibility for infrastructure development remains with the (then) Department of Provincial and Local Government currently known as the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCOG) through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG).

The challenge of illegal connections was mentioned in so far as it creates further uncertainty and instability with regard to service provision. Demand in cases of illegal connections becomes difficult to predict, and therefore places a strain on the existing schemes, since the capacity can often not cope with the demand.

On the issue of service standards, the DWA officials mentioned the baby deaths crisis of 2008. Poor water quality is likely to have been a contributing factor, and although there is no direct evidence that poor water quality caused the baby deaths, the majority of these deaths were caused by diarrhoea, and there was evidence of high levels of

risk associated with the drinking water quality system, including inadequate infrastructure, poorly maintained and operated treatment works, lack of quality controls in the management of water quality, and a weak water quality monitoring and reporting system (Palmer Development Group 2008:24).

The DWA conducted an investigation after these deaths which assessed the drinking water quality. In an effort to address such challenges, the DWA, through funding from the SWAP, transferred funding to the municipality, put disinfectant equipment in place, ensured that chemicals were available, trained operators, and improved the Drinking Water Quality Management and reporting tool. Improvements such as daily on-site monitoring in Barkley East and Sterkspruit were made possible through SWAP funding.

The responses suggested that the DWA, in collaboration with its sector partners through a Joint Operations Team at a provincial and district level, ensured that proper infrastructure and equipment was placed in the areas that deserved it the most, in order to curb the crisis.

5.4.2 Customer engagement

The DWA conducted a pilot study in the Chris Hani District Municipality (CHDM), a neighbouring rural municipality, on the establishment of Village Water Committees (VWCs). These are community-based structures at a village level that take on the responsibility of customer care issues and liaison with the concerned municipality. This approach has proved to be effective in CHDM, and the DWA is considering extending this to the other rural municipalities that it is supporting. VWCs will be used to improve access to information, and to create and raise community awareness on water conservation issues.

5.4.3 Access to SWAP funding

As it has been pointed out in the previous section on this subject (5.3.3), SWAP funding is accessed through a Water Services Authority Business Plan (WSA BP) which used to be an annual plan until the conversion into 5 year plans that took place in 2006/7. The business plans are then presented to the Water Sector Support Unit in the provincial office of the Department of Water Affairs (DWA). The officials who

were interviewed agreed that the development of these Business Plans assists with the proper prioritisation of projects. The municipality is assisted to focus on the key challenges that would otherwise not be funded through the MIG or any type of grant source. In the UkDM, the 5-year business plan focused on the critical issues raised in the municipal peer review report, which mostly involved strengthening the institutional capacity of the authority function. At the time of the peer review, which took place in February 2008, the municipality was faced with the challenge of institutional capacity, as the whole WSA function was being resourced by one person. As a result of the findings of the peer review, this situation was changed through funding from the SWAP in the WSA BP. Hence, the focus of the Business Plan was on the following issues:

- Strengthening institutional capacity: this assists the municipality with the challenges of sourcing and retaining good technical skills, and the WSA organogram now has the critical positions filled.
- Improving water quality management programmes: this involves increasing sampling points and daily sampling in the highly affected areas of Sengqu and eLundini, as well as funding of training programmes and skilling of relevant personnel.
- Assisting the municipality to draw up service level agreements with its water service providers: this is a requirement outlined in the Water Services Act of 1997. The baby deaths' crisis was to a large extent due to poor accountability, lack of performance and poor enforcement. Strengthening WSA capacity is therefore a key element of the support enabled through SWAP funding.
- From 2005 for the whole of the study period, sampling points have been increased and the purchasing of equipment and building of laboratories, as well as the doubling of sampling points from 25 to 50, training programmes for process controllers, plumbers and plant operators, were also developed. The achievement in this case is the doubling of sampling points because it meant that there are more testing sites. This meant that the quality of water improved because testing and precautionary measures were taken at a larger scale. Training for process controllers, plumbers and plant operators increased

the skills to operate equipment and identify problem areas before they erupted into crisis.

- Establishment of a geographic information system (GIS): the aim of this project is to assess existing infrastructure per scheme and village. GIS support helps with planning and quality of service, and enables the municipality to budget for proper infrastructure asset management, as well as operations and maintenance.
- The issue of political leadership arose as a crucial one after the baby deaths' crisis, since it was found that at the local level, municipalities were not held accountable for performance of their statutory functions, including the provision of safe drinking water and conclusion of service level agreements between service providers. The DWA has introduced a councillor development programme focusing on key areas such as water quality, health and hygiene promotion, asset management, and regulation.

5.4.4 Using WSDP as a planning tool

There is an acknowledgement of the role of planning in promoting good investment in water infrastructure and to ensure that communities are aware of the planned water investments. If such investment exists, the problem of poor asset management, resulting in total collapse and risks to human health, can be avoided. Poor infrastructure leads to a collapse in service delivery – therefore, the levels of access to water and basic sanitation remains low, posing a serious health risk, whereby humans are forced to drink unclean water or walk long distances to fetch it, and human dignity is lost when people do not have proper sanitation. Therefore, the DWA has a dedicated unit that supports municipalities with WSDP development. Whether these documents are actually developed for planning or simply for compliance is an issue that the DWA is addressing.

5.5 Responses from community representative interviews

Ten community representatives were interviewed in three villages

5.5.1 Access to water services

Two villages were supplied by water supply schemes connected to municipal water reservoirs and the other village was supplied by a borehole. Responses concerning the

issue of access varied from appreciation and acknowledgement of the WSP's role in providing the service to complete dissatisfaction with the quality of the service provided. In the two villages supplied by schemes, people were generally satisfied with the availability of water, even stating that in some neighbouring villages, they did not have the privilege of access to water, and indicating that before the community standpipes were built, they had to fetch water from the rivers, and those who had cars had previously fetched water from the towns. In the village served by a borehole, there was a lack of satisfaction, and indications were that the municipality has to address this problem as a matter of urgency, as the people found the water "too salty" to drink.

A trend in all three villages was unhappiness with the quality of the service provided. The first issue raised was the quality of water, judging from turbidity levels, and therefore changes to the colour of water that comes out of the tap from time to time. This is mainly water that comes from the schemes to community standpipes. People then concluded that the water is "dirty, and that it makes them sick". They even referred to the issue of baby deaths in 2008, and even though it did not occur in their particular villages, one can conclude that the perception that these babies had died as a result of unclean water was prevalent.

The second issue was that of intermittent supply, leading to "water cut-offs". One of the respondents was a local businessman who ran a tuck shop or *spaza* shop in the village. He expressed unhappiness with what he termed water cut-offs, indicating that at some times, these cut-offs lasted for longer than a month, and this had an adverse effect on his business.

Of the ten interviewees, four people had private connections in their yards, and did not therefore draw water from the community standpipes. So, there is a 40% illegal connection use. However, the observation was made by all four that they had used illegal connections to access the water. They acknowledged this fact, indicating that they were aware that they were in the wrong, but that accessing water in this way was more convenient and quicker than doing a formal application through the municipality. There was no evidence of an understanding of the negative implications

of these illegal connections on the revenue of the municipality and on the capacity of the schemes to cope with these illegal connections.

5.5.2 Customer Engagement

With regard to customer engagement, the ten interviewees expressed concern about the fact that the municipality does not provide reasons for water cut-offs or the turbidity of water. Most people indicated that information about water purification, for example, comes from schools, where their children receive pamphlets and instructions for cleaning water. There were indications that there is no direct engagement with the municipality, and confusion exists regarding the role of the WSP and that of the WSA. This confusion stems from the fact that the WSA offices are located in a town closer and more accessible to the people, and they therefore prefer to do walk-ins from time to time. However, when they get to these offices, they find that not all their questions are answered, as they are predominantly service-related questions. This perpetuates the perception that the municipality (in this case the WSA) is not accessible. The issue of village water committees was discussed, and there seemed to be a willingness to participate in such structures, provided they did not become too demanding on people's time, and that there would be consistent support from the municipality in terms of responding timeously to issues raised at a village level.

5.5.3 Access to SWAP funding

At a village level, people are not aware of funding processes or that a portion of the funding received by the municipality comes from donors. The issues which seemed to be of immediate concern to them were access to water and sanitation, aversion of risk to human health, and assurance of supply.

5.5.4 Utilisation of the WSDP as a planning tool

None of the community members indicated an involvement in planning processes such as IDP development. They seemed to be silent recipients of the development that was planned for them. Interviewees did not seem to know about IDP hearings that the municipalities are supposed to conduct on an annual basis in order to promote community participation.

5.6 Discussion

This section will focus on the factors that have promoted and hindered sustainable water services provision in the municipality, as per the findings of the field research that was conducted during this study.

5.6.1 Promoting factors

The data collected from the UkDM, the DWA provincial office and community representatives indicates that the impact of water services delivery in the UkDM is moving in the right direction in terms of the following:

- Avoiding risks to human health: this comprises of measures undertaken by the municipality to address the water quality crisis, and avoid future crisis
- Effective utilisation of SWAP funding, strengthening municipal capacity to deliver: this comprises of selected programs and interventions that were funded by SWAP, and their strategic significance to improving service delivery
- Openness and transparency with problems: this entails approach undertaken when the municipality was faced with crisis, of not hiding information but opening up and taking part in assisting other municipalities that may face similar future challenges
- Promotion of sector orientation: this entails the role of local, provincial and national government in fostering inter-sphere coordination, and sector orientation

5.6.1.a) Avoiding risks to human health

After the baby deaths crisis of 2008, a physical inspection of each and every treatment work was conducted by the DWA and members of the Joint Sector Task Team, which comprised the Department of Health and Local Government and Traditional Affairs. Some of the challenges identified through this assessment were inadequate monitoring of drinking water quality at an operational level by the water services provider, and at a regulatory level by the water services authority. In addition, there was a lack of operational monitoring equipment, operational skills, maintenance and rehabilitation, and poor operational management of procurement and storage functions.

The assessment concluded that “the dilapidated state of treatment infrastructure should be regarded as the biggest threat to the continued safe supply of drinking water

in the UkDM's area of jurisdiction" (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry Ukhahlamba Water Services Authority Report 2008:8). Following this conclusion, one can see concerted efforts being made by various stakeholders to reduce the risk to human health posed by unsafe drinking water. During the interviews conducted with the municipality, various improvement projects were discussed, such as daily monitoring, purchasing of testing materials, refurbishment of infrastructure, training of technicians, and so on. It was also observed that most of the improvements that were made were made possible by the availability of donor funding from the SWAP. The WSA BP facilitates the building of institutional capacity for delivering effective services, and most of the interventions in the UkDM centred on strengthening institutional capacity and averting risk to human life.

5.6.1. b) Effective utilisation of SWAP funding: strengthening municipal capacity to deliver

One of the key elements of the SWAP in the South African water sector, through the Masibambane programme, is strengthening institutional capacity in order to deliver services to communities effectively. In the case of the UkDM, it should be noted that there was a peer review conducted by the Water Information Network-South Africa (WIN-SA) at the beginning of 2008, which outlined key challenges with regard to institutional capacity and made some recommendations on how the capacity of the WSA could be strengthened (Palmer Development Group 2008: 9). At the beginning of 2008, there was only one official who dealt with the management of the WSA within the municipality.

However, it has to be acknowledged that at the end of 2008, important positions in the WSA organogram had been mostly filled. In addition to this, efforts have been made to deploy skills and train municipal staff. This has been made possible through SWAP funding, which focuses specifically on strengthening institutional capacity. The observation that can be made is that SWAP funding has enabled the municipality to address its main institutional capacity challenges, in a way that other types of funding such as equitable share grants and municipal infrastructure grants would not have allowed because of the conditions that are attached to them. This is an example of the innovation and flexibility that is brought about by SWAP processes and funding approaches, particularly the realisation that effective service delivery is not only about

putting hard infrastructure in place, but also about creating an enabling environment and building the capacity in order for the work to be done.

5.6.1 c) Openness and transparency

It can be argued that one of the strongest points with the management in UkDM at the time of the study was the acknowledgement of the challenges that the municipality was facing. This is evident in their participation in the WIN-SA Peer Review process that took place early 2008, and their commitment to addressing the critical challenges they faced in the peer review turnaround plan. Further to this, after the baby deaths crisis the municipality presented their problem at the provincial Integrated Water Sector Forum. This Forum agreed that lessons learnt and guidelines for municipalities facing similar challenges had to be developed. This process was completed in 2009. One can conclude that this openness prevented similar problems in other municipalities, had UkDM management decided to evade the issue, and not be open and transparent about it to the water sector and the South African public at large, this would not have happened.

5.6.1 d) Promotion of sector orientation

As outlined in previous chapters, one of the key pillars of the South African water sector SWAP was to create sector orientation. This was to be done through various collaborative platforms, at a district municipality, provincial and national level. In the South African context this sector orientation was further promoted by legislation such as the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 13 of 2005. This Act promoted intersphere coordination and coordinated planning amongst various government spheres and sectors. In the year 2000, the provincial Integrated Water Sector Forum was established as part of strengthening sector orientation amongst various stakeholders in the Eastern Cape province. The Forum had representatives from local, provincial and national government, private and civil society sectors. It became a good platform for sharing best practice and for discussion of strategic policy imperatives. Through this Forum, UkDM also managed to profile its water challenges, and to source funding for key initiatives such as its induction programme for councillors who were new to the municipality.

5.6.2 Hindering factors

There are areas that still require attention from the UkDM and DWA in its support programmes, be they funded through the SWAP or the national fiscus, namely;

- Access to basic water services: this shows that despite SWAP funding for water provision, access to water by communities still remains a challenge in the municipality since a significant percentage of the population still rely on water from unprotected sources
- Rights and responsibilities based customer engagement: the issue of customer engagement in order to promote local accountability and rights and responsibilities based awareness is essential. This has not happened adequately in UkDM and has resulted in worsening crisis such as drinking water quality, and the issue of illegal connections has impacted negatively on water provision,
- Operations and maintenance of infrastructure: this emphasises the importance of O&M and that reliance on donor funding is not sustainable in the long term, municipalities have to budget for such from their own funding sources. UkDM has relied on donor funding for areas that require internal budgeting, and should the SWAP come to an end, they will be faced with a problem if this issue is not addressed
- Effective planning processes: the importance of including water issues in municipal planning processes cannot be overemphasised. This results in better coordination and ensures communities are aware of key projects planned by the municipalities. This is not happening adequately in UkDM and requires improvement
- Effective monitoring in the SWAP: it can be argued that some of the problems that erupted in the municipality at the beginning of 2008 could have been avoided had there been proper monitoring of the impact of SWAP funding on the capacity of the Water Services Authority.

5.6.2 a) Access to water services

The statistic for access to piped water was 59% for the year 2008, which indicates that 41% of the population at this time was accessing water from boreholes, protected springs, and unsafe sources (Palmer Development Group 2008: 23). This is a large percentage, considering the fact that the SWAP began in the year 2000. The

Government of South Africa therefore has to renew its commitment towards eradicating rural poverty and promoting local economic growth. Water plays a central role in this commitment, since it is central to growth and development. At the centre of poverty eradication efforts is the issue of provision of basic services, such as healthcare, water, electricity and road infrastructure. In the UkDM, more effort needs to be made with regard to the provision of basic water supply and sanitation, in order to alleviate poverty and ensure sustainable local economic growth. This would require particular attention being paid to rural areas of the municipality and privately owned land, since these are lagging behind.

5.6.2 b) Rights and responsibilities-based customer engagement

The issue of customer engagement is crucial, in order to ensure a vibrant local democracy. It clarifies accountability lines, so that communities know who to engage with in the municipality, should they have any problems to address. In the current service protest environment, one could say that it is in the best interests of a local authority to engage citizens constructively. Community engagement is, however, not a one-sided matter - communities must also be educated on their rights and responsibilities. In the case of the UkDM, it is evident that the municipality has to engage in a rigorous rights and responsibilities' education campaign. The rate at which people are illegally connecting to water sources poses a serious threat to service delivery, as indicated in earlier sections of this chapter. Effective service delivery and poverty alleviation efforts will be hampered by communities themselves if they are not properly educated about their responsibilities. This is particularly important for the idea of establishing Village Water Committees (VWCs) that was mooted by municipal officials at the time of the interviews. The partnership between the municipality and the community will be either strengthened or weakened by the relationship between the municipality and the VWCs. It has been shown how VWCs can improve customer care, and address immediate operations and maintenance challenges thereby improving service delivery, however, the municipality has to acknowledge the potential problems and address them before they hinder service delivery.

5.6.2 c) Operations and maintenance of infrastructure

The value of effective operations and the maintenance of water infrastructure cannot be overemphasised. The UkDM learnt its lessons the hard way with the baby deaths of 2008. It has been argued that with the support from the DWA, through the SWAP funding, efforts to address this problem were realised. However, it is important that the municipality builds on the support it received during the time of the crisis. The other challenge is that of non-functioning water schemes, resulting in water cut-offs or total non-availability. A good infrastructure maintenance programme requires adequate human and financial resources. Allocation of funding should be central to municipal budget allocation processes. Reliance on donor funding is not sustainable in the longer-term, and the municipality cannot afford another baby death or similar health crisis.

5.6.2 d) Effective planning processes

The inclusion of water in the integrated development planning processes of municipalities ensures that specific attention is given to basic services delivery. It has been argued in earlier sections that through DWA support, water services development plans have been developed by municipalities - these planning documents guide water services delivery and ensure that an informed approach is taken towards appropriate levels of service. Municipal planning should include water services, including operations, maintenance and financing, quality of service, water conservation and demand management. The WSDP should incorporate all these elements, in order to ensure a sustainable service to communities. One can argue that if the UkDM had a WSDP that it refers to as a working document, the problems with regard to water quality and infrastructure maintenance would have been identified sooner.

5.6.2 e) Effective monitoring of SWAP performance

One can argue that some of the problems that erupted in the municipality at the beginning of 2008 could have been avoided had there been proper monitoring of the impact of SWAP at the inception phase. The fact needs to be acknowledged that SWAP funding is not used to build hard infrastructure such as schemes and bulk water pipes, but it is meant to strengthen the capacity of the institutions in question to deliver services. In the case of UkDM, efforts should have been made to build the

capacity of the municipality after it was proclaimed a WSA in 2003. The fact that this was only done after the baby deaths crisis of 2008 does not suggest that SWAP funding was properly directed, or that SWAP monitoring processes were functioning effectively.

The issue of monitoring is an important one for SWAPs to be successful. In every five year cycle, an impact assessment was conducted for the South African water sector SWAP. The two impact assessments that were conducted in 2004 and 2008 indicate that there was significant progress made with the SWAP implementation, however there were some notable problems such as poor monitoring of SWAP impact on service delivery and involvement of civil society organisations. This is an issue that requires further attention at national planning levels. Nesen (2009: 12) argues that sometimes SWAPs are more focused on budget disbursements and strategic plans at national level, and less on the impact on service delivery on the ground. Whilst this cannot be a generalisation made about the SA water SWAP, it has to be pointed out that more work could have been done towards monitoring impact on the ground, especially after 2003, when WSAs were newly created.

5.6.2 f) Impact of the SWAP in Ukhahlamba District Municipality

Some of the biggest water services delivery challenges facing UkDM are the eradication of the bucket system, water services provision, improved operations and maintenance of infrastructure, extension of water services to areas where there is a high risk of waterborne diseases, improved sanitation provision and drought relief (Ukhahlamba Water and Sanitation Policy 2003:12). One acknowledges that the immediate and therefore most urgent challenges to address for most rural municipalities in South Africa are that of providing infrastructure for bulk and retail water thereby ensuring that water is constantly available in each tap. It has to be further acknowledged that the donor funded programme that was brought about by the SWAP in South Africa was never intended for infrastructure. The SWAP intended to promote sector orientation, to build strong institutions and to improve the quality of service delivery.

Funding for infrastructure is made available through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) which comes from the national fiscus. Therefore when one assesses the

impact of the SWAP approach, one has to focus on the extent to which the SWAP sought to promote the quality of water services, create a sector orientation and to strengthen the municipality in its institutional role of providing water to the people of UkDM. The first aspect is that of promoting the quality of water services provided to communities, one has pointed out that this was a problem for the municipality especially the fact that water turbidity levels were rather high at the time of the baby deaths crisis and before. Through funding from the SWAP systems were put in place to ensure physical inspection of each water treatment works, and more rigorous monitoring of the quality of drinking water, training to ensure proper operation, and management of procurement processes was provided. The second aspect deals with the promotion of sector orientation, which advocates for a culture of working together, and stronger inter-governmental relations. Collaborative structures in which the municipality participated, encouraged sharing of information and accommodation of inputs and views from various stakeholders such as civil society, and other government departments. The third aspect deals with strengthening the capacity of the municipality to deliver services. One has mentioned that after the peer review that took place in 2008, and the subsequent crisis of baby deaths, the municipality developed and implemented an improvement plan with SWAP funding. Some of the key achievements were filling the WSA organogram, and training of municipal staff which complemented the funding that comes from equitable share and other municipal grants.

It has been outlined in section 5.6.2, that some of the challenges that remain in UkDM are that of ensuring access to basic water services, ensuring rights and responsibilities based education, proper operations and maintenance of infrastructure, effective planning and monitoring of SWAP programmes. Therefore when one assesses the impact of the SWAP these issues have to be considered, because even though SWAP performance is to be assessed against the three pillars it meant to promote in South Africa, basic challenges of service delivery still remain, and future recommendations for SWAPs should take into account the fact that if a developing country requires development partnerships on basic service provision, the issue of infrastructure funding should be reviewed in future donor country strategies.

5.7 Conclusion

The secondary and primary data collected from the UkDM indicates that the municipalities have a fair amount of challenges with regard to effective water services provision. These have been outlined in this chapter. One can also deduce that efforts to address the challenges have been, to a large extent, realised through the availability of donor funding from the SWAP. The efforts to address the water quality crisis which resulted in babies' deaths in 2008 have to be mentioned. It should be pointed out that even though this funding has not gone towards the erection of hard infrastructure, as prescribed by EU conditions, it has assisted municipalities with ensuring that service provision is of a good quality. This is mainly evident in the WSA Business Plan, which focuses on strengthening institutional capacity to deliver services in other areas. The UkDM is strengthening its capacity to deliver services effectively. However, this will only be realised if the areas that have been highlighted as challenges requiring further attention by the municipality and its supporting institutions are properly addressed.

Chapter 6

Suggestions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher commences the discussion by returning to the original research questions, namely: what is the impact of the sector-wide approach on service delivery in the UkDM? what factors hindered and enabled sustainable water provision in UkDM during the period of study. At this stage the research objectives will also be incorporated, these are, namely

- To conduct a literature review on the topic of the sector wide approach to development, both within and outside South Africa.
- To outline the impact of the sector-wide approach on the delivery of water services to the people of the Ukhahlamba District Municipality in the Eastern Cape.
- To analyse the factors that have promoted and hindered the sustainable provision of water services during the chosen period in the Ukhahlamba DM.

The South African government played a major role in supplying people with good quality and clean water during the period after the 1994 new democratic dispensation. As pointed out in the literature review, inequality between rich and poor people is particularly acute in those parts of South Africa that were previously classified as homelands during the apartheid dispensation (Motteaux et al 1999:262).

A municipality such as UkDM falls within a part of the Eastern Cape province that was previously classified as a homeland. There were also long-term commitments made to the people with regard to the delivery of water services at the beginning of the new democratic dispensation, but these were never free of charge. People had to pay for the water and all the services that went with it. In spite of these changes, many challenges still abound.

It is important to note that the lessons learnt from this study differ according to levels and degrees of magnitude, with some being more fundamental, with broad

applications, while others being context-specific and not necessarily applicable to different situations. In short, what works in one municipality does not necessarily work in another, even if they are in the same province.

6.2 Specific recommendations based on findings

6.2.1 Access to water services

It has been pointed out previously in this chapter that SWAP funding as such was never meant for infrastructure, it was directed to building and strengthening the capacity of institutions that are meant to provide the services to communities. This, one can argue, has led to a difficulty in making a correlation between the availability of SWAP funding and the infrastructure on the ground. This is something for the South African government to consider in other SWAPs as well so that less restriction is placed on the usage of the funding for putting up infrastructure that will avail services and better the lives of the people.

6.2.2 Creation of a culture of payment for services

It is essential for UkDM to start creating a culture of payment for services through rights and responsibilities based education. In some cases, there is a distinct possibility that local people were not informed in the early stages of water delivery, and that their expectations were not properly managed. This was alluded to by one of the women in Elundini, when she said the following: “they promised to give us free water and the next thing they want is for us to pay for it? Who owns water? Only God owns water. Why can somebody ask us to pay for it? We are going to steal it if they close it.” From this comment, it is clear that the municipality did not put any effort into community education and awareness, and did not provide information about the implications of illegal connections in the community on water delivery.

The municipality needs to educate and inform the community about water regulations and the services for which they need to pay. The researcher strongly recommends that traditional chiefs and local leaders be part of this training, and be able to understand why people need to pay for water. This training also should be conducted in the mother tongue, in order to accommodate all community members. This would be an essential step towards putting the first last and making citizens responsible for the services that they are receiving.

The question that arises in terms of this scenario is the following: What is more important - local ownership, shared ownership or both - in terms of water delivery and the sustainable use of water? It may not be a well known fact that South Africa is a water scarce country, but the reality is that in order for us to achieve security of water supply by 2025, there are numerous changes that have to be made from now onwards. These involve behavioural changes, and it is especially important for all water users in the country to adopt water-saving techniques. This requires a change in mindset and for government to take the responsibility for driving a robust community education and awareness campaign. This change of mindset is also required at community level. Kepe & Cousins (2002:1) argue that sustainable rural development must focus on reducing inequality in the ownership and effective control of productive assets. The Department of Water Affairs has produced some knowledge sharing and information booklets and pamphlets that need to be distributed to all our citizens. It is also important that these materials are made available in the 11 official languages of this country.

6.2.3 Operations and maintenance of infrastructure

It has been pointed out in the previous chapter that SWAP funding resulted in flexibility within the municipality that did not exist with the normal grant-funding mechanisms. It can be argued that SWAP funding enabled the municipality to identify its greatest need, and was able to assist them with institutional capacity, monitoring of drinking water quality, and training of operators, among other things. The UkDM did most of these things after the baby death crisis of 2008.

It is important that UkDM utilises its equitable share grant funding from the national fiscus to address operations and maintenance challenges before crisis erupts. It has been argued that it was a problem for the municipality to effectively respond to crisis due to dilapidated and poorly maintained infrastructure. It has also been shown how SWAP funding made it possible for UkDM to respond quickly and to address critical problems before they became insurmountable. This is an important aspect of the South African SWAP, and this responsiveness can be observed across the municipalities throughout the country that have been recipients of such funding.

The Department of Cooperative Governance (DCOG), the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and other sector departments have lessons to learn from the water SWAP, and this could be an opportunity for the Department of Water Affairs to share such lessons. The issue of the limitations of current funding mechanisms has to be raised in various local government forums, and solutions to this have to be sought. The researcher's suggestion is that some of the conditional grants enabled by the national fiscus have to adopt some of the flexibility enabled by SWAPs. This would allow quicker response. The issue of building and investing in institutional capacity for delivery is essential. This is something that individual countries can pursue, even in cases where there is no donor funding coming from SWAPs.

6.2.4 Effective participation in local planning processes

Local ownership gives responsibility for sustainable service delivery to local partners such as ward and portfolio councillors, communities and relevant civil society structures. This is necessary for sustainability, whereas shared ownership, a promoter of mutual commitment, is also necessary for effective delivery. However, it is interesting to note that the financial restrictions observed in this study neither promoted local ownership nor shared ownership. This demonstrates that while the establishment of inclusive leadership through ward committees and other local governance structures that appear to promote local ownership is commendable, the water services delivery did not adequately support the vision. Transparency and mutual accountability, as well as sufficient flexibility through pure dialogue and meaningful participation in local planning processes are essential. Goldman (2003:2) points out after the establishment of ward committees in 2001, there was an expectation that these will promote community participation in IDP processes, however there is no effective way of getting the committees to participate in IDP processes.

We fail to see this in terms of water delivery in the UkDM when examining the views of community members, and we fail to see it in the broader South African context - hence, the outbreak of service delivery protests throughout the country. This shows an underlying problem of leadership that fails to include benefactors of development in service delivery decisions that affect their lives.

6.2.5 Effective monitoring in Sector Wide Approaches

Land & Hauck (2003:5) point out that weak downward accountability and lack of meaningful participation by the ultimate beneficiaries that is community members is a challenge. There is a need in SWAPs to monitor whether this downward accountability is taking place as regularly as it should in order to ensure that the development efforts are still meeting the desired objectives. The issue of effective monitoring to ensure impact on the ground has still come up as a problem in the SA water SWAP, despite the noted successes. The researcher recommends that more active monitoring be conducted at local level to ensure that the capacity of WSAs to provide services is indeed built and that SWAP funding is utilised for intended purposes. Impact assessments come every 5 years, which is understandable since impact cannot be measured in a short space of time, however, more regular spot checks and evaluations should be conducted at local levels, and the results from these assessments should be used to guide future direction of funding.

6.3 General recommendations to improve the quality of water delivery

6.3.1 Ensuring good quality and sustainable services through public education

While some of the people praised and applauded the delivery of clean water through communal or illegally connected house taps, others still complained about water restrictions when there were cut offs, as well as the colour of the water after cut-offs. One community member said that “after their long days cut-offs, the water that comes out is black, I even prefer to go to the nearest river in order to get clean water, what is the use of all this, let them take out their stupid tap, we do not need it.” For this community member, the colour of the water indicated cleanliness. The water that she would fetch from the nearest river might look clearer and ‘clean’, but she was not aware of the microscopic insects, bacteria or dirt that infected the water. This shows little or no knowledge regarding hygiene and water contamination. Water diseases are a real problem in Africa. South Africa experienced a cholera outbreak at the beginning of 2009, and with the outbreak of the H1N1 virus nationwide, people need to receive proper training and information with regard to clean water and hygiene-related illnesses. The researcher recommends that seminars and meetings are

conducted in order to help communities, especially in rural areas, understand the effect of drinking water from polluted sources.

Educating communities about the dangers of contaminated water from taps would also benefit communities and the UkDM. This is a lesson that could be learnt from the 2008 water quality challenges that resulted in 80 baby deaths. Some community members indicated that their children receive education on the dangers of contaminated water at school - therefore, the Department of Education is an important partner in any community awareness and education initiative.

6.3.2 Poverty and payment for water

One of the biggest challenges facing the municipality is the level of poverty and unemployment in rural areas. Borat & Cassim (2004: 5), state that in 2002, 52 per cent of households in South Africa consisted of unemployed people. This means that most community members are indigent. According to Statistics South Africa, indigent households are those without an income, and those with an income of below R 1200 per month. According to the UkDM Integrated Plan Review of 2006/7, 32 per cent of households in the UkDM had no income, 54 per cent were female-headed households, with 26 per cent of this 54 per cent living with HIV/AIDS (Ukhahlamba IDP Review 2007:2) This demonstrates high levels of vulnerability and deprivation. The vicious cycle of the deprivation trap, as highlighted by (Chambers 1983:10), is evident from this finding with regard to poverty patterns in the UkDM.

It can be argued that the poverty and deprivation trap is an ugly and persistent state of existence, which keeps people below the poverty line and delays the efforts that are made to extricate them from this trap. This poses a general challenge to the effective provision of water services. Water services are provided effectively in instances where the business itself is viable -, that is, when the provider gets revenue from users and consumers to provide an even better service and to maintain the existing service. This means that if the municipality is able to collect sufficient revenue through proper billing procedures, and if consumers are able to pay, it therefore has funds to sustain and grow the service it provides to communities. With regard to communities with high levels of poverty and no stable source of income, it can be concluded that the municipalities that have to bill consumers for water services are unable to do so and

therefore to provide a viable water service. This is a vicious cycle in which communities have the expectation of a service, but cannot get the service because they are unable to keep the business of the municipality running.

6.3.3 Learning from problems

At the time of writing this chapter in June 2010, the UkDM had participated in two lesson learning and sharing platforms in the water sector, where the lessons learnt from the Drinking Water Quality crisis of 2008 were shared. These were documented by an external body, and endorsed as lessons to be shared widely throughout the country by the UkDM and the Integrated Water Sector Forum of the Eastern Cape Province. A response strategy for similar crisis situations in district municipalities was formulated, and it is hoped that others will learn from this experience and will manage crisis situations better in their own municipalities. The level of openness that the municipality demonstrated by allowing this introspection and admitting to failures on its part shows a level of maturity that will help other municipalities in their quest to deliver better services to the people of South Africa.

6.3.4 Institutional Review

In terms of Section 78 of the Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000, municipalities are supposed to determine the capacities of various entities before choosing an appropriate service provider for a municipal function. In the case of the UkDM, the service providers selected for the water services provision function are the four local municipalities. In terms of the Water Services Act, 108 of 1997, a water services authority (WSA) such as the UkDM, is supposed to do planning and financial management, establish bylaws, and regulate the water services provider (WSP). In cases where the District Municipality is the WSA, and its local municipalities are WSPs, there are challenges with regard to the proper regulation of the latter. The different spheres of government in South Africa are recognised as distinct spheres, but are constitutionally mandated to work together, and this is further reiterated in the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 13 of 2005. This therefore poses a challenge for effective local regulation, where two government entities have to regulate each other. This is further complicated by issues of capacity, which are a reality that cannot be ignored in most rural municipalities in this country. Where a local municipality is unable to provide these services efficiently, they in most cases

need to be supported through capacity building initiatives, in order to perform these services better.

It is therefore suggested that the UkDM and other district municipalities that are WSAs facing similar situations should learn from and share lessons with each other on how best to manage WSPs that are government entities. This is a management and capacity building initiative that can be taken forward by the relevant departments in charge of local government and water affairs, DCOG and DWA respectively. Issues of proper contract management practices, service level agreements, and regulation and recourse action must be properly documented to equip managers who have to deal with such challenges on a daily basis with better decision support tools and skills.

6.4 Conclusion

In this study, the researcher explored the impact of the SWAP on service delivery in the locality of the UkDM in the Eastern Cape. Through a literature review and empirical investigation, this study draws the following conclusions as its major contribution to the educational and social development of the people of South Africa and elsewhere in Africa.

6.4.1 Bringing services to the people

South Africa has a history of racial inequalities and unequal distribution of economic resources. This has had a negative impact on access to basic services such as water and electricity by the majority of poor people in the country. After the 1994 elections, a democratically elected government came into power. The mandate of this government was to redress the inequalities of the past and deliver services to the people in an accelerated effort to eradicate poverty. This resulted in government departments such as that of Water Affairs and Forestry being created to manage both the water and forestry resources, and to provide water services to rural communities in the country. Legislation to support these efforts was promulgated, and huge support was required, especially from the donor community, in order to realise these efforts. However, through this study, it has been noted that despite the efforts which government has made since 1994, bringing services to the people is still a challenge. Rural municipalities such as the UkDM are faced with a range of challenges and

manifestations of institutional weaknesses, which require specific attention by government and donor communities if services are to be brought to the people.

6.4.2 Community-driven social development opportunities

The emphasis on community-driven social development opportunities cannot be overstated. Basic principles of people-centred development have to be applied, including a focus on the sustainability of services provided. Ideally, communities should play a role in any effort to sustain the service, otherwise the sense of ownership is not there, and it becomes yet another government-provided service that is open to abuse, which does not benefit either government or people in the end. We have seen this with the illegal water connections that are so prevalent in the UkDM. This in the end negatively affects the community, since there are water cut-offs, and it adversely affects the business of the municipality in the sense that consumers do not pay for the services they receive. Issues such as community-based management of water schemes, and operations and maintenance with incentives for predominantly poor communities should be considered. This would promote efficient water management for the benefit of the municipality and the community.

6.4.3 Genuine partnership and dialogue at all levels

There is value in ongoing partnership and dialogue at all levels. The tendency with most collaborative processes that are enabled by national government is for dialogue to happen at national and provincial levels, and not as robustly as it should at local government and community levels. One can conclude from the role played by the UkDM in provincial and national collaborative structures over the past decade that there has been tremendous value in partnerships and dialogue. However, this cannot be said to be true for intra-municipal dialogue, mainly between the district municipality and its local municipalities, which also happen to be water services providers. There are also issues concerning adequate community involvement, since the pilot of Village Water Committees is still in its proposal stages.

6.4.4 Value of building institutional capacity

It has been noted that most of the challenges faced by the municipality during the period in question have been a result of poor institutional capacity. Although this was the main focus of the SWAP funding, not all the problems were addressed, and some

of these problems still exist. This is a valid point, because at the time of inception of the SWAP and during the course of implementation, there have been concerns about the channelling of funding to building institutional capacity, instead of putting hard infrastructure in place. This is a huge debate, and requires special focus and attention. It is clear that even with all the support and resources for building strong institutions, the country is nowhere near solving the inherent institutional challenges at the local level. These problems result in limited or no capacity within water services authorities to perform their functions, and a lack of capacity to properly regulate water services provision. The researcher strongly recommends that this continues to be the focus, not only of the donor community, and the South African government, in its efforts to improve local government, should prioritise institutional capacity issues.

6.4.5 Continued sector learning and collaboration

It has been shown that the water sector responded to the drinking water quality crisis that resulted in 80 baby deaths in the UkDM through the promotion of collaboration and learning from mistakes. This shows a level of maturity in sector dialogue and collaboration, and this should be encouraged to continue. It should be the mandate of the Department of Water Affairs as a sector leader to ensure the continued facilitation of sector learning and collaboration, so that mistakes such as the one that occurred in the UkDM are not easily repeated by other municipalities.

6.5 Research aspects that need further attention by other researchers

- There is a need for a review of the body of knowledge on Sector Wide approaches for services such as water, health, agriculture in South Africa. This would benefit other researchers who want to pursue further work on South African SWAPs
- An assessment of the impact of illegal connections on the overall business of the municipality, not just water, needs further exploration by researchers since this is a major contributor to poor service delivery, yet when communities protest they overlook their role in crippling service delivery
- The issue of the impact of the Sector Wide Approach, on service delivery to vulnerable groups in society is also worth considering by other researchers. This should take into account the HIV Aids infected and affected, women, youth, people living with disabilities and children.

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