



**Securing Water to Enhance Local Livelihoods
(SWELL):
Community-based planning of multiple uses of water
in partnership with service providers**

**A case study on its application in Bushbuckridge,
South Africa**



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Executive summary

The South African NGO Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD) has been piloting the implementation of a Multiple Use Services (MUS) approach in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality in South Africa. MUS is about water services provision aiming to meet all people's water demands. The approach is known locally as Securing Water to Enhance Local Livelihoods (SWELL). AWARD is using a community-based planning approach, working closely with the Municipality and the local offices of the national departments of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF), Agriculture and Social Development.

The approach consists of a participatory assessment of people's water-based livelihoods, the water services and water resources available within the villages in a ward. Based on the assessment, a process of joint analysis and planning is followed where strategies are developed and projects to take forward implementation are agreed upon. The outcomes are linked into the Municipal Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process, and to departmental plans.

In Bushbuckridge, SWELL is being implemented at ward level (Ward 16). In the collective planning for this ward where the methodology was piloted, immediate refurbishment of infrastructure was prioritised, while noting that operation and maintenance capacity must also be upgraded, management improved, and communication channels opened it up. An outcome of this planning was that funds have been allocated from the IDP to refurbish the water infrastructure, on the basis of a detailed technical and management assessment of the entire water system, undertaking awareness raising and training at the same time. A multi-stakeholder platform is now monitoring the progress of the implementation. This sets the basis for ongoing coordinated action between stakeholders, and a mechanism for learning and accountability.

A paper which gives the more general background and conceptual underpinnings of the SWELL approach is also available (Maluleke *et al.*, 2005). It is recommended that that paper is read alongside this case study.

Introduction

Poverty and water

Providing water for productive uses can enhance people's livelihood options by making significant additions to household food security and nutrition, and generate income. Research by AWARD in 13 villages in the Bushbuckridge municipality showed that where villagers had more water, the economic activities of many poor households in the village doubled (Pérez de Mendiguren and Mabelane, 2001). Typical examples of productive uses in those villages included brick making, watering of cattle and goats, small home-based industries such as hair salons, beer brewing and ice making, and backyard or community gardens.

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

The development of SWELL

Within this context, the South African NGO AWARD (Association for Water and Rural Development) has been supporting the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality¹ (see Figure 1 for its location in South Africa), in its planning process through a number of methodologies and tools for a MUS approach. These have resulted in a methodology, called SWELL (Securing Water to Enhance Local Livelihoods). This seeks to provide a comprehensive framework and set of tools for the participatory assessment of the role of water in people's livelihoods and the planning of water resources and water services to enhance people's livelihoods. In this, it aims to link up with Municipal planning frameworks such as the IDPs. For a more detailed introduction to the SWELL methodology, see Maluleke *et al.* (2005).

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

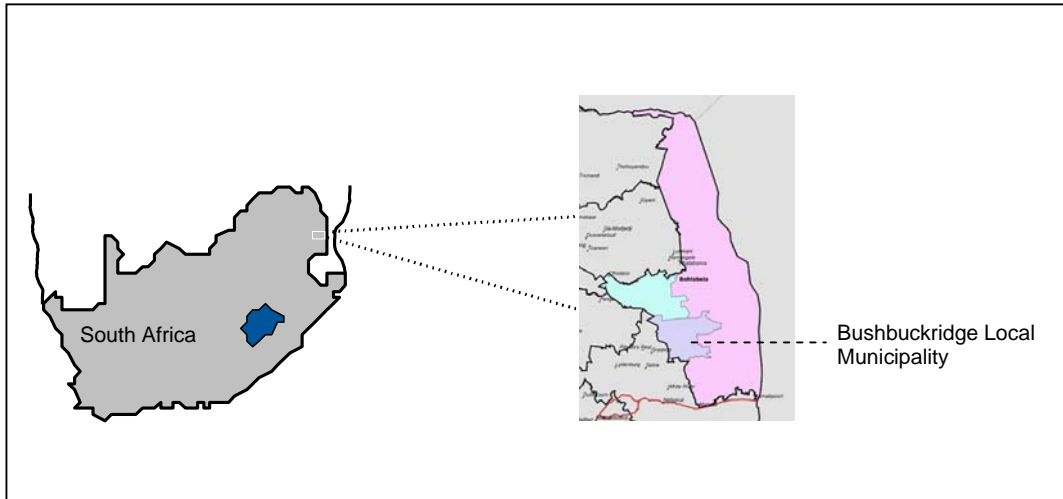


Figure 1: Location of the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality in South Africa (Source: Municipal Demarcation Board).

The process of SWELL development started off with a pilot in the village of Utah in one of the wards (Ward 16; see map) of the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality in 2003 (see AWARD, 2004, for a more detailed description of this first pilot). A team of local government officials and AWARD staff was established and were trained to carry out the village level assessment, focusing on livelihoods and water. After a 4 day field assessment, a village level analysis of the outcomes of the assessment was held to verify results and to agree priority areas for action from the villagers' perspective. This was followed by a workshop which also drew in officials and decision makers, to analyse and plan together. There were high levels of participation in the process, and very positive feedback. It was recommended, though, to adapt the methodology as a ward level process, as the ward (typically including 7-14 villages) is the lowest level of planning for local government. In addition, it was recommended that planning and implementation should be embedded within IDP planning, for this would mean that plans would become part of district approved, sanctioned, budgeted and monitored processes. In this way the strengths of community-based participatory approaches and local government planning processes would be combined.

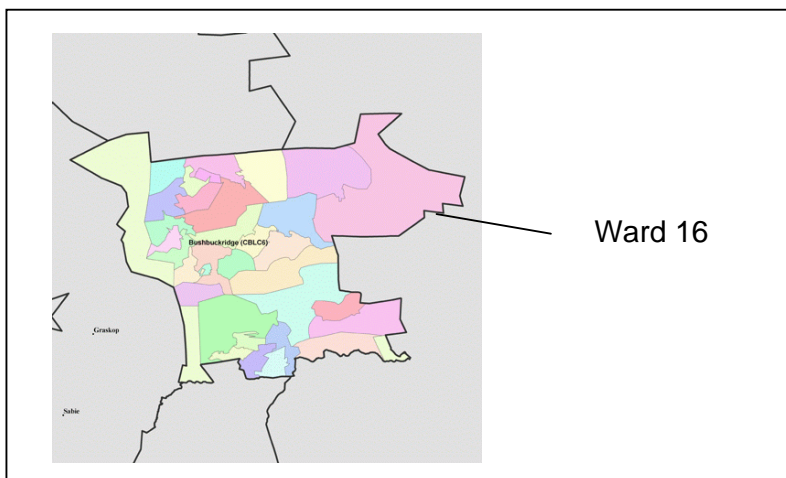


Figure 2: location of Ward 16 in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (Source: Municipal Demarcation Board).

This was taken forward, and SWELL developed into a ward level planning methodology. The process was carried out in six more villages of Ward 16 of in late 2004 and early 2005, again in close collaboration with a range of stakeholders. This resulted in an agreement on objectives and strategies for the ward, and some budgets were approved. Implementation is currently starting, as is monitoring of this implementation. The water and livelihoods assessment in the remaining 5 villages in Ward 16 is being completed in the final quarter of 2005 as part of the implementation of refurbishing existing water infrastructure.

It is felt that SWELL has reached a stage where it can be of relevance for other local authorities in the country interested in a more integrated approach to water services delivery, as well as to other sector stakeholders. This paper therefore aims to give a detailed description of the process followed in SWELL, as well as on some of the main findings for the villages in Ward 16. Finally, a reflection is given on the methodology as it is now and on some possible ways forward. The paper is accompanied by another paper, which gives the more conceptual underpinnings of the methodology (Maluleke et al., 2005). It is aimed at NGOs, local government and development organisations in general who might be interested in using elements of this methodology for similar planning exercises.

SWELL process in Ward 16

Summary of the overall process

Before going into the detailed processes as followed in Ward 16, this section sets out the objectives and broad process of SWELL.

The pilot in Ward 16 had a number of specific objectives:

1. Villagers and Service Providers in Ward 16 better understand the current uses of water in livelihoods, and the potential role of water in improving rural livelihoods - especially of the poorest and most vulnerable people and households.
2. Planning for water in Ward 16 is done in an integrated, collaborative and holistic way, and leads to concrete plans being incorporated into the next IDP. Integration is at 2 levels:
 - Between the uses, users, sources and technologies
 - Between different service providers and tiers of government.
3. Implementation of plans reflects the new understanding of the role of water in improving people's livelihoods
4. Management of water and water systems by both villagers and service providers becomes more effective, integrated and sustainable.

The phases of SWELL are:

- **Preparation:** Planning for the assessment with village leadership and officials of the relevant government tiers and departments – building institutional understanding and buy-in.
- **Assessment:** In each village the assessment is done through open meetings, focus group discussion and household interviews, using participatory methods, to identify trends and patterns (across the socio-economic spectrum,) within the

water and livelihoods situation, water resources and infrastructure, institutional roles and relationships.

- **Synthesis/ analysis:** Findings are collated and presented first for village confirmation, change and analysis, including identifying and prioritising proposed solutions to problems. This is followed by a multi-stakeholder forum process for collective analysis and problem definition.
- **Planning:** The collective then go on to agree on strategies and also prioritised projects, identifying who will take these proposals and activities forward
- **Implementation and monitoring** For purposes of accountability to agreed strategies and plans, and for learning in order to improve implementation, the multi stakeholder platform convenes every 3 – 6 months for report backs, reflection on progress, for problem solving and for building communication and capacity.

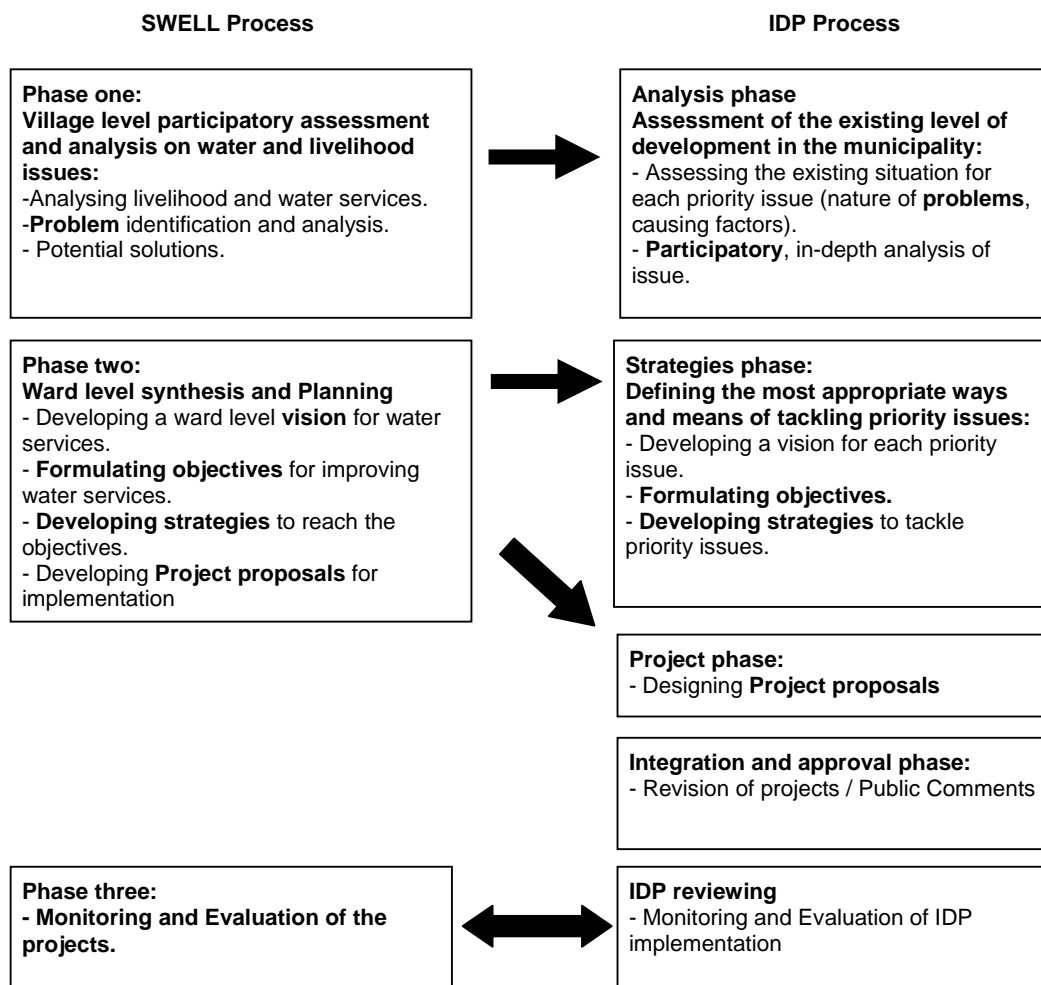
Preparation

Preparatory work with the various stakeholders was the first task. This included:

- Village and Ward leadership
- Local Government: the Bohlabela District Municipality, and the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality
- Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) local office
- Regional office of the Provincial Department of Agriculture
- Department of Health

While many had been engaged in the first pilot in Utah, there were others to bring on board, especially from village organizations and the ward and local government, and we sought to include representatives of the health sector. Time was spent with each stakeholder, raising awareness and developing collective ownership of the process. The SWELL team prepared a presentation on SWELL which was adapted for each stakeholder, and which was presented in a meeting in which they tried to include managers and field staff (with varying degrees of success). The presentation explained SWELL, and went on to talk about how this related to this particular stakeholder, and to ask a series of questions of about the possible nature of their participation, in order to discuss this and agree on it. Priority was given to villager leadership and to local government, given the latter's role in water services provision and integration of service delivery.

The link and connection to the IDP was seen as the strategic key linkage point, as this is what would embed the SWELL process in local government and departmental practice. SWELL should serve as a framework for these stakeholders to carry out their mandate for integrated and community based planning and implementation. The following table shows the linkages between the two processes. This was used extensively as a tool to engage with stakeholders at community and stakeholder levels, clarifying what the IDP process should be (according to the IDP manual), what SWELL seeks to do, and how the two relate.



Out of the meetings with the stakeholders the assessment team was agreed upon. Training and joint planning took place over 4 days to equip this team to carry out the village assessments. Care South Africa – Lesotho led the training. Care was providing support to SWELL through their SCAPE² Programme, which seeks to develop the capacity of civil society, and which provides training in the sustainable livelihoods approach. The workshop took people through the concepts of livelihoods and water, as well as through tools for assessment of these, drawing upon existing Participatory Rapid Assessment (PRA) tools. A first attempt was made to consider HIV/AIDS and gender as key vulnerability factors related to water and livelihoods. It was not possible, though, to go into much depth and the issue was noted for further future work.

² Strengthening Capacities for Transforming Relationships and Exercising Rights

Table 1: Breakdown of participants in the training and planning workshop

Name of organisation	No. of persons
AWARD	5
Department of Agriculture	3
Dept of Water Affairs	2
Dept of Health	4
Ward Committee	1
Regional Office of the BBR Local Municipality	1
BDM District Municipality	2
Total	18

Preparatory meetings in villages were held with village organizations and leaders, and established which local organizations were active and should be participating. In most villages the primary structures were the Community Development Fora (CDFs) and Water Committees. These structures undertook to organise village meetings.

The village water and livelihoods assessments

Immediately after training, the team carried out the village assessments, working in three villages concurrently. Later three more villages were assessed, giving a total of 6 villages for the entire round. The names of the villages are: Delani, Seville A, Seville C, Thorndale, Gottenburgh, and Hlalakahle.

Village level assessment

During the first two days, the focus was on the village as a whole and understanding broad trends and patterns in the village across the socio-economic spectrum. As the meetings were well attended (between 60 – 90 people in each village), for each of these two days community members were divided into smaller groups for undertaking specific PRA exercises. Groups were comprised of men and women, as well as people from different age groups. Each group worked on a different exercise, at the same time. Afterwards each group's work was reported to the whole meeting. This allowed us to work with groups of reasonable size, to engage in a lot of activities and so be more productive, and to have a chance for everyone to understand and check the information emerging from group work. An open-ended, semi-structured approach was used, that could be responsive to what was emerging on the ground, while keeping some level of consistency in approach. A number of tools were used in order to build up a picture of water, livelihoods and their connections. The methods complement each other, and also provide some cross checking of information, allowing the picture to deepen as the exercises progress. The following assessment activities were used with the focus groups (for a specific description of each activity, see AWARD, 2004; these build upon existing PRA methods as described in Pretty et al., 1995).

Water resources mapping; a general village map was drawn and then water sources and related infrastructure was added. Qualitative information was captured with stickers such as:

- Reticulation system *Not in use since ... / Often broken / functional*
- Taps *(broken since .. / Rarely used/ In use most of the time / yard taps)*
- Other sources *(location + seasonality + quality (drinkable or not))*
- Sources used outside village

See below for an example of an infrastructure assessment.

Table 2: example of infrastructure assessment in Delani

Infrastructure element	status
Engines	3 electric engines at located the lower part of the village (next to the dam). Regular breakdown occur because of technical and managerial incoherence The capacity the 3 engines is said to be sufficient to supply domestic water for the whole village. The functioning of the engines is supposed to be automatic but it happens that the operator intervenes manually in their operation
Main reservoir	1 main cement reservoir at the top of the village in a fenced location in good status.
Reticulation (pipes and taps)	28 communal taps are present and in good status. The reticulation system is problematic regarding the connection set-up between the 3 engines and is a cause of regular breakdowns.
Dam (earth dam)	Silted. Runs dry during the dry season (for 2/3 months). It is said that because of siltation it has lost its water retention capacity
Rain water tanks or buckets	No rain water tanks exist in the village. In few cases, basic arrangements are made to collect rain water in 200 litres drums during the rainy season.

Time line of the water situation to capture the history of water use and development

Transect walk to cross-check the mapping exercise, and have a more focused discussion on infrastructure status, type, institution responsible for maintenance and specific problems.

Pocket voting on a matrix of sources and uses; to show linkages between users, uses and resources (see Table 3 as example).



Table 3: uses, users and sources of water (averages generated from a group exercise)

Uses	Sources	Users	Quantity of water (litres per household per day)
Reproductive use			
Cooking	Borehole Fountain/stream Rainwater	Mothers, girls, sometimes boys, single men	25 l
Bathing		All in household	75 l
Drinking		All in household	25 l
Washing	Rain water and stream	Mothers and girls and school boys	75 l
Household cleaning		Mothers and girls and sometimes boys	20 l
Productive use			
Small vegetable gardens	Recycle after washing dishes	Mothers Women	75 litres per day
Traditional beer making	Pipe		420 litres
Cooking porridge to sell at market			10 litres
Chicken project			Lot of water
Community garden			
Traditional healers			75 litres
Livestock drinking	Borehole	Women collect and father give to livestock	150 l to 300 l Cattle need a lot of water
Building		Fathers and sons	630 l
Brick making for building		Fathers and sons	800 l
Irrigation	Recycled water	All in household	Depending on size of garden

Matrix of task and role players, to identify management tasks around resources, technologies and users, and role players, and assess performance.

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

Well-being or welfare ranking, which drew on the social map, and used local criteria to categorise well-being groups. This enabled deeper discussion on inequalities and degrees of vulnerability, and some analysis according to well-being groups.

Once the last two exercises were completed and shared, households were identified for the team to interview the following day/s, ensuring that a cross section of well-being groups would be identified, and people willing and available.

Assessment at household level:

The household level assessment used a semi-structured interview and discussion approach. The following gives the broad checklist used:

For **income generation**, for **food generation** and for **general domestic uses**

- What are the assets that people draw on to ensure the success of these activities?
 - Social assets, Natural assets; Financial assets; Human assets: Physical assets:
- What are the major stresses that make the achievement of these difficult?
- How do people cope in case of shocks?
- What are people's assets that they could potentially draw on to perform water related activities in the case of a water related project?

See Figure 3 for an example of results of food generation strategies.

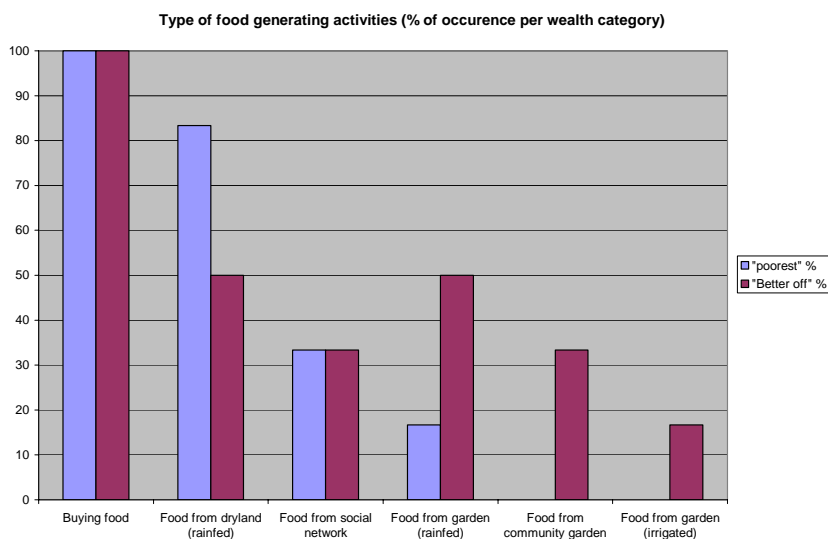


Figure 3: Type of food generating strategies as percentage of occurrence per wealth category in Delani Village

Analysis

Village level analysis and synthesis

The objectives of the Village Synthesis were:

- To understand and assess the overall water situation at village level by affirming and analysing outcomes of the assessment with villagers.
- To develop agreed on priority action areas for improve the village level water supply, for taking into the ward analysis and planning

This was done through the following activities.

- The facilitating team prepared a presentation on the main results of the Village Assessment, in the form of statements on the situation, which set out the links between resources, technology, users, uses and management.
- Villagers checked whether they agreed with the information and statements, and then in groups explored opportunities that could enhance their livelihood through improvement of the water supply at village level. Each group made proposals and presented their findings to other groups.
- Villagers debated proposals, and input from officials was invited at this stage (from DWAF and Department of Agriculture). After deliberation, all those present agreed on prioritised projects.

- Community representatives were then mandated to take the analysis and agreed priorities forward to the Ward Synthesis and Planning Workshop.

Table 4: examples from presentations to villages and results of discussions

<p><u>Seville C</u> Seville C has about 60 households. Cash income generating activities that use water are carried out by some 30% of households, and include making and selling ice blocks, marula beer, vegetable production and pig production. This income contributes up to 28% of cash to those households. Lack of water was not seen as the limiting factor on such enterprises; rather health and manpower, absence of a fence and lack of money to start a business were identified</p> <p>All villagers have a backyard plot for gardening, and these are the major source of vegetables for household use. Some 43% of households irrigate these gardens. The section of the village, where many refugees live, does not have stand pipes, so people here cannot irrigate their gardens. The community garden only caters for 10 households. Some 80% of villagers have a dryland field for food production away from the house.</p> <p>The refugee section needs standpipes, and rain water harvesting could be explored for these households.</p> <p><u>Hlalakahle:</u> Between 1986 and 1995 villagers' access to water was reasonably good. Maintenance was fast and reliable (by government). However diesel was sometimes a problem, and there were only 4 standpipes so people had to walk long distances.</p> <p>In 1995 an NGO came to develop water infrastructure in order to address the needs of the growing population. They installed a new engine and standpipes, but problems started arising. There are a range of different reasons given to explain problems, and people do not agree on causes. The lack of clarity makes it difficult to understand and solve water system problems.</p> <p>The community wants to have a clear understanding of the infrastructure which is now quite complex (engine connection to reservoir, engine connection to reticulation system, water flow within pipes, etc...).</p>
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Table 5: village assessment and synthesis summary for Delani

	Problems identified	Suggestions	Level of priority for the community
Water for domestic uses	There are regular engine breakdowns and low pressure. The reticulation system is problematic in terms of connection set-up between the 3 engines and is a cause of regular breakdowns. The result is that less than 50% of the communal standpipes are effectively providing water.	The problem of adequate water supply in Delani seems to require further technical investigation around the causes for regular engine breakdown, and no supply at many standpipes.	No 1
Water for livestock	The dam cannot hold water for the whole year (2/3 months dry). Livestock has to be sent to other villages. There are some drinking troughs but they are broken and cannot be used anyway at the moment because	Scooping and levelling the dam to ensure a proper storage capacity. As the dam is silted due to erosion occurring upstream, any attempt to solve the problem of at the dam side	No 2

	of engine breakdowns.	of Delani should include a proper study of the erosion causes.	
Water for gardening	Most of villagers in Delani have backyard gardens (and a community garden) but all lack proper infrastructure to be irrigated, which translates into underutilized opportunities for food security. Irrigating garden from a communal stand pipe is practically non feasible. Moreover, regular engine breakdowns make it too insecure to irrigate a garden as crops can dry fast (10 days) in winter if not irrigated.	Providing more water at the standpipe is not going to make gardening easier. Infrastructure has to be provided at the yard level. Rainwater harvesting underground tanks can be an alternative, much cheaper and sustainable solution, than yard taps. Rainwater harvesting tanks can provide a sufficient water supply for small gardens in winter, but only if properly designed and managed. This requires facilitation and awareness raising. Extra training on gardening might be necessary to ensure full use of the tanks.	No 3
Water management activities	Communication between the operator, water committee and DWAF has been proven to be a problem as tension exists between the operator and the community. DWAF delays and quality of work for maintenance of engines is identified as a burden to ensure reliable water distribution.	A meeting should be hold between DWAF, the community and the operator. Moreover, improper engines maintenance from DWAF seems to be at stake, which cannot really be translated into concrete project, except maybe exploring the causes for such low maintenance performance (research) and such low accountability.	No 4

Ward Synthesis and Planning

The major objectives of this step were to develop a collective analysis and then to agree on plans for the improvement of water services in Ward 16, for inclusion in the IDP municipal planning process.

The following steps were taken to reach the objective:

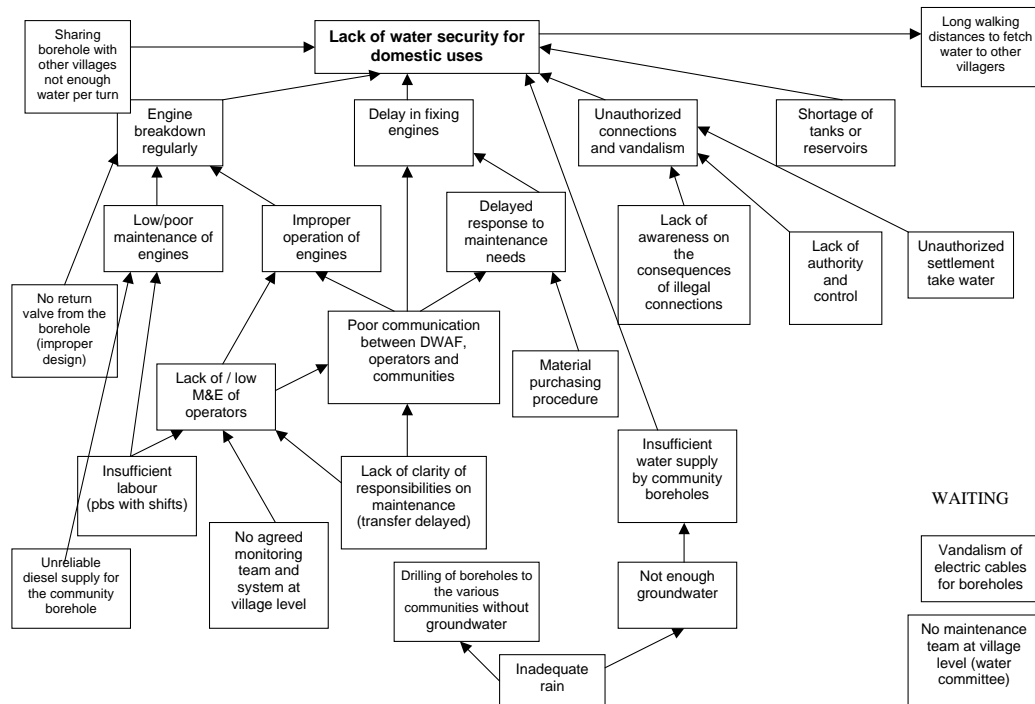
- Step 1: Identification and analysis of problems around water services in the ward
- Step 2: Formulation of objectives for the improvement of water services in the ward.
- Step 3: Development of strategies to reach the agreed objectives.
- Step 4: Drafting of projects proposals for improvement of water services in villages of the ward.

All these steps were undertaken by the SWELL stakeholders in a participatory meeting over 3 days, in the “Ward Synthesis and Planning Workshop”. The method that was used was first to prepare a summary of the assessment outcomes from each village for collective problem analysis.

Develop a Problem Tree together.

Participants in groups identified key problems on cards, and then developed this problem tree in plenary.

Figure 4: example of problem tree developed for Ward 16



Development of an Objectives Tree

Here participants turned each problem into a positive statement. It became known, fondly, as the “Christmas tree”. The positive energy, after so much concentration on problem areas, was important for the group.

Inputs to introduce new ideas and technology options

AWARD staff and resource people gave a series of short presentations, in order to open participants’ minds to new options or ways of addressing problems. We talked about the IDP processes, about rain water harvesting, about the meaning of water to especially vulnerable households and people, and on training resources and opportunities from government funding.

Development of strategies to overcome key problems

In groups, work was done on strategies – and people were encouraged to think broadly of what would make a meaningful difference to the problems, considering all they had done before on underlying causes, objectives and new ideas. Through discussion 6 strategies were agreed on.



Agreed Strategies:

Strategy # 1: Investing in water storage infrastructure for domestic use, livestock and gardening, along with capacity building for maintenance of the infrastructure

Strategy# 2: Investing in rainwater harvesting technology to provide water for domestic, productive and water for income generating activities, along with capacity building for operation, maintenance and use

Strategy # 3: Create technical and institutional capacity to maintain and repair water distribution infrastructure (for multiple uses)

Strategy # 4: Define and enforce clear lines of responsibility, accountability and communication on water management (by all actors, covering all water uses (Domestic, Agriculture and productive)

Strategy # 5: Develop awareness raising on land, and water resources and water infrastructure

Strategy # 6: Measures in place to ensure secured supply of domestic water in emergency (e.g. during drought periods and breakdowns)

After this, agreement was sought on specific projects to realise the strategies. Roles and responsibilities for taking these forward were assigned with actions, names and a time frame. The specific projects that were prioritised include:

Project #1: Awareness campaigns against vandalism (developing communities' capacity to understand the Water Distribution systems)

Project #2: Rain water harvesting for domestic and productive uses

Project #3: Land care project on Agricultural practices and soil conservation

Project #4: Assessment of borehole situation; and fixing of boreholes, and training of local people

Project #5: Infrastructure for livestock watering

We saw it as important to agree on a process to follow up on the agreements made. In the meeting it was agreed that the grouping who developed the plan will meet regularly, more or less quarterly, and will develop a monitoring and evaluation methodology in order to:

- Hold stakeholders accountable during the implementation of projects.
- Learn from the process
- Inform current and future plans for the IDP implementation

Thus this is now an agreed-upon multi-stakeholder learning platform.

Planning, implementation and monitoring

Outline plans from the Ward 16 forum now needed to be taken to decision makers for approval and detailed planning. Projects #1 and #4 were taken up by the Councillor and submitted for inclusion in the BBR IDP budget, and provisionally approved. A Planning Team was set up, comprising of the BBR Regional Manager, AWARD staff, the councillor and DWAF officials. This group then undertook the detailed planning and interaction with the Ward Committee (that represents village structures), and the identification and appointment of technical expertise. The implementation plan includes elements that were discussed in the ward synthesis: integrating the need for more technical detailed assessment with an understanding of the systems as a whole and their operation and maintenance and management. The detailed plan is currently awaiting final council approval so that the technicians can be appointed and the project implemented.

The Department of Agriculture staff at the ward synthesis workshop undertook to take forward plans #2, #3 and #5, and requested that AWARD attend a meeting with their senior management to report on and plan for this. This led to a series of meetings in which it was decided by the DoA that another section of its structure should be taking up projects 3 and 5. As DoA was at that time involved in one village as a pilot for rain water harvesting they did not want to commit to any further work in that regard at this stage. DoA demarcations of responsibility do not match with local government ward divisions. However there is now a Service Centre Manager for Bushbuckridge North who is mandated to take these proposals forward and seek to have them integrated into DoAs plans and budgets. Having a person designated, who is now part of the multi-stakeholder platform, gives this more chance of succeeding.

AWARD agreed to take forward plan #2 on rainwater harvesting – being aware of the DoA programme and that there is also one from the national DWAF, but that it is all new and untested. To take this forward AWARD is building this into current work on completing the last 6 village assessments, which it was agreed need to be done before the detailed technical assessments are done for the whole ward. Moreover the technical assessment will work alongside the AWARD facilitated village processes for identified the most vulnerable households that should be targeted for rainwater harvesting subsidies and support. The current assessments are seeking to take more account of vulnerability and are working with local care groups and a Community

Based Organisation working with HIV Aids carers and orphans. This is work in progress and to be reported on in further developments of this methodology.

There has been one subsequent meeting of the LA platform for Ward 16. Progress was reported, and the DoA official was brought on board here, and undertook to take the plans forward as discussed above. It was affirmed that regular meetings are needed to keep momentum and to achieve at least some coordination of implementation, if not integration.

Reflections on the process

The planning aspect of SWELL has set an important foundation, but this is only the beginning. The barriers to an integrated approach were not overcome through one round of work, but will require ongoing iterations of planning, implementation, monitoring, learning and new plans and actions. A slower and more iterative process that takes people through a more thorough process of awareness raising might be ideal – but the tensions of replicability and how much time people are willing to spend constrain this. Perhaps this can be more coherently built into the preparatory steps, into training and also into the synthesis, planning and then the monitoring, as well as into the implementation aspects of the various projects. Having learning support materials for this would be helpful. The SWELL team would like to develop these for its future work, and for sharing with other practitioners.

For all the work that went into preparation and seeking to identify the right people to engage at the right level, we did not get it right the first time in all cases, especially the large government departments. As the process is new to everyone those within the institutions were not always able to judge it appropriately – and so adjustments have been necessary. Also along the way new stakeholders were identified and brought in. Keeping an eye on expanding or adapting the stakeholder list is important.

In principle it was correct to involve officials in the assessment team. This way they could work in a cross-departmental team, could learn and could also contribute their knowledge. Being paid officials this seemed the place to build capacity: for replication and for sustainability. Officials and community members were vocal on how they do not work together in the normal course of events, and were excited at this new process. However in a number of cases the skills and energy were simply not sufficient to make them effective team members. In further work AWARD is exploring working with more locally-based people from care groups and village structures.

AWARD is thus still exploring where capacity to facilitate such integrative processes should reside. For upscaling and sustainability it makes sense that this be based in local government, but perhaps it also needs to be in government sector departments, and in the village based structures, as already it is clear to us that the demands and expectations of local government are unrealistic. However it may prove to be the case an independent NGO with credibility needs to play this role for some time to come; which is of concern, as the number of NGOs in South Africa is extremely limited. It may well be the answer lies in working with the many emerging Community Based Organisations (CBOs) such as home based care organisations and with the sector officials, with local government playing the convening role, rather than actively

facilitating the processes we are developing. These are questions we take into the next stages of the work.

At village level it was very difficult to specifically raise issues of HIV/AIDS and of gender. And yet we say that vulnerability is important, and it can clearly get lost in the overall planning for water. It is not easy to see how to bring these out or practically address them.

There are tensions and conflicts between stakeholders – we see it currently starkly between local government and the DoA, and also between different village leaders when there is the prospect of allocation of resources amongst villages. As someone said “development is political, and politics stops development”. Having the conflicts out in the open makes it possible to work with them – conflict management skills are needed to facilitate these processes that seek integration and coordination. For now having them articulated in the multi-stakeholder platform makes it possible to identify them, and agree on strategies to overcome them. Thus some direct actions were agreed – for e.g. writing letters to the municipality and the Department of Water Affairs about inconsistent attendance of their officials, and the taking up of a problem with the Ward Committee on communication and decision making.

Future – where is SWELL going?

There is further work in the pilot area of Ward 16 that remains part of the methodology development:

- Completing the assessment of all villages, and in this experimenting with working with vulnerability in new ways, and with a different assessment team. This work is at this stage being facilitated by AWARD, using external funding.
- Exploring different models of who carries out assessments and analysis, and in what role – with concerns for replicability in mind.
- Implementing the projects that were identified and agreed on
- Monitoring progress, and through this managing the conflicts and dealing with problems that emerge
- Conscious learning by all stakeholders on this approach, for informing future work in Ward 16
- Some research and documentation of the impacts of the SWELL approach over time: on the planning and implementation processes, on the relationships between the various stakeholders, on the village water systems, and on the impact on the livelihoods of some of the most vulnerable households in the villages.

Lessons, materials and research outcomes will all be actively disseminated within the district, and beyond it, in provincial and national forums, and also internationally. More immediately there are plans to work with the NGO World Vision, in the neighboring Maruleng Local Municipality, where the water resource base is somewhat different, to adopt a SWELL approach in their work on water. There is also interest from Zimbabwe partners in the MUS project on using an adaptation of SWELL in their planning of MUS systems. The approach will need to be adapted to local situations, and the particular constraints and opportunities these offer. Moreover creative adaptation of the broad approach are to be encouraged.

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