



Community-driven development: understanding the interlinkages between individuals, community-based workers and institutions.

*CDD Working Paper Series*

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**Working Paper No. 7**

**Case Study: Tsogang Water and Sanitation project, Lefahla village,  
Limpopo Province**

By  
Lindi Mdhuli  
with the African Institute for Community-Driven Development

July 2006

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The purpose of this research is to identify the potential and constraints of community-driven management and service delivery by tracking the evolution of participation, in selected projects as shaped by the interface between individuals, community workers and institutions.

Pro-poor community-driven development is both enabled and constrained by individual identities, the actions of community workers and the workings of institutions. The positive aspects can be enhanced through a greater understanding of individual motivations, institutional processes and improved monitoring techniques. However, the limitations of such models must also be recognised.

This research has three objectives: (1) to understand individual participation in collective action; (2) to understand the contribution of community-workers to participatory processes; and (3) to understand the possibilities of 'getting institutions right' for pro-poor development.

The research analyses case studies of community-driven development activity in relation to water and HIV/AIDS in Tanzania and South Africa.

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*This Working Paper Series is dedicated to the memory of  
Comfort Mfangavo  
enthusiastic research partner in Dar es Salaam.*

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Working Paper 1

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## **Key Findings**

This case study about community-based water management was carried out in Lefhala, Limpopo province, a poor, rural and isolated village with little access to services or state governance. The water project, facilitated by a nongovernmental organisation (NGO) with support by municipal leaders and carried out by a community-based and community-selected water committee, seems to be one of the very few developmental projects implemented in the village. However, the case study shows that community participation in development interventions in this isolated village is obstructed by a) existing conflicts and inequalities in the community, b) by the continuous reproduction of existing bureaucratic hierarchies, and c) by a lack of proper training and funding to sustain services delivery systems. Nevertheless, the community's involvement in the water project seems to have sparked several community members to expand on the uses of acquired skills and resources.

### **Institutions & community participation**

Municipality and facilitating NGO reproduce a top-down hierarchy between them and the community water committees. Little effort is made to take the opinion and participation of such committees serious. The committees are only expected to carry out a set of assigned tasks.

### **Community and community-based workers (CBWs)**

Conflict over village leadership between two headmen and their families constrain the implementation of equally accessible services through participatory processes.

The CBWs carry out their tasks on a voluntary basis. Whereas remuneration is not expected, the community needs to have funds to make up for lost productive hours and expenses made by CBWs.

The distinction between the community development worker (CDW) and the CBW is not clear. CDW need to be accountable to their communities instead of the municipalities. This could increase community participation in development initiatives.

Participation in community interventions is restricted to those who are literate. The use of English by NGO and municipality also constrains the participation of many villagers.

Trained water committee members have difficulty with applying acquired skills to other areas but their assigned tasks. They also show little effort to hare acquired skills with others, thereby wasting a source for further development of the village. Further capacity building and resources are necessary to encourage creativity and sharing among capacitated community-members. This could improve rural livelihoods.

**Summary of community-based water management in Makele and Lefahle**

<b>Institutional Origins</b>	<b>Facilitating Agent</b>	<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Incentives/motivation</b>	<b>Mechanisms of in/exclusion</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
Water Committee in 2004, Makele and Lefahle, Limpopo	NGO Tsogang; Local Municipality; District Sekhukhune; Department of Water Affairs and Forestry.	NGO community vote for appointees	NGO for agreed tasks; to community for actual functioning	Training opportunity; Status Capital; Some receive stipend of R25 per day	NGO guideline in/excludes according to their interpretation of equality; levels of literacy; those who have leadership position versus non-leaders	Provide labour for works & ensure it happens; identify tap-locations (ie. Springs); consult community; intermediary between community and NGO.



## **1 Introduction**

South Africa's sixty year history of apartheid left a legacy of high levels of inequality in the delivery of public services. The overall vision of the current South African government is for a people-driven process: "Reconstruction and development require a population that is empowered through expanded rights, meaningful information and education, and an institutional network fostering representative, participatory and direct democracy" (Republic of South Africa 1994). The Constitution stresses the need for the public to participate in policy-making and the legislation around local government in particular stresses active participation. The introduction of the Municipal Service Partnership (MSP) policy marked a commitment by government to provide a clear framework that actively promotes an ethos of participation by consumers and other stakeholders in the process of determining and implementing service delivery options.

The purpose of this research was to identify the potential and constraints of the Community-Based Worker (CBW) system and service delivery by tracking the evolution of participation in selected projects as shaped by the interface between individuals, community workers and institutions. The key research question is: How do community based worker systems effectively contribute to pro-poor development? Tsogang is a non-profit organisation (NPO) implementing the use of community based workers for the delivery of water services in rural areas around Limpopo province. Lefahla is one of the villages that are part of Tsogang's water implementation project.

The main research methodology was to combine conventional ethnographic methods (participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups) with participatory learning and action (PLA) techniques (wealth ranking and community mapping). This was drawn mainly from participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) exercises Tsogang carried out prior to implementing the water project in the village. The key target sample included Tsogang officials, key stakeholders in the community groups and the water committee. The research was carried out during the months of October 2005 and May 2006. Due to the geographical distance between the Khanya-aicdd main office and Lefahla village it was difficult to obtain more detailed data to support findings of the case study. Nevertheless the author is of the opinion that the information and analysis provided in the report do cover the key issues for the CBWs in the village.

## **2 Background to the communities**

### **2.1 Economic and institutional overview of Lefahla village**

Lefahla is one of ten villages forming ward 16 in the Greater Tubatse municipality, which in turn is one of the municipalities forming the Greater Sekhukhune District municipality. The ward consists of Mankele, Lefahla, Mokgotho, Mamogolo, Segorong, Maretlwaneng, Malepe, Penge, Morabe and GaMotshana villages. Penge is at the centre of these villages and is the one village with routes linking to an urban settlement. Penge is just over 10 km from Lefahla village and the nearest urban area is Praktiseer, 20km from Penge. Burgersfort is the nearest settlement with a Central Business District (CBD) and is situated 24km from Praktiseer. According to data from the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality (2003) the budget for capital expenditure for water to the population of Lefahla village for 156 people. Members of the water committee indicated that there were 45 households in the village with an average household size of about eight people<sup>1</sup>. Data collected by Tsogang teams during PRA exercises established that there were 56 households in the village.

With regards to the administration of the village there is a ward councillor who sits on the Greater Tubatse Municipal council and one ward committee member per village. From 2000-2006 the ward councillor was Mr Mashaba, a teacher at a local school. Mr Mashaba resided in Praktiseer. The community representative for Lefahla on the ward committee was Mogau Matshubeni. She indicated that it seemed that the ward committee was effective in liaising with committees but that the concerns raised by community members were never appropriately addressed. There was even an indication of an amount of R40,000 on the budget set aside for water and sanitation but when committee members wanted to probe the issue further, the ward councillor failed to respond with a concrete answer. There was a sense of disempowerment by the other ward committee members because they felt that, while they work hard to mobilise communities to take part in the politics of bringing development, the ward councillor does not seem to relay the same kind of energy and enthusiasm when he goes to council meetings. The members of the committee often felt that it seemed that only people who are professionals, especially teachers, get elected as ward councillors. There is a perception that candidates put themselves up only to make themselves richer and end up burdening themselves with more work in addition to their day jobs.

Members of the community seemed to have more faith in the ward committee members because they are seen as a resource to the community. People often consult with them in understanding what service

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<sup>1</sup> Meeting with members of the water committee Lefahle village, 21 October 2005

they can access from the municipality. Through consultation with the ward committee, household families where there is a funeral can now have municipal water tanks bringing water to their homes to help with funeral proceedings. Ward committee members attribute this positive outcome to lobbying by members and also greater motivation because communities have shown confidence in the committee members.

Most of the ward committee members are young people who are also members of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL). The normal procedure for electing ward committee members is that the ward councillor will call a community meeting and make a call to the community to elect a person whom they trust to represent their needs on the committee. Then community members will choose by popular vote. In the previous term the ward committee attended two training sessions at the Tubatse municipality to get a deeper understanding of the role and function of the ward committee. However most of the members feel that it was just a theoretical exercise. Members are not given a chance to be proactive in bringing about development to their people; some decisions are taken unilaterally by the council and some of the officials sitting at the municipality. In March 2006 the second municipal election were held and Mr Sereemane, who resides in GaMotshana village which is about 25km from Lefahla village, was elected. Ward committee members were not yet selected at the time of writing.

At village level Lefahla has the tribal authority in place, with two tribal headmen. Mr Matshubeng has three people sitting on his tribal council and Mr Mametja has four people sitting on his tribal council. A forest and river in the village set the jurisdiction of the two tribal councils and each has their own tribal stamp. There are issues on which both tribal councils work together, for instance in the Tsogang project. Some community members do not see the logic in having two tribal heads and feel that tribal councils are not effective enough in advocating for community development issues. There is some tension amongst members of Lefahla community regarding the legitimacy of having two headmen. Apparently one of the headmen is self appointed without any blood linkages to the chieftaincy lineage. People did not want to discuss this matter openly because the other headman is also a minister in the local church and a traditional healer. In addition to that his first wife is the sister of the other legitimate headman. Chapter 12 of the South African Constitution makes provision for traditional authorities to have a role on matters affecting local communities. In the Limpopo province there is a house of traditional leaders. Mr Matshubeng has made efforts to raise the concerns of the community at this level but the process of bringing about change at community level is often slow.

There is acknowledgement on the part of the two headmen that the local municipality is the sphere of government that is closest to the people and therefore where action needs to happen. In reality this is

not happening, mainly because the local government does not acknowledge the power and function of traditional authority. The headmen feel they are acknowledged out of courtesy more than anything else, because they are never consulted to give inputs on policy issues. With the introduction of the new democracy contemporary politics seemed to have over-ruled traditional customs and it seems the older generations are the only ones who still want to maintain the traditional customs.

There are different views between the older and younger generations with regards to the interface between traditional authorities and local government. The older generation still maintain that traditional protocol needs to be observed when dealing with communities where there is a headman. The headman is seen as the first step before taking matters to higher authorities, in this case the local municipality. Even the ward councillor is seen as a constituent of the tribal headmen with the role of messenger between the headmen and the municipality. The younger generation are however of a different opinion. They feel that through votes the mandate for bringing development is placed in the hands of the ward councillor and that the municipality has to deliver equitable services to both urban and rural communities. According to young people the traditional authority will further entrench the developmental divide between urban and rural communities. However they maintain that the traditional authority is important for the preservation of traditional practices, cultures and norms. The young people we interviewed indicated that they are thankful to be residing in areas where there are traditional authorities because their level of understanding of the Sepedi language is much deeper and crime levels in Lefahla are not as high as in neighbouring urban villages such as Penge. The youth put this down mainly to the disciplinary measures and rules of the tribal councils.

The main community groups include Sebatakgomo, a community burial society including people from neighbouring communities. Affiliation to this society is per household where households contribute wood and water to help with the catering arrangements in the case of a funeral. Women and older girls go to the bereaved family to give support in terms of helping with household chores. Another society is the Diphiri society for men, which is also related to funerals. Members help with carrying the casket and digging the graves. There is no graveyard in Lefahla and there is no area that has been rezoned by the municipality for such purposes. Thus people bury their deceased randomly on the neighbouring mountains. About forty households are members of the St Engenas Zion Christian Church (ZCC), one of the most widely supported African-initiated churches in South Africa. Most of the daily activities of the members of this church are prescribed by the teachings of the church. For instance women are not allowed to wear trousers and during menstrual cycles women are not supposed to touch food. However water committee members in Lefahla, which is comprised mainly of women, have not experienced negative sentiments expressed by the community. On the committee women expressed that sometimes it is difficult to do intensive labour such as digging trenches in a dress or a skirt, so they would wear

trousers or track pants underneath the skirt. Belief in witchcraft and African traditional beliefs in ancestors is not prevalent, although there are random experiences where people claim that they have been bewitched. Nothing concrete ever comes out of the accusations.

The main socio-economic groups in the village include the aged, employed single mothers and young people - especially those just out of school. There are no institutions of higher education in the whole of Tubatse Municipality so most of the young people leave the village to further their studies in Witbank, Middelburg, Tzaneen or Polokwane. On completing their studies hardly any learners return and they end up settling in those or other urban areas. This contributes to the prevalent patterns of rural-urban migration. Lefahla village and the neighbouring villages have a history of migrant labour where most of the men left their homes to seek employment in the urban areas. Most of the migrants work on the mines in Steelpoort, Middelburg and Witbank or on mines nearer Johannesburg. The community members say that migration to Johannesburg is mainly for jobs in the professional sector by young people who had gone to further their studies.

Penge used to be a mining settlement but the mines closed in the late 1990s and most people lost their jobs. Some returned to settle in their home villages and some were afflicted with asbestos-related tuberculosis. Each of the 45 households has at least one member who is a migrant labourer<sup>2</sup>. Most of the people employed in the urban areas return home during Easter and the December vacation. Most families in Lefahla are members of the ZCC and they visit home during Easter is mainly for the annual pilgrimage to Moria in Polokwane.

About eighty percent of the adult population who reside permanently in the village are unemployed<sup>3</sup>. The main source of household income is from government social grants received by members of the family either as a child support grant of R190/month/child or an old age pension of R820/month or both. Some households get remittances from family members who are working in urban towns; however for some families this is not regular, so it is difficult to cite this as a form of income. There is a large number of young people who do not have opportunities to further their studies due to inability to access bursaries or study loans. Most of the young people follow their parents' existing activities by being involved in community and or church activities. In the church there is a youth church choir that meets every week to practice new hymns. Community members feel that this is a good choir and have encouraged them to record their songs on cassettes to be sold to other church groups.

Many people in the village lack the skills required in the mainstream labour market. Most of the people are skilled in doing elementary tasks. In the case of women this is mainly sewing and crafts

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<sup>2</sup> Community focus group Lefahla village 20 October 2005

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

such as making brooms, baskets and clay pots. Most of the older women are skilled in making woven grass mats and clay pots and utensils. The women have made their own ovens to dry the pots. This is seen as an age-old custom and is not even considered as a form of technology by the producers. Other skills include making wooden utensils such as spoons and other stirring equipment. The men in the community make wooden walking sticks and tools for tilling land. This is a labour-intensive activity because there are no tools for chiselling the wood.

The livelihood strategies of this community revolve around agriculture. Every household in Lefahla has a patch of land used for small-scale farming of wheat, maize, beans, avocados, paw-paws, mangos and bananas. These are all individual initiatives and people use traditional methods of farming. They do not buy seeds for planting. The products of their farming are used for sustenance and any surplus is shared with other members of the community. Whatever is left over is saved in storage houses. Some families sell their produce in Penge and Burgersfort but this is a small amount of produce.

The main challenge faced by people in selling produce at a larger scale is lack of transport. Women are mostly responsible for carrying the produce on their heads to sell at the market. The other mode of transport is donkey carts. The money earned is often used to pay for school fees and school uniforms, December and January is the primary time when people take their produce to towns. There are no organised markets for the produce because selling in those towns is on an *ad hoc* basis and sometimes sales are made on the basis of orders from people in the neighbouring towns. The community indicated that there is an opportunity to venture into communal farming, although farming is a seasonal activity that is dependent on rainfall patterns. On Matshubeng's plot there is substantial agricultural activity with the production of paw paws, mangos, sugar cane, maize and avocados. In 2004 and 2005 Mogau Matshubeng won third prize in the Women Farmer of the Year competition run by the Department of Agriculture (DoA). The agricultural activity thrived because Matshubeng's family put funds together to install irrigation pipes to water their fields.

Community members perceive agriculture as their strongest resource, backed by the fact that members of the community are not lazy to venture into agricultural activities. This includes young people. One of the future goals of the community is to engage with government to bring training and funding to enable the village to build on existing agricultural expertise, especially now that employment opportunities for the young people are scarce. Members of the community hope to use the success of the Matshubeng family to get the DoA's support. Since obtaining her prize Mogau has attended training on agriculture activities. On returning to the community she has become a resource to the

community, giving advice on the best times for planting and also for digging irrigation trenches to draw from the nearby river.

There are six households with ventilated improved pit latrines (VIPs). These were constructed through a Mvula Trust initiated project, and implemented in the neighbouring village of Mokgotho. Mvula Trust is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that receives funding from government to carry out stand-alone water- and sanitation-related projects. Tsogang was the implementing organisation and worked with the community to build the latrines. The project budget only allowed for the installation of VIPs to six households in Lefahla<sup>4</sup>. Apart from the Tsogang project, which was still under way at the time of writing, there is no access to potable water in the village. People draw water from nearby streams coming from a spring in the mountain and from Lefahla River. This water is used for drinking and those who can afford to install irrigation pipes also use the water for agriculture and household gardens. Communities did not necessarily rate access to potable water as a priority. But since no service delivery has reached the place the community members decided to accept Tsogang's offer for piped water into the village. When asked what their priorities are the community cited access roads, employment opportunities and markets for agricultural products. The water provided by the Tsogang project is for drinking and household use.

There is no electricity in the entire village apart from a solar system that is installed at the primary school and in a few households. The nearest high school is in Penge and the matric pass rate is very low. Some of the children never reach matric. Not a single household in the village has a television set. Community members believe that this puts them at a disadvantage because sometimes it is difficult for them to relate to some of the issues they hear over the radio. There are no Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses in the village; people build houses using their own private savings. Roads in the village are bad and can only be accessed using a four wheel drive or bakkie vehicles. There are about seven people in the village who own a car and even these are regularly in a state of disrepair. There is no clinic; people attend Penge hospital, about 10 km from Lefahla. In the case of people who are too sick to walk this is a long distance to travel, since there is no public transport (mini-bus taxis or buses) coming into the village. Penge hospital is not fully functional because there is no ambulance and they only attend to immunisation of children and ante-natal mothers. The nearest clinic is in GaMoraba which is about 16km from Lefahla, although a mobile clinic comes once a month to service Mamogolo, Mankele, Mokgotho and Lefahla. This clinic does not bring significant change because it is mainly for chronic treatment such as hypertension and diabetes.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Kenny Phasha Project Manager Tsogang water projects May 2006

There are several common health ailments amongst the group including diabetes, TB, stroke, hypertension, HIV/AIDS, cholera and other waterborne diseases. Waterborne diseases are seasonal and only become prevalent when there is no rain. Some of the cases are reported and monitored by the local clinic, especially cases of hypertension and diabetes. TB cases are due to exposure to asbestos as most of the people used to work in asbestos mines. There are still high levels of stigma around HIV/AIDS in the village, primarily because people who are infected are mainly migrant labourers in the bigger cities and they come back home being sick. Education about HIV/AIDS without visual aids is not effective. There are two home-based carers (HBCs) who are part of the bigger network of HBCs working in ward 16. They work from Penge hospital but reported that they do not get enough support from the nursing personnel at the hospital. They do however sympathise with the nurses because they have observed that the hospital is understaffed and there are not enough vehicles to allow the nurses to do home visits. In January 2006 the Limpopo Department of Health asked the HBCs to develop a database of all HBCs. There were talks about payment but this has not been confirmed to date<sup>5</sup>. The main services the HBCs provide is mainly information dissemination and HIV/AIDS care and support to the infected and affected. The carers have not received any training on home-based care. They provide care by visiting people, bringing food and help to bath those bedridden.

The members of the water committee explained that most members of the community have left for better employment opportunities elsewhere because of the limited development in the village. People do not feel part of the new democracy. It does appear that tangible benefits of development are few. “Life is still the same for us here, we only saw the former Deputy President Mr Zuma when he came to open the new bridge on the Lefahla River in 2000”, said one community member. The bridge itself was only built after community members put their own money together. There was a contribution from government, although members of the community could not agree on which government department provided funds. Before the bridge was built people crossed the river with the aid of a hand-operated cable car.

Tsogang Water and Sanitation is an NGO established in 1995 to assist in the development struggle of South Africa. Tsogang’s mandate is to ensure that the previously disadvantaged population reaches the standards of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations (UN) and to contribute to the achievement of a better life for all. Tsogang runs a rural water and sanitation programme targeting poor communities that do not have access to water. Tsogang employs community management and participatory approaches in implementing their programmes. Before embarking on a project Tsogang undertakes a livelihoods assessment to identify existing resources in the community.

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Mogau Matshubeng 17 May 2006



When Tsogang begins a project, a project steering committee is selected and members of the committee serve on a voluntary basis (see Annex 1 for project cycle). The community elects the committee and Tsogang plays a facilitating role. The NGO does not dictate who should be members of the committee, although basic guidelines such as gender equality are always prescribed. The elected committee is supposed to be part of the entire process of managing the project within their community and ensuring that the project is sustainable and owned by the wider community.

Tsogang's work is mainly in rural communities that are not reached by municipal services. Tsogang delivers water according to RDP standards as set by the South African government. According to the South African Constitution water and sanitation services are a function of the district municipality. The Sekhukhune capital expenditure for water reports that the standards in Lefahla are eighty percent below the RDP target (Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality 2003). Cheaper technologies to deliver services are used to ensure that the tools employed are sustainable in the context of that particular community.

The Lefahla village project is one of a number of Irish-funded projects that Tsogang manages. Donors, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) and the Tubatse municipality are key partners in the project. The municipality identified the villages to be included in the project. The project was initiated in September 2004 when the project committee was selected and trained. The main role of DWAF and the local municipality is to monitor progress on the project<sup>6</sup>. Tsogang works on a budget of R450,000 to install potable water in three villages.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Kenny Phasha Project Manager, 18 May 2006

### **3 CBWs and community-driven development**

#### **3.1 CBWs in the Tsogang water project**

For the purpose of this case study a CBW refers to a member of the water committee in the Lefahla water scheme as implemented by Tsogang. The majority of people still use river water as there is no running water or taps in houses. There are two households that draw water using pipes to reach their homes. These are private initiatives and the owners had to cover the full costs. Although people realise that having clean water is important, they prioritise other services such as electricity, better roads and houses before water. However they take what is on offer - in this case, water. They also realise that they can use water to improve crop production eg for irrigation.

Tsogang used the links they had established when implementing a Mvula project of installing VIP toilets in 2002 to introduce the project in Lefahla. A community meeting was called and Tsogang presented the goal of helping communities to access clean water within 200m of their houses through communal standpipes. During fieldwork for this case study the committee and other members of the community were in the process of digging trenches to install pipes to draw water from the spring on top of the mountain into the village. There were debates and several meetings were held to discuss the exact location of the taps. Tsogang's view was that the project aimed to install communal taps but the community were convinced that they were getting taps and reticulated water in their homes. Tsogang argued that to install taps in households would mean installing a meter and therefore the implication that people have to pay for water. The community members believe that the water from the spring is a natural resource that always belonged to the community so they should not pay for it. They however do not consider the capital expenditure to install pipes, etc.

The community was asked to elect a committee reflecting the demographics of the village, with gender empowerment as a criterion. Tsogang prescribed the composition of the committee and the community felt this was an imposition. However in the end community members were happy with the final group of people that was elected. Tsogang explained that there would be no financial incentives involved except that the committee would undergo training on the basics of water and sanitation service provision. The community elected ten members - eight of them women and two men. The committee comprised mainly young people. Over time the composition of the committee changed because some people dropped out because of illiteracy. After the first few meetings with Tsogang some members of the community felt marginalised because they could not understand English and some of the concepts were difficult to explain in the local language.

The committee attended training sessions on basic book-keeping and health and safety in dealing with water and sanitation. The committee had to elect a secretary who would record proceedings of meetings of the committee, meetings between the committee and Tsogang and any meetings with the community. At first the committee did not understand its role in relation to the community; they felt they were accountable to Tsogang more than to the community. However over time the community started approaching members of the committee to ask about progress on the project and this inspired the committee to take the initiative to contact Tsogang and not just wait for them. The committee felt that Tsogang was not always honest with them. For instance they did not know the overall budget of the project or why progress in their village was slower compared to other villages.



The community participated in the project by providing labour to dig trenches. After the committee complained to Tsogang fieldworkers that the process of getting water to the community was slow, Tsogang suggested that more people be employed to help with digging the trenches. A community meeting was called and people were invited to take part. Most of the people

who volunteered were young men, with a few young women. Two supervisors were appointed to record the time people spent and the progress against set tasks. The supervisors received more money than the workers. People indicated they were proud to be involved in activities that benefit the whole community. There was also a sense of an underlying status attached to involvement in the project because you earn the respect of the community. There were monetary incentives involved in digging the trenches, and this seemed to be an important factor motivating people to be involved. People were remunerated at R60 for every six metres of trench they dug and R35 for filling trenches with concrete.

The water committee learned that people in Mokgotho (a neighbouring village), also involved in a Tsogang water project and doing similar work, got more money than they were getting and this created tension. Tsogang officials justified this discrepancy by explaining that each community is getting what they agreed to and signed in their contracts. Committee members also had the experience of digging trenches only to be told that the trenches were not straight and had to be redone without compensation. A Tsogang fieldworker had informed the committee members that they would be remunerated for redoing the trenches but when the project manager came he reversed the decision. It is clear that decision making did not lie at the community level but with the facilitating NGO.

Members of the community sometimes perceived Tsogang with suspicion because they felt that the NGO was not transparent in terms of how much money was allocated to the community. In reality Tsogang had to wait for funds from donors before it could purchase the required material. This made the community members impatient (see for example annex 2, journal entries of one of the CBWs). Apparently people are prone to wait as they are used to taking orders from others instead of asking questions or taking the initiative. This raises questions of genuine community ownership for the process despite Tsogang's methodology of setting up committees to ensure a collectively-owned process and that communities are part of the process. In this case committee members felt they were not part of the process as they were caught between Tsogang and the communities. This frustrated them at times because their first loyalty is to the community whom they feel they should be accountable to. During times when there was no activity on the water project, community members expressed their frustration and impatience to the committee members, and in most cases the committee did not feel it was in a position to provide answers. The community members felt that there are people amongst them with strong leadership qualities that could be built on and strengthened to manage the project on their own. Tsogang could allocate a certain amount of money to run the project and let the committee decide how this is achieved, with Tsogang providing overall support and monitoring on a monthly basis. There were times when the committee had to wait for over a month for Tsogang to come up with the next implementation plan.

### **3.2 The contribution of community workers to participatory processes**

Members of the community expressed a desire for the water committee to be more empowered and to take forward some of the challenges facing the community to higher levels of government. They felt the committee could achieve this because it had displayed a high level of commitment even at times when it seemed like things were not going right. The committee held several meetings with government representatives mainly from DWAF. The municipality was invited but did not send a representative on a regular basis. The meetings were mainly to inform stakeholders of the progress on the project. Tsogang also confirmed that working with committees has brought empowerment to the committee members and confidence to the communities who now believe there is hope for the future. The dissatisfaction expressed by committee members hinge on the need for technical expertise, such as surveying for pipelines to be installed, with whoever was tasked to do this remaining on site on a full-time basis to guide the community. Communities wanted to carry on with the work even in the absence of Tsogang. As a result Tsogang moved toward placing full-time fieldworkers with the communities to give ongoing support.

The Tsogang project has empowered young members of Lefahla village who are starting to explore other ways of improving their livelihoods. This includes using available natural resources to turn into

business enterprises. People have also expressed the desire not to wait for government but to drive their own development. Through the training on book-keeping provided by Tsogang people have realised the importance of maintaining records, especially of time worked, because now people can account for the work achieved. They say that timekeeping is also important for planning purposes because sometimes people tended to overestimate time available to complete a certain task. Nevertheless there was a sense of despair when people considered that the Tsogang project was a short-term project that would be over once the taps were installed. Some committee members were considering leaving the village for employment opportunities elsewhere.

### **3.3 Understanding the possibilities for ‘getting institutions right’ for pro-poor development**

#### *3.3.1 Local government*

The local municipality is not visible enough on this project and even the ward councillors are not addressing many of the challenges facing the rural villages. Amongst other roles, the Constitution tasks local municipalities with ensuring the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in all matters of local government. The objective is based on the understanding that communities must participate in all decision-making processes of local government on matters that affect them. The introduction of the ward committee system was a move towards the further actualisation of the objective of enhancing participatory local government. In principle the ward committee members have to work in partnership with the ward councillor, helping to identify pervasive conditions in the community and making recommendations to the ward councillor on matters and policy affecting the ward.

#### *3.3.2 NGO (Facilitating and Implementing Agency)*

One of the water committee members was also a ward committee member in the previous term. She explained that there was little difference between the two because it seems that people with financial power do not feel inclined to listen to recommendations of committee members. For instance the previous ward councillor did not want to empower the ward committee to handle the budget allocated to the ward. There were no reports to the ward committee on municipal expenditure. The relationship between the water committee and Tsogang is similar in that the committee is trusted only to do manual labour and to disseminate information about water and sanitation hygiene but not to handle finances of the project, which Tsogang does. This means that poor people’s voices are not listened to as long as people are not literate and do not have the money to do things on their own. In their practices institutions such as Tsogang and the local municipality seem to perpetuate a culture of dependency because they are unable or unwilling to equip people with the necessary skills to question authority in

a constructive manner. The community believed that ward councillors only visit their communities when canvassing for votes and after that they forget their promises.

For its part Tsogang also experienced problems in working with the technical directorate at Tubatse Local Municipality. The director was never available to visit the project site; only DWAF officials were available to give support and advice, and even this was on an *ad hoc* basis. This presents a picture of a very weak institutional relationship between potential CBWs, service providers and government structures.

### *3.3.3 Provincial support*

The introduction of Community Development Workers (CDWs) is an initiative stemming from the Office of the Presidency. The main vision for CDWs is captured in President Thabo Mbeki's State of the Nation address in February 2003 where he stated that "...government will create a public service echelon of multi-skilled community development workers who will maintain direct contact with the people where these masses live. We are determined to ensure that government goes to the people so that we sharply improve the quality of the outcomes of public expenditures intended to raise the standards of living of our people. It is wrong that government should oblige people to come to government offices and have no means to pay for the transport to reach government offices" (Department of Provincial and Local Government n.d.). The initiative is viewed as contributing to a removal of the 'development deadlock', strengthening the 'democratic social contract', advocating for an organised voice for the poor and improving the government-community network which contributes to 'joined up' government. However, this process is flawed in that these CDWs are deployed in municipalities but without proper management and or supervision support provided to them.

## **4 Conclusions and findings**

### **4.1 The role of the state in service delivery**

Despite local and district government having a key role in the delivery of services, the reality in Greater Tubatse Municipality is that the municipality faces serious challenges in bridging the gaps in service delivery. There are gaps in the administrative structures in the municipality because of a failure to implement the political mandates as spelled out in the previous ANC local election manifesto. None of the municipal services specified in Schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution are available to the people of Lefahla village. This seems to be a prevalent phenomenon in the neighbouring rural areas. It seems the people of Lefahla village are excluded from the whole concept of a developmental state because no development had reached their area. There is need to acknowledge the unique characteristics of rural communities including the need to bring services closer to the people while acknowledging their existing traditional structures and social fabric which hold the community together.

### **4.2 The role of state in participatory process**

A ward councillor is elected from among the ten villages of ward 16. Then a ward committee is formed of representatives from each of the villages. Legally the ward committee is meant to serve as a link between the community and the local municipality through the ward councillor. However, ward committee members in Lefahla do not feel acknowledged by the local municipality or by the ward councillor, although they do feel empowered by the community's displayed confidence and respect in them. The introduction of the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process, of which the ward committee forms part, is to ensure that communities are part of the planning process, that real community needs are reflected in the plans of the municipalities and that priority need of communities are budgeted for. However, in Lefahla the community has not participated in planning for their ward.

With regards to community meetings around water issues, the ward councillor attends on invitation from Tsogang. Normally these meetings are mainly to help communities voice their concerns and frustrations around water; even so, the onus seems to rest with Tsogang as the implementing agent. It seems the ward councillor sees the process of water service delivery as an issue for Tsogang with no intervention needed by the local municipality. The municipality needs to involve the community more in planning processes. The technical director for water and sanitation in Tubatse municipality is reactive, dealing with community issues only as urgent needs arise.

The IDP outreach process needs to be strengthened and people's voices need to be enhanced in these forums. Given the rural background of communities around Lefahla village government should embark on a rights-based literacy campaign to inform people of their rights and responsibilities.



### **4.3 Community-based workers**

#### *4.3.1 Selection criteria*

The CBWs in the Tsogang project were elected by popular vote at community meeting. There was no set structure. Community meetings are democratic because Lefahla is not a big village, although the issue of the tribal authorities has created divisions and impacted on who got selected to participate in the committee. It is an unwritten rule that each of the two headmen of the village wants to be satisfied and this might not necessarily be possible because the population in one of the headman's area of jurisdiction is smaller and mostly consists of his family members. This raises issues of nepotism and favouritism that in turn impacts on how the committee operates. There is need for a neutral facilitator, although no-one could really say who should be a neutral facilitator as the issue of the two headmen is a sensitive one that people did not want to discuss openly.

The community at large appeared to be happy with the process feeling that they were informed and were part of the process, and that the process was transparent. However, some people felt marginalised because of their literacy levels, since to be eligible to be a member of the Tsogang water committee people needed to be able to read and write. Not all members initially selected by the community could read and write so they were replaced. This brought in elements of shame and exclusion. In future participation should be based on passion and ability to do the required job. Where there are literacy gaps people should be put into an Adult Basic Education (ABET) process to ensure capacity building and empowerment.

#### *4.3.2 Relationship between community structures and CBWs*

Sebatakgomo is a burial society that has been in existence for a long time. It is the moral fibre that binds the community together. Membership to Sebatakgomo is by default and there are no selection criteria. It has elements of being a CBW system except that members are only mobilised when the occasion arises. There is no training required; learning is by doing and is passed on from generation to generation. All the members of the water committee have strong links with Sebatakgomo, though these are not formal institutional linkages between the two structures. The water committee identified the need to forge strong working relations to allow for cross-pollination of ideas. For instance the committee could show Sebatakgomo how they could implement a proper recording system. This is something the community structure currently does not have. This could help in tracking the number of funerals in the community and also the possible causes of death. This would assist in preparing the community for dealing with such issues. A recording system could also help to monitor community support for these structures.

#### *4.3.4 Training, support, supervision and accountability*

Water committee members received training on book-keeping, and water and sanitation hygiene. The training has remained within the committee, because the members do not use the skills to train other people or to improve their own livelihoods. The members need to get accreditation for training received. This could help them seek employment opportunities and to start applying their skills beyond the Tsogang project. Although appreciated, the training received from Tsogang is insufficient. Members felt they needed training in financial and project management to be able to source and manage funding for other development in the community. Nevertheless the experience in the Tsogang project has inspired members to start taking an active role in the development of their community and not wait for government. To support this there is a need for financial resources and skills to manage funds and bring quality development. Committee members have started to explore ideas on how to develop into entrepreneurs, because they acknowledge that development that comes through an external service provider is short term and is not sustainable.

#### *4.3.5 Impacts and sustainability*

People have started to explore the resources available to them and how to turn these into enterprises, for example bottling water from the spring as it is a natural resource. Agriculture has been cited as one of the major socioeconomic sectors of this area, although water is a problem. People in this area are eager and willing to work but there is not enough support from government to link communities to information and to the formal economy. People in the rural communities are self sufficient but the new government seems to be concentrating more on urban areas. It is not necessarily true that people in rural areas want to be urbanised. Development should be brought in such a way that it suits the conditions of the rural areas. In this way the impact will be fully appreciated and the community will ensure sustainability.

#### *4.3.6 Payment vs voluntarism*

CDWs and CBWs are different concepts. CDWs are government employees who become the extension service of government in a particular local government area – a top-down approach to service delivery. CBWs are the extension of community needs but with more emphasis on linking communities with needed services and bringing services in the most affordable way – a bottom-up approach to service delivery. Ideally CBWs are people who live in community and do voluntary work for the benefit of the community. But there are issues of whether people are able to work long hours without receiving benefits. This does not mean that people want to take CBW activities as a form of employment. They do not necessarily expect to be paid. But there are practical considerations that CBWs have to make especially taking into account the number of hours they spend on fieldwork. Everyone has a need for proper nutrition, clothing and shelter. The government needs to make available some community funds to allow for the remuneration of community workers.

The introduction of CDWs has also created a lot of confusion amongst community members because it brings in elements of accountability. CDWs are seen to be accountable to local municipalities and in fact they are seen as local municipal officials. On the other hand CBWs are seen to be accountable to communities as they are elected by communities. Government needs to make a clear distinction between the role of CDWs and CBWs. It could consider transferring the budget for the overall administration of CDWs to communities to be managed by communities through the ward committee structure.

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## **Annex A Mogau Lettie Matshubeng - journal and reflections**

**November – December 2005**

Activity: Building and cleaning

**1-4 November:** Building of the spring box and the digging up of the grab where animals will drink water. Pipes were installed; one to collect water from the eye of the spring and the other one for water overflow and cleaning of the box. Filling the outside box pit with stones and collecting of stones to build the box and grab. Building the box then a shortage of sand, we left the cleaning of pipeline and went to work on the road to the dam.

**5-9 November:** Over weekends we used to clean the road from the village to the dam and people came to us saying we must not delay the process as they need water in time. Cleaning the pipeline road, we were asked to have two people to collect sand from the river of which one will be from our group and the other from the community. This was a failure because it rained over the night and the river was flooded. We completed the building of the box and new tools to clean the road were received.

**10-12 November:** Cleaning the road and digging the pathway from the box to the grab, filling the outside box pit with stones and covering the stones around the spring with cement so that it does not collapse if it rains. On the 10th, 11th and 12th cleaning the road from the village to the dam continued.

**14-17 November:** We were cleaning the pipeline on the 14th. On the 17th we decided to replace Elmon Mametja with Cosina Mametha because he was always absent without justifiable reasons.

**19-22 November:** Cleaning the road to the dam on the 19th and on the 21st we divided ourselves into two groups. One group was removing sand that had been deposited by rain while the other group cleaned the pipeline and two people continued with pouring concrete to the grab.

**23-28 November:** Cleaning and arrived at the place to erect a dam. People joined the cleaning of the road to the village and levelling of the place to erect a dam. I was not there for the meeting. On the 29<sup>th</sup> tools were collected from the spring and the cleaning of the pipeline road to cross the river to Machubeng's site was done. On the 30<sup>th</sup> cleaning from the dam down to Mametja's site started. We completed cleaning on 2<sup>nd</sup> December then we closed for Christmas and New Year festivities.

People's attitudes

I regularly met our *magoshi* (chiefs) and they commended us on the good and hard job that we're doing. They also encouraged us to be fast so that people get water in time. We never had community meetings due to funeral services that we had within our society during the weekends. People we met said that they need water and we seem to delay this process. They also need jobs and we the committee must talk to our bosses to increase the rate from R30 to R35 upwards. They want to see TV people visiting the area to document so that they are also considered as priority for water. Also they want the NGO to fund them so that water bottling industry is developed to alleviate poverty in the area. Transport is our major problem as we're working up in the mountain and we use donkeys to transport sand, cement, fence, etc.

## **January to February 2006**

### Activity: Building, re-cleaning and pipe-laying

**18 January – February 2006:** We started working as from the 18<sup>th</sup> January by collecting stones and sand for the building of the grab. We transported cement for two days and fixed up the building of the grab. We carried cement and sand for slabs and plastering the spring box. Then the digging of the holes for pipes to strengthen the fence and the cleaning of the furrow from the eye of the spring box. It rained so much so the pipeline road was no longer clean. Trees fell over and plants (shrubs) have grown etc. So we had the re-cleaning of the road from the 27<sup>th</sup> January until 2<sup>nd</sup> February, there were only six people working during that period.

**03- 09 February:** Transporting cement sand has been made and plastering, then the slab on the following week was laid. Digging and cutting of the roots on the trench. A big tree fell down and damaged the corner pole and handle of the fence then it was lifted and the repairing of the damage was done.

We did not work from 8-10 February because of rain and the river was full and unable to cross to the other side. Then the committee on the other side were working. We were asked to add four committee members to be ten in number and have ten strong men to crush concrete. We had nine men for concrete then four left the work saying that there is no adequate payment.

**15-21 February:** We had also twenty temporary workers to transport pipes. We connected and covered the pipes. Concrete was measured and the levelling of the trench completed. Also covering pipes to collect water from the eye of the spring to the box was completed. Sand was also delivered for the construction of the dam and we were waiting for concrete and other material by next week when we would begin building.

### People's attitudes

Community meeting was held on the 12 February 2006 at Mametja's kraal. I was not informed so I was not there. The meeting was about water problems being as follows:

Where will water end up?: We were told that the water ends up where households end. Mr Phasha said this was because he never knew our school was not used for voting. So he decided water will end up at the school and if finances could be found the other part of our village named Pong could also benefit.

Delays: Phasha blamed the committee saying we are not working as well as our supervisors. The committee blamed Phasha for not delivering. Finally an unpaid supervisor (volunteer) was elected to monitor. Rain was regarded as the other cause of the delays. Community people are waiting for the TV people to arrive and document their plight. Also more water is needed for irrigation purpose. We had four meetings from January to February all about water. We have tried to solve all the problems brought to our attention.

### **March-April 2006**

#### Activity: Pipe laying, building, transporting, digging furrows and filling

**March:** Pipe laying on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> by sixteen people. On the 18<sup>th</sup> we were measuring concrete and filling up the trenches. The stone crushers were stopped as concrete was enough, about 158 wheelbarrows done. On the 9<sup>th</sup> the stone wall around the eye of the other spring was built to prevent soil erosion and the cleaning of the yard. On the 10<sup>th</sup> we were topping concrete on the trenches with soil.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> carrying sand x10 it also rained and we left to go home. On 14<sup>th</sup> digging pipeline support holes x9. There were ten people present. 15<sup>th</sup> carrying cement, sand and water for the building of the P.L.S x10. On 16<sup>th</sup> carrying cement, pouring concrete to the holes with wire to tie up the pipes and the digging of the pipeline furrows on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

21<sup>st</sup> carrying cement and sand and on 23<sup>rd</sup> we had a meeting with Tsogang and those who are not members of the committee were busy filling the furrows. The stone crushers were paid on the 21<sup>st</sup>. 24<sup>th</sup> plastering the spring box and the stone wall with mortar. 27<sup>th</sup> plastering the stone wall, 28<sup>th</sup> held a meeting and informed to add the pipeline support so on this very day we had six holes completed, then about eight holes on the 29<sup>th</sup> i.e. fourteen holes in total completed. 30<sup>th</sup> we cleaned the box, pouring concrete and building the supports.

#### **April:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> carrying cement, sand and pouring concrete to the P.L.S
- 2<sup>nd</sup> carrying cement, sand and the pouring of concrete also
- 4<sup>th</sup> connecting water from the spring box to the dam, carrying sand to the holes
- 5<sup>th</sup> carrying sand, cleaning the grab, filling the furrow connecting pipe to the grab and marking the pipeline way



- 6<sup>th</sup> digging up the furrow 18 x 6m
- 7<sup>th</sup> digging the furrow 28 x 6m
- 8<sup>th</sup> digging 17 x 6m
- 10<sup>th</sup> backfilling of the furrows 63 x 619m
- That means 63 x R40 for digging and 63 x R35 for the filling the trenches

We were also paid on the 10<sup>th</sup> then off for Good Friday holidays. We started marking pipeline way for reticulation task based on the 24.2x. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> we employed about 59 people and they started working on the 25<sup>th</sup> to dig the furrow-pipe. On the same intervals I left to phone Mr Phasha to bring us lime. He promised but never came until the 15<sup>th</sup> May.

We were working at Mametja's from the 24-28 April. From the 29<sup>th</sup> April until 5<sup>th</sup> May we finished at Matshubeng's site. Then Mr Phasha came and said that the line was not straight. On 8 May Mogau, Sanza and myself were re-marking the line which we're told was not straight. Sanza told me that people will be paid for that work even though it is a repeat work.

People were working from 9am to 12 noon and about 74x6m was corrected. On 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> we were correcting at Matshubeng's site. On the 17<sup>th</sup> we had a meeting with Khanya rep Lindiwe Mdhluli.

#### People's Attitudes

The community is happy about the water even though the dam has not yet been erected. They need more water for irrigation purpose. They are also happy to see people from outside like Lindiwe from Khanya and Council for Geoscience from Pietersburg. They hope through the aid of the abovementioned people we can live a better life. We had four committee meetings and two community meetings regarding problems within ourselves, and they are settled. The committee and Tsogang met about progress report and problems encountered on the following dates 23/2/2006 and 18/3/2006. We had community meeting on 23/03 for report writing, problems encountered and employment. And about 49 people excluding the technical team were present. We were informed that the pipeline that was adjudged not to be straight and which we corrected was not going to be paid. People are not happy about that.