



COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND VULNERABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA



PERSPECTIVES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY ON
LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The State of Local Governance Publication

Since 2008, the GGLN produces regular commentaries on the state of local governance in South Africa. The purpose of the State of Local Governance (SoLG) publication is to present a civil society based assessment of the key challenges, debates and areas of progress with regard to governance and development at the local level in South Africa. It also aims to provide local government policy-makers and practitioners with practical recommendations to improve policy, guidelines, systems and interventions where necessary, based on a sound analysis of the context and an assessment of the challenges and opportunities for improvements. The publication has also been used to build awareness of, and mobilize support within civil society and appropriate government institutions for the key advocacy positions of the network.

The following editions of the State of Local Governance are published: Community Resilience and Vulnerability in South Africa (2014), Active Citizenship Matters (2013), Putting participation at the heart of development//Putting development at the heart of participation (2012), Recognizing Community Voice and Dissatisfaction (2011), Ethical Leadership and Political Culture in Local Government (2010), and Local Democracy in Action: A Civil Society Perspective on Local Governance in South Africa (2008).

Cover Picture: Isandla Institute



COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND VULNERABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

PERSPECTIVES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY ON
LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Good Governance Learning Network	3
Foreword	5
Acknowledgements	6
Executive Summary	7
In Search of Community Resilience	9
Mirjam van Donk and Gabeba Gaidien - GGLN Secretariat	
Community Resilience	
A case study of North East Sector 2 in-situ upgrading and housing project in KwaZulu-Natal	18
Ignatius Matanyaire - Built Environment Support Group	
Langrug: More than mere taps and toilets. Creating a community space through collaboration	29
Thandeka Tshabalala and Baraka Mwau - Community Organisation Resource Centre	
From the margins to the centre through mobilisation: building resilience in the rural communities	38
Boyce Tom and Siviwe Mdoda - Trust for Community Outreach and Education	
The Role of Microfinance Groups to Build Women’s Empowerment and Strengthen Community Resilience.	
A Case Study of Izandla Ziyagezana	47
Thandiwe Dlamini, Linzi Lewis and Mamokete Matjomane - Khanya-African Institute for Community-Driven Development	
Appreciating Contestation: Investigating the Value of Conflict Management for Strengthening Community Resilience	56
Adoné Kitching, Tristan Görgens, Pamela Masiko-Kambala and Mirjam van Donk - Isandla Institute	
Addressing Woundedness, Resilience and Development through Networked Healing Spaces	68
Ronald Eglin - Afesis-corplan	
Building Resilience Through Social Cohesion: A Case Study in Lavender Hill	76
Sarah Watson and Colleen Ryan – Democracy Development Programme	
Conclusion	87

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the GGLN

ABOUT THE GOOD GOVERNANCE LEARNING NETWORK

The GGLN was founded in 2003 as a national initiative to bring together civil society organizations working in the field of local governance. The network offers a platform to facilitate knowledge production & sharing, peer learning, and advocacy towards the goal of strengthening participatory, democratic and developmental local governance in South Africa.

VISION

The creation of a strong civil society network that harnesses and builds the collective expertise and energy of its members to contribute meaningfully to building and sustaining a system of participatory and developmental local government in South Africa.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the network are to:

- ✦ Share information and learning about local governance by creating an interface for organizations working in this arena;
- ✦ Document and disseminate best practices as well as produce information and research outputs that are of benefit to various stakeholders involved in local governance processes, including municipalities and communities;
- ✦ Advocate for changes in policy and practice to promote participatory local governance;
- ✦ Promote the development and replication of innovative models for participatory local governance and pro-poor development at the local level; and
- ✦ Generate partnerships between civil society organizations, and between civil society and government at various levels, to strengthen local governance processes

VALUES

The GGLN is underpinned by the following set of values, to which all members of the network commit themselves:

- ✦ Participatory and pro-poor governance
- ✦ Non-partisanship
- ✦ Constructive engagement with government and other stakeholders
- ✦ Working together in the interest of achieving the network's objectives
- ✦ Sharing the benefits of membership of the network amongst active members
- ✦ Building the capacity of the member organizations of the network

MEMBERS

The full members of the GGLN are:

- Afesis-corplan
- African Centre for Citizenship and Democracy (ACCEDE)
- Black Sash
- Built Environment Support Group (BESG)
- Community Law Centre (CLC)
- Community Organisation Resource Centre (CORC)
- Democracy Development Programme (DDP)
- Development Action Group (DAG)
- Eastern Cape NGO Coalition (ECNGOC)
- Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA)
- Fair Share
- Isandla Institute
- Khanya-African Institute for Community-Driven Development (Khanya-aicdd)
- Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG)
- Planact
- Project for Conflict Resolution and Development (PCRD)
- Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI)
- Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE)

The associate members of the GGLN are:

- Eastern Cape Communication Forum (ECCF)
- Ethics SA
- Mbumba Development Services
- Rhodes University - Mobisam
- Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC): Justice and Peace Department

CONTACT

The Secretariat of the GGLN is
hosted by Isandla Institute
Tel: 021 683 7903
Fax: 021 683 7956
Email: ggln@isandla.org.za
www.ggln.org.za

Physical address:
Ubunye House, 1st floor
70 Rosmead Avenue
Kenilworth
7708
Cape Town

Postal address:
P.O. Box 12263
Mill Street, Gardens
Cape Town
8010

FOREWORD

The Good Governance Learning Network (GGLN) and its member organisations have a long track record of community engagement, facilitation, knowledge sharing and research to animate participatory local democracy.

Previous editions of the GGLN's State of Local Governance Publication have made significant contributions to current discourse and practice on participatory local democracy. In particular, these publications have advocated for a transformation of state-community relationships towards more respectful, inclusive and collaborative ones.

The GGLN acknowledges that local government has a critical role to play in local development planning and service delivery, in balancing demand for services with available state resources, and in representing – whilst remaining responsive to – community interests. However, the process of defining local demand and prioritising resource allocations and development interventions cannot be done successfully without the active participation of local communities and interest groups.

The 2013 edition of the State of Local Governance publication focused on the notion of active citizenship, as mooted in the National Development Plan. A general thread running through this edition is that citizenship is primarily expressed as part of a collective process of engagement and political struggle, as opposed to an individualistic notion of citizenship.

The 2014 edition builds on the analysis and insights of the previous edition. South Africa boasts great examples of self-organisation that shape functioning communities, but also instances of faltering community systems which result in further marginalisation and opportunism at the expense of those who are most vulnerable. Community resilience is a seductive notion, but (as the papers in this volume caution) it should not be seen as a self-contained reality. Building and sustaining community resilience requires a variety of actors to take responsibility and cohere around a transformative agenda that addresses material dimensions of marginalisation, and the systemic factors underpinning these dimensions.

The GGLN presents this publication in the interest of inspiring more critical and constructive debate on the nature and quality of local governance in South Africa, and how it can be transformed to reflect some of the core features of resilience highlighted in this publication.

Mirjam van Donk

Isandla Institute / Chairperson of the GGLN Reference Group

Cape Town, March 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With the support and dedication of key stakeholders, the GGLN was able to produce the sixth State of Local Governance publication.

Sincere gratitude to the contributing authors from member organisations for their dedication to this project: Ignatius Matanyaire (Built Environment Support Group), Boyce Tom and Siviwe Mdoda (Trust for Community Outreach and Education), Baraka Mwau and Thandeka Tshabalala (Community Organisation Resource Centre), Thandiwe Dlamini, Linzi Lewis and Mamokete Matjomane (Khanya-aicdd), Sarah Watson and Colleen Ryan (Democracy Development Programme), Tristan Görgens, Pamela Masiko-Kambala, Adoné Kitching and Mirjam van Donk (Isandla Institute), and Ronald Eglin (Afesis-corplan).

The hard work and attention to detail by the research manager, Meera Ramjee, and text editor, Kristina Davidson, has resulted in a sound publication. A special thanks goes out to the peer reviewers: Jaap de Visser, Nontando Ngamlana, Kate Tissington and Mirjam van Donk.

Gabeba Gaidien was instrumental in the early phases of the production process, a role she tackled with passion and perseverance. Her successor, Annuschka Williams, has helped to bring the process to a successful conclusion.

A special thanks to the Reference Group Members who serve the Network in guiding the strategic direction and promoting its growth and development. Your valuable contributions are appreciated. Reference Group Members include Rama Naidu (DDP), Mike Makwela (Planact), Elroy Paulus (Black Sash), Kate Tissington (Planact), Nontando Ngamlana (Afesis-corplan) and the Chairperson Mirjam van Donk (Isandla Institute).

The writing and production of this publication was made possible by grants from the Ford Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and GIZ. The Good Governance Learning Network appreciates their continued support for and engagement with the network.

The GGLN Secretariat



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 6th edition of the State of Local Governance Publication, themed 'Community Resilience and Vulnerability in South Africa' explores the notion of resilience and how communities exposed to extreme vulnerabilities and poverty respond to the daily stresses and challenges. The papers presented in the publication examine resilience literature and present case studies which demonstrate strategies employed by communities to overcome their circumstance through adapting and transforming as well as identifies the roles of external agents, i.e. non-government organisations, the state, and the factors that promote and or undermine community resilience.

The introductory paper presents resilience by looking at the origins and development of the term and critically examines its meaning. The paper also explores the notion of social vulnerability as it deepens the understanding of community resilience. The paper criticises resilience thinking for not recognising that the majority of people in countries like South Africa live in a state of 'generalised precariousness', for not adequately taking account of power and social justice, and for devaluing context and specificity. The paper also reviews how resilience and vulnerability are dealt with in the National Development Plan, concluding that it falls prey to similar critiques. Finally the paper seeks to define what a resilient community looks like and provides a framework for community resilience which can be applied to the South African context.

The Built Environment Support Group presents a case study of North East Sector 2 informal settlement in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, and draws on the vulnerability framework by Pasteur (2011) to identify vulnerabilities and hazards this community is exposed to. The paper demonstrates how this community was able to adapt and take a proactive approach to human settlement development as well as its ability to draw on organisational capacity to strengthen their position in negotiating with the state.

The paper by the Community Organisation Resource Centre presents the Langrug informal settlement in Franschhoek, Western Cape, as a demonstration of development from below through collaborative planning and strategic partnerships with government and community organisations to address community needs. The ability of government to provide adequate services to informal settlements is limited and Langrug is no exception to the lack of services. The need for water and dignified sanitation services inspired community members to create alternatives and strengthen community cohesion. The paper draws strongly on resilience theory which focuses on strength of the individual and system which will enable it to rise above adversity.

Rural communities across the country are faced with numerous challenges which expose landless farmers and rural families to negotiate daily for their survival. The paper by the Trust for Community Outreach and Education presents a case of small-scale farming in three rural municipalities in the Western Cape. This paper highlights some of the challenges in rural communities and how through collective organisation and partnerships communities are able to adapt, challenge their status quo and strengthen their livelihoods.

The paper by Khanya-aicdd explores how savings-led microfinance systems can address particular dimensions of vulnerability and enable the poor, women in particular, to cope with shocks and stresses due to ill health, death or natural factors. Focusing on Izandla Niyagezana in KwaZulu-Natal, the paper demonstrates how a savings group can strengthen social cohesion and contribute to livelihood strategies of the poor, thereby enhancing resilience.

The paper by Isandla Institute presents conflict as an element to be identified and addressed within development planning to neutralise power imbalances and strengthen those who are most vulnerable. The paper poses that contestation and conflict are part and parcel of democracy and should be acknowledged and harnessed in democratic decision-making. Mindful that contestation can be both constructive and destructive, the paper argues for an attitudinal shift and the adoption of approaches such as appreciative enquiry, mediation and conflict transformation to ensure that contestation can be explored and integrated constructively into development processes.

The paper by Afesis-coplan argues that the societal and generational woundedness experienced prevents the county from reaching its full potential and that in order to move forward the past must be confronted first. The growth and unity that has been achieved must not be minimised, but there is still much to be done as is evident in violent expressions of frustration by the people toward government, towards each other and toward themselves, which is a result of past (collective) injustices, anger and aggression. The paper suggests that mechanisms need to be established that will address the woundedness and aggression and argues for the development of networked healing spaces to enable citizens to confront, understand, transcend and release the pain and trauma of the past.

The Democracy Development Programme presents the Lavender Hill community in the Western Cape with its multiple vulnerabilities. It is an impoverished community dominated by gangs, drugs and violence, yet through an innovative process of visioning and capacity building, including drawing on community gifts and resources, members of the community were able to transform their engagement with the state and mobilise for social change. This paper illustrates how a community is able to draw on their collective skills, assets and resources to create change and how an NGO can act as a catalyst for development.

The papers present an array of dissatisfied communities who draw on some form of resource, process, organisation and personal strength by creating connections and social capital to bring about positive change in the community and lives of citizens. These case studies demonstrate community resilience as evidenced in social mobilisation and collective action to address social vulnerability. At the same time, the papers remind us of the role and responsibilities of other actors, most notably the state, to address social vulnerability, support self-organisation of communities, and forge innovative partnerships around learning and implementation.



IN SEARCH OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Mirjam van Donk and Gabeba Gaidien - GGLN Secretariat

Since its introduction in the early 1970s, the notion of resilience has gained widespread appeal. While its roots are in ecology, resilience has influenced a wide variety of fields such as anthropology, human geography, psychology, cultural theory, management sciences, urban theory and, most recently, security studies. The concept of resilience is alluring, suggesting an ability to 'bounce back' from adversity and, possibly, even achieve a state that is better than the original one, prior to the misfortune. When applied to communities, the label can be an affirmation of their resourcefulness and capacity to mobilise when faced with shocks and stresses. But there is a danger in using the term uncritically, particularly if its interpretation is devoid of an understanding (or critical questioning) of power, agency and responsibility.



PHOTO: ISANDLA INSTITUTE

THIS PAPER PROVIDES a brief overview of the origin, uptake and interpretation of the concept of resilience. It explains how resilience relates to social vulnerability and provides a short critique of the concept. The paper reviews how the National Development Plan (NDP) interprets both community resilience and social vulnerability, introduces a set of features that define a resilient community and presents a framework for advancing community resilience. The paper

concludes by briefly summarising the key themes and dimensions of community resilience as reflected in the papers in this edited volume.

ORIGIN AND UPTAKE OF THE CONCEPT OF RESILIENCE

The concept of resilience stems from the field of ecology and was traditionally defined by the Canadian ecologist CS Holling as the factor that 'determines

the persistence of relationships within a system and is a measure of the ability of these systems to absorb changes ... and still persist' (in Folke 2006: 254). This concept of resilience within the ecological context emphasised the amount of shock or change a system can absorb and the extent to which a system can reorganise to reach a level of stability in order to maintain the status quo. Holling's contribution was to recognise that ecosystems are characterised by complexity, multiple equilibria and change, rather than a single-equilibrium and stable state.

The definition of resilience developed, as ecological studies progressed and the multi-layered complexity of an ecosystem was acknowledged. In particular, attention shifted to the interaction between human and ecological systems. Initially, much emphasis was placed on the influence of human actions on the capacity of ecosystems to generate natural resources and ecosystems services (for example, over-fishing of certain species, or soil erosion or any other human action that causes erosion of resilience). Over time this led to an appreciation that the erosion of natural resources and ecosystem services is likely to have adverse impacts on societal development, and the reciprocal nature of interactions between human and natural systems (Berkes 2007). This influence of systems theory on resilience thinking became more and more pronounced, with a recognition that systems (ecological and human) are complex and adaptive.

DEFINING RESILIENCE

Resilience is often associated with an ability to cope, withstand, absorb or recover from shocks and stresses. For example, Adger (in Folke 2006: 259) defines social resilience as 'the ability of human communities to withstand external shocks to their social infrastructure such as environmental variability or social, economic and political upheaval'. However, emphasising the robustness and persistence of a system following a disturbance assumes a level of

constancy and predictability that, more often than not, is non-existent, particularly in relation to complex systems. In fact, resilience thinking recognises that uncertainty is inherent to complex systems, and that living with change and uncertainty is unavoidable (Berkes 2007; Folke 2006). As John F Kennedy once remarked, 'there is nothing more certain and unchanging than uncertainty and change'.

Carpenter et al. (2001: 766) identify three characteristics that define the concept of resilience in relation to social-ecological systems: (a) the amount of change the system can undergo while still retaining its structure and function; (b) the degree to which the system is capable of self-organisation; and (c) the degree to which the system can build the capacity to learn and adapt. Although located within the field of ecology, the concepts of adaptation, transformability, learning, innovation and self-organisation have become quite influential in subsequent resilience thinking, particularly in relation to social/community resilience (e.g. Berkes 2007; Folke 2006; McAslan 2011).

Adaptability refers to 'the capacity of people in a social-ecological system to build resilience through collective action', whereas transformability refers to 'the capacity of people to create a fundamentally new social-ecological system when ecological, political, social or economic conditions make the existing system untenable' (Walker et al. in Folke 2006: 262). The notion of collective action underpins both these notions and is returned to later in this paper.

Folke et al. (in Berkes 2007) further develop the notions of learning, innovation and self-organisation, identifying four critical factors that interact across temporal and spatial scales and are crucial to building resilience in social-ecological systems. These factors have particular relevance for what a resilient community looks like.

1) *Learning to live with change and uncertainty.*

Emphasis is placed on the importance of social memory, to learn from past events and enable

system renewal. In the words of Nelson Mandela: 'In the life of any individual, family, community or society, memory is of fundamental importance. It is the fabric of identity'.

- 2) *Nurturing diversity in its various forms.* Diversity (in relation to ecology, economy, livelihoods and actors/partnerships) is critical for renewal, and diversification is an important strategy to reduce risks.
- 3) *Combining different types of knowledge for learning.* Recognising the complementarity of different knowledge systems (including local, situated knowledge systems) and establishing cross-scale platforms for dialogues are important for stimulating learning and innovation.
- 4) *Creating opportunity for self-organisation and cross-scale linkages.* Resilience involves renewal and reorganisation, with some of the key aspects being social organisation, community-based management, multi-level partnerships and nurturing learning organisations.

At this stage it is important to consider briefly the notion of vulnerability, with a particular focus on social vulnerability. Berkes (2007: 292) refers to resilience as 'the flipside' of vulnerability, i.e. the factors or characteristics that makes a system less vulnerable to shocks and stresses. Similarly, building community resilience means focusing on issues that reduce the vulnerability of communities (McAslan 2011).

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

Vulnerability can be defined as 'the degree to which a population or system is susceptible to, and unable to cope with, hazards or stresses, including the effects of climate change' (Pasteur 2011: 11). Much of the resilience literature focuses on vulnerability to natural disasters and emergencies, such as floods, droughts and fires, often as a result of changes in ecosystems (e.g. climate change). Factors such as location (i.e. proximity to hazards) and access to relevant

information (regarding risks and available responses) clearly contribute to such vulnerability.

McAslan (2011) argues that vulnerability stems from the overlap of human systems, the natural environment and the built environment. In addition to location and access to information, key factors that contribute to social vulnerability are the quality of (public and private) infrastructure, housing type, density of the built environment, economic wellbeing of a community, access to resources and political status (i.e. inclusion/marginalisation).

The notion of social vulnerability is valuable for two reasons. First, it allows for an appreciation that shocks and stresses are not necessarily (exclusively) environmental in nature but can also be the result of changes in the social, economic or political environment, such as illness, death, loss of employment or political conflict.

Secondly, and more importantly perhaps, it recognises that vulnerability is the sum total of factors in the socio-cultural, natural, physical, economic and political environment. In other words, it is multi-dimensional. As Pasteur (2011) reminds us, people who live in impoverished social and economic conditions are more susceptible to environmental hazards, as they have less resources to draw on to cope with, and recover from, these shocks. And, 'if people have weak access to, and influence over, the institutions and policies that govern their access to resources and decision making, they can do little to address the underlying causes of their vulnerability' (Pasteur 2011: 9).

This focus on systemic issues underlying vulnerability and, in turn, undermining resilience brings us to a critique of the notion of resilience.

CRITIQUE OF RESILIENCE THINKING

The concept of resilience is very appealing, as its widespread uptake across various fields suggests.

But it is also an elusive and contested term, partly because it has seen so many applications. For the purpose of this paper, the critique of resilience theory is limited to three issues.

First, much of the resilience literature presupposes a norm that does not correlate to the daily reality of a large part of the global population, or indeed the population of South Africa. Resilience literature tends to speak about shocks and stresses as an event, an occurrence, something that is considered 'abnormal' and results in loss of some sort. For example, McAslan (2011: 1) states that 'the concept of resilience ... suggests the ability ... to recover and return to normality after confronting an abnormal, alarming and often unexpected threat'. This does not speak to what could be called a state of generalised precariousness, which tends to characterise poor communities, where shocks and stresses are a part of daily life, not once-off blows. In contrast, the norm (or state of normality) suggested in much resilience literature takes a certain standard of living and quality of life for granted.

Secondly, resilience theory fails to take adequate account of systemic factors that result in (or aggravate) social vulnerability and undermine resilience. It does not critically examine how power, ecology and development intersect. The relations of power are left intact, and the notion of social justice is excluded from the purview, because of the blind spot of how power is exerted (globally, regionally, nationally, locally) and manifested (Ernstson 2014; Slater 2014). Although the concept of resilience incorporates an element of transformation, as mentioned previously, this does not mean that it is grounded in a radical agenda of transformation of power relations.

When resilience is mooted in a context of 'generalised precariousness' and entrenched inequality, the danger is that people are expected to reach a state that may well prove unattainable,

particularly if the systemic causes of vulnerability remain intact. Moreover, as Slater (2014) cautions, it may (inadvertently, perhaps) support a neoliberal agenda of austerity, capital accumulation and dislocation of the poor.

The third criticism is that the strong influence of systems thinking has resulted in a high level of abstraction, where context, difference, history and particularity of place or process, cannot be adequately accommodated (Ernstson 2014). Ironically, perhaps, systems theory has proven to be extremely resilient to revision by virtue of presenting an abstract overarching framework that can absorb almost any textured account.

These critiques form the starting point for the papers in this publication, which seek to redefine the notion of community resilience with reference to specific causes and manifestations of social vulnerability and with regard to social organisation in the face of, and sometimes in response to, social vulnerability. In other words, a fine-grained contextual reading is essential to appreciate community resilience, as and where it manifests itself, and to identify the core components that enable communities to become more resilient. The papers describe realities that are more representative of the 'average South African experience' than the norm implied in much of the resilience literature. The papers also highlight issues of power/empowerment, with some articulating an explicit agenda for transformation. Finally, most papers in this publication provide detailed contextual accounts of particular communities (of location, interest or circumstance) who organise around particular issues, draw on community assets and engage in collective action.

Before proposing a framework for enabling community resilience, we briefly review how the NDP reflects the notions of resilience and social vulnerability, and what a resilient community looks like.

RESILIENCE AND SOCIAL VULNERABILITY IN THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

As the first overarching strategic plan for South Africa, informed by a progressive development agenda, the NDP is a useful reference point for assessing how the notions of community resilience and social vulnerability are understood.

The NDP makes numerous references to resilience/resilient, in particular in the chapters dealing with environmental sustainability (Chapter 5), human settlements (Chapter 8) and social security (Chapter 11). Even the chapter on fighting corruption refers to the need to build a 'resilient anti-corruption system' (NPC 2012: 447). With the exception of this last reference, the understanding of resilience reflected in the NDP is similar to that in the broader literature on social-ecological systems. For example, Chapter 5 states, 'Development challenges must be addressed in a manner that ensures environmental sustainability and builds resilience to the effects of climate change, especially in poorer communities' (NPC 2012: 197). The chapter on human settlements introduces the principle of spatial resilience, which is defined as 'Vulnerability to environmental degradation, resource scarcity and climatic shocks [which] must be reduced. Ecological systems should be protected and replenished.' (p.277).

By and large, however, the NDP does not escape the criticism levelled earlier against the use of resilience in much of the literature. Resilience is reflected as an ideal outcome, without defining clearly the characteristics of a 'resilient society' (p.209), 'resilient economy' (p.209), 'resilient towns and cities' (p.284) or 'resilient transport networks' (p.189), let alone a resilient anti-corruption system, as mentioned above. All that is implied is the ability to somehow withstand, adapt to or mitigate the effects of climate change and resource scarcity/dependency. Resilience is presented a desired state, something to aspire,

without acknowledging any current manifestations of community organisation or collective action as characteristic of community resilience.

The NDP has quite a sophisticated interpretation of vulnerability, particularly in the chapter dealing with social security. It recognises that vulnerability manifests itself in different ways, such as health status, employment status, income status and housing/tenure status and can further stem from natural disasters, crop failure and accidents. The chapter on human settlements refers to informal settlements as being 'associated with high degrees of physical and social vulnerability' (p.273).

Throughout the NDP, only one explicit reference is made to the need to address systemic factors when seeking to bring about a resilient society and economy:

South Africa's primary approach to adapting to climate change is to strengthen the nation's economic and societal resilience. This includes ensuring that all sectors of society are more resilient to the future impacts of climate-change by:

- ✦ Decreasing poverty and inequality
- ✦ Creating employment
- ✦ Increasing levels of education and promoting skills development
- ✦ Improving health care
- ✦ Maintaining the integrity of ecosystems and the many services that they provide (p209).

Apart from this reference, the NDP does not link the notion of preparing the poor for future shocks (largely seen to be related to shocks and systems in the natural world) to current day realities and struggles of the poor (characterised by perpetual precariousness, as argued before, but also by diverse forms of social organisation and collective action). It remains conspicuously silent on the global, national and local political economy that produces, reinforces and perpetuates social vulnerability – and in fact creates

and aggravates environmental hazards, shocks and stresses that are disproportionately felt by the poor.

WHAT DOES A RESILIENT COMMUNITY LOOK LIKE?

Drawing on Folke et al. (in Berkes 2007), a resilient community is one that learns from the past and values memory, values diversity and pursues diverse strategies to meet its needs. It draws on local knowledge, which it combines with other sources of knowledge (including specialist knowledge). It organises around collective issues and links up with other communities and actors. However, resilience in a community cannot be decoupled from the imperative of an acceptable standard of living and basic requirements for human survival, livelihoods, safety, belonging and respect.

Communities are faced with challenges and stresses brought on by factors (including systemic ones) that are beyond their control. It is therefore important that other actors, especially in the state, provide an enabling and supportive environment,

which includes addressing underlying systemic issues.

McAslan (2011) presents a framework for community resilience that outlines three sets of enablers of community resilience: physical, procedural and social. *Physical enablers* refer to the physical assets and infrastructure required to satisfy basic human needs for survival (air, water, food, shelter) and safety (including personal security, health and wellbeing), and also includes the physical state of individuals. *Procedural enablers* refer to institutional knowledge or information, policies, plans and strategies to facilitate disaster management. *Social enablers* refer to a community's skills and preparedness for change and uncertainty, as measured by social cohesion, motivation and leadership.

Although written for a particular context (Australia) and issue (disaster management), this framework can be adapted to suit the South African context, with its high levels of poverty, inequality, fragile livelihoods and low levels of human development (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Community resilience framework



Adapted from McAslan (2011) and Pasteur (2011)

As Figure 1 shows, community resilience has three components: livelihoods, social cohesion and governance. Each of these components translate into specific enablers of community resilience: physical and material, social, and procedural and institutional. The conceptual framework is broadened to reflect South Africa's particular contextual realities, stemming from systemic causes of social vulnerability. The notion of livelihoods is foregrounded and refers to 'the resources (including skills, technologies and organizations) and activities required to make a living and have a good quality of life' (Pasteur 2011: 29). It expands McAslan's interpretation of physical infrastructure, assets and enablers, to take account of precarious living conditions as a daily reality, rather than as a result of a (future) natural disaster or hazard.

Similarly, the notion of governance is introduced to indicate that the task at hand is also to address systemic factors underlying social vulnerability, not merely to arrive at a state of preparedness to pre-empt or deal with future shocks and stresses as a result of environmental hazards or disruptions. In addition to McAslan's more circumscribed focus on policies, plans, programmes, procedures and information, emphasis is placed on state capability to address current development challenges, institutionalise learning and adaptive management, and a shift to partnership-based modes of decision making and service delivery. Public leadership is an important aspect of this.

Social cohesion is the product of common values, commitment to shared learning and collaboration, responsive leadership and community organisation.

Thus, as Figure 1 suggests, community resilience is about, on the one hand, the process of organisation, knowledge sharing, collaboration and resource mobilisation and, on the other hand, tangible improvements in standards of living and quality of life. To appropriate a phrase from McAslan (2011: 11),

these can be called the 'ingredients' of community resilience. Resilience outcomes help us to clarify what resilience looks like in practice, which includes individual and family survival, secure livelihoods and shelter, and security of community infrastructure. It also speaks to an ability to adapt to change and manage risks, as well as a sense of community and belonging.

Figure 1 indicates that some core 'ingredients' of resilience can also be outcomes of community resilience. For example, social mobilisation can make a community more resilient to current and future stresses but may also be a manifestation of a community able to manage (or even steer) change, improve their living conditions and successfully lay claim on the state to take its share of responsibility.

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

The papers in this edited volume reflect a strong focus on a 'bottom up' approach to resilience, with particular attention given to how communities (of location or of interest) mobilise around substantive issues (housing, sanitation, food security, income, neighbourhood planning or historical injustice) and engage in collective action aimed at addressing particular vulnerabilities. In this regard, leadership (both individual and collective) is clearly important, as discussed in the papers by BESG, CORC, DDP and TCOE.

While community agency is recognised and affirmed, other actors and interventions clearly need to complement the actions of communities. Without external action and support, there are limits to what communities can achieve, whether it concerns microfinance as a means to address income poverty (as described in the paper by Khanya-aicdd), tenure security, housing and basic services (as elaborated on by BESG and CORC), food security and land access (TCOE), historical trauma (Afesis-corplan) or community revitalisation (DDP). A common thread is

the notion of partnerships, both within and between communities, and between communities and the state, aspects that are further elaborated on in the papers from BESG, CORC, DDP, Isandla Institute and TCOE.

The papers by CORC, DDP and Isandla Institute also pick up on the notion of social and institutional learning, while the Afesis-corplan paper speaks to the theme of memory and the need to address historical pain and woundedness.

Thus, the papers speak strongly into the three components of resilience: livelihoods, social cohesion and governance. A particularly critical conclusion is that the nature of governance needs to change, to be deliberative and collaborative, enabling and supporting community voices and initiatives, and be geared towards addressing systemic factors of vulnerability. This implies that the relationship between the state and communities is transformed to one where the state is a development enabler and partner, rather than a provider and decider.

A prominent feature is the notion of power, both internal and external to the community. The DDP paper reflects on how a dissolution of power in community processes can lead to the emergence of innovative and lasting community-driven solutions to local problems. BESG reminds us that community structures set up to coordinate particular community struggles run the risk of being hijacked by local political elites, and patronage permeates development opportunities, such as shelter and work opportunities. TCOE argues for

an explicit political agenda and mobilisation strategy for transformation to address the structural causes of landlessness and marginalisation of the rural poor. The paper by Isandla Institute posits that contestation and conflict, which are intrinsically linked to power and powerlessness, need to be recognised, managed and harnessed in the interest of bringing about a more inclusive, community-based and sustainable development practice.

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the critique of resilience thinking, the concept of community resilience provides a useful lens to review current examples of self-organisation and collective action around critical development concerns in South Africa. This paper has argued that we need to understand resilience in the context of continual stress and shock (i.e. a state of generalised precariousness), as opposed to the usual once-off shock or disturbance that most resilience literature is about. While it is important to recognise and celebrate resilience from within/from below, it is equally important to acknowledge that other actors, particularly the state, have a vital role to play in creating the material, physical, procedural, socio-cultural and political conditions that allow community resilience to flourish. As we prepare for an uncertain future, the time is now to put the necessary building blocks, relationships and values in place to enable communities to be resilient and empowered.

REFERENCES

- Berkes F (2007) Understanding uncertainty and reducing vulnerability: lessons from resilience thinking. *Natural Hazards* 41: 283–295.
- Carpenter S, Walker B, Anderies JM and Abel N (2001) From metaphor to measurement: Resilience of what to what? *Ecosystems* 4: 765–781.
- Ernstson H (2014) Stop calling me resilient. Comment on Tom Slater's blog post 'The resilience of neoliberal urbanism', www.rhizomia.net, accessed 5 March 2014.
- Folke C (2006) Resilience: The emergence of a perspective for social-ecological systems analyses. *Global Environmental Change* 16: 253–267.
- McAslan A (2011) *Community Resilience: Understanding the Concept and its Application*. Discussion Paper. Adelaide: Torrens Resilience Institute.
- NPC (National Planning Commission) (2012) *National Development Plan 2030*. Pretoria: The Presidency.
- Pasteur K (2011) *From Vulnerability to Resilience: A Framework for Analysis and Action to Build Community Resilience*. Rugby: Warwickshire, Practical Action Publishing.
- Slater T (2014) The resilience of neoliberal urbanism, *openDemocracy* <http://www.opendemocracy.net>.



COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

A CASE STUDY OF NORTH EAST SECTOR 2 IN-SITU UPGRADING AND HOUSING PROJECT IN KWAZULU-NATAL

Ignatius Matanyaire - Built Environment Support Group

The world's urban population is currently estimated at 52% (Van Huyssteen et al. 2013) and is expanding rapidly, which means that towns and cities have to manage and mitigate the risk of increasing vulnerabilities. Like most cities in the developing world, South African cities are experiencing high rates of urbanisation (almost 68% of South Africa's population live in towns and cities). Yet urbanisation is taking place in a haphazard manner, with no control and regulation, because of inadequacies in planning, management and provision of basic urban infrastructure and services. The growth of informal settlements and the failure to provide housing to meet the low-income demand are natural indicators of the urbanisation process.



PHOTO: BUILT ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT GROUP

IN SOUTH AFRICA, 13.6% of all households live in informal settlements (Stats SA 2011), which are located largely in fragile and hostile environments, and often do not have secure tenure, adequate housing or basic services. In most instances, these households have few resources at their disposal and inadequate access to the skills and expertise that could help them to make the best use of their

limited resources (Pasteur 2011), which make them susceptible to hazards and stresses. Their human security is vulnerable, in terms of physical (from violence or trauma), socio-economic and environmental security (O'Brien and Leichenko 2007).

'Human settlements are dynamic, complex socio-ecological systems which arise from the interaction of socio-economic and environmental processes on

various scales' (Aguilar and de Fuentes 2013: 15). To understand the vulnerability of human settlements, the different links in these complex socio-ecological systems need to be interrogated, in order to look at power, politics and other contextual factors that create insecurities (O'Brien and Leichenko 2007). Towns and cities are the main engines of South Africa's economy but are characterised by huge inequalities and high concentrations of poverty. Therefore, the resilience of these spaces and the preparedness of urban communities to deal with stresses, risks and mounting (and often prolonged) vulnerabilities is critical.

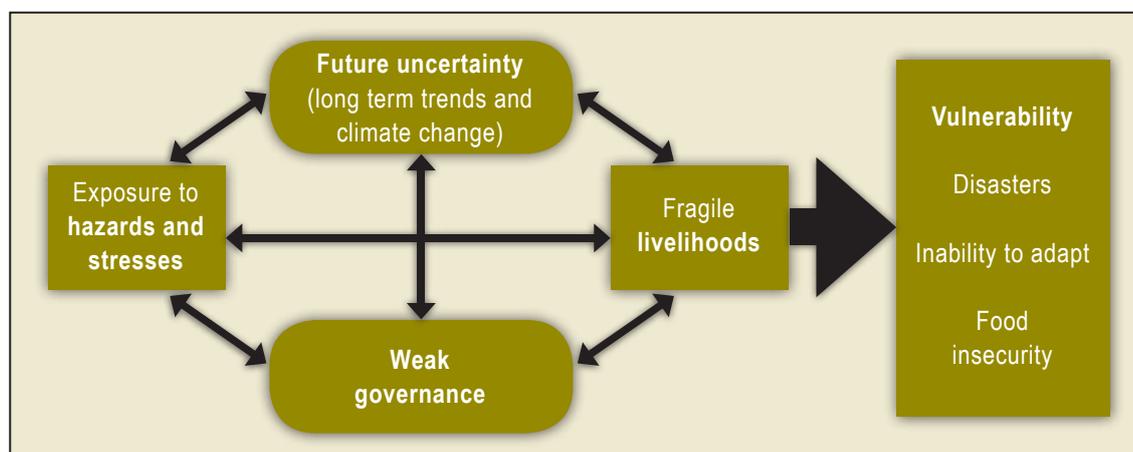
This case study is an analysis of the North East Sector 2 (NES2) community, which is located in Pietermaritzburg, Msunduzi Local Municipality, in KwaZulu-Natal. It documents how a community has managed to maintain resilience against multiple adversities, explores the community vulnerabilities and traces the positive ways in which people have responded to shocks and stressful events in their quest for housing development. The paper contributes to the current discourse on community resilience, by providing an overview of and reflection on the concept of resilience from a human settlements perspective, extrapolating applicable findings and lessons.

THE CONCEPT OF RESILIENCE

Both vulnerability and resilience have been shaped largely by severe stresses and impacts closely connected to natural hazards. The concept of resilience refers to 'the ability of a system, community or society to resist, absorb, cope with and recover from the effects of hazards and to adapt to longer term changes in a timely and efficient manner without undermining food security or wellbeing' (Pasteur 2011: 13). It can be thought of as a community's capacity to endure shocks and stresses without its overall situation deteriorating. The concept of resilience is also no longer confined to analysing the functioning of ecosystems but refers to a 'broad spectrum of social, economic, institutional and ecological hazards as well as the complex interplay between them' (Christmann et al. 2012: 2). Vulnerability is increased by the wider context of uncertainty created by long-term trends, which are exacerbated by weak access to – and influence over – the institutions and policies that govern the community's access to resources and decision making (Pasteur 2011).

As Figure 1 shows, vulnerability constitutes intertwined and multi-faceted stresses and risks

Figure 1: Vulnerability Framework (Pasteur 2011: 11)



that lead to potential or actual weakening of social systems and ways of life. Stresses and risks that lead to an inability to cope can be defined in terms of immediate vulnerabilities¹ or long-term trends that foster prolonged uncertainty. In contrast, resilience signifies the successful adaptation of societies to shocks and stresses. Therefore, increasing people's resilience is directly linked to addressing the factors that underlie their vulnerability. Building community resilience requires an understanding of challenges and stresses to a community's overall health, income, environment and physical security, as well as its coping mechanisms that enable people to address these issues through a 'bottom up' process of adaptation and change.

According to Pasteur (2001: 13), 'vulnerability is not a permanent state, and communities are certainly not helpless in the face of hazards that might affect them'. Capacities and opportunities need to be harnessed in order to ensure that communities can cope with hazards, adapt to change and begin to move out of poverty (Pasteur 2001). Vulnerability can be seen as a system's actual weakness, whereas resilience can be seen as a system's coping capacity. The level of vulnerability is greatly influenced by a system's capacity to deal with threats (Christmann et al. 2012). Hence, in some instances, vulnerability may be low, even if the exposure to threats is high.

According to Folke (in Christmann et al. 2012), resilience can be understood as a process rather than a state, and so adaptation, learning and innovation

processes must be considered. An important aspect of resilience is positive coping strategies, which are the result of positive adaptation, learning and innovation processes. Sustainable resilience can only be achieved when households and communities use non-erosive² strategies based on the available skills and resources (Pasteur 2011). Therefore, 'resilient households and communities are able to cope and respond to change proactively, making active choices about alternative livelihood strategies that will maintain wellbeing under the changed context' (Pasteur 2011: 14).

NORTH EAST SECTOR 2 IN-SITU UPGRADE: A CASE STUDY

The North East Sector 2, or NES2, was the fourth phase of the Glenwood 2 less formal township development³ but was originally planned as the second phase of a proposed fast-track emergency settlement area. In 1996 the first phase was serviced and used to relocate the Q-Section informal settlement from steep land between Glenwood 1 formal suburb and the Willowton floodplains. In December 1995, the Pietermaritzburg-Msunduzi Transitional Local Council (TLC) applied for a project-linked subsidy to develop the second phase (NES2), but in July 1996 the provincial Department of Local Government and Housing indicated that the application would not be supported on the grounds of high servicing costs. Nevertheless, in 1997, the project area was planned, surveyed, and pegged to provide 283 sites. In the same year the TLC relocated to the area about 190 families from the former informal settlements of Peter Hey and Woodstock Road, in Mountain Rise, after the Pietermaritzburg High Court ordered their eviction. The communities agreed to the move because they were promised 'housing opportunities'. However, the relocated families found themselves living in emergency shelter

Building community resilience requires an understanding of challenges and stresses to a community's overall health, income, environment and physical security, as well as its coping mechanisms that enable people to address these issues through a 'bottom up' process of adaptation and change.

(tents), which became seemingly permanent because of project delays and led to the settlement being nicknamed 'Tent City'. This was in contravention of the South African Constitution (1996), which enshrines the right of access to adequate housing (in Section 26 of the Bill of Rights). In accordance with the Municipal Systems Act (2000), the site was serviced at the municipality's expense, with emergency services comprising communal standpipes and ventilated improved pit latrines (VIPs). Electrical reticulation was provided upon registration of the General Plan.

In October 2000, amidst municipal concerns about the high estimated cost of servicing the area, the city planner commissioned the Built Environment Support Group (BESG) and consulting engineers Moore Spence Jones to undertake a project feasibility study. The study found that the servicing costs would be high, requiring an additional R8 000 per site on top of the housing subsidy. Based on this finding, a mass relocation was considered, to an area that would be cheaper to develop, but the community strongly resisted this idea. The NES2 community, which had moved before on the promise of housing, had invested in meeting their own (largely informal) housing needs while waiting for the municipality to deliver on its promises. Further project delays and uncertainty prompted the community to organise itself and elect a Development Committee. In 2002, the Msunduzi Municipality advertised for a project implementation agent (IA) to develop the area through a project-linked subsidy application. The NES2 community leadership asked BESG to tender for the project, and in February 2004 BESG was appointed IA.

In 2005, BESG took two community leaders to the housing summit hosted by the national Department of Housing. At the summit, the community leaders spoke about community housing issues, highlighting project stagnation and reiterating their

It is a story of a community organising itself, building capacity and continuously advocating for development in spite of significant vulnerabilities and threats.

commitment to maximum community involvement in project pre-implementation, development and construction. However, in the period leading up to the 2011 local government elections, the Development Committee was disbanded because of local-level political contestation and other factors that are beyond the scope of this paper. In order to save the project a joint intervention followed, involving the IA, the ward councillor, municipal officials and the community, which led to the development committee being re-established and regaining control of the project. Further project delays prompted the community and BESG to approach the KwaZulu-Natal Human Settlements MEC who, in August 2012, confirmed that his department had no objections to the project and would honour the appointment of BESG as the IA. In September 2013, the MEC signed the project approval documents, paving the way for in-situ upgrading. BESG is currently finalising the contracts of agreement, and construction is set to start in 2014.

This case illustrates how, over a period of 16 years, a community has been proactive, adapted to change and managed to cope when the housing project did not go as planned. It is a story of a community organising itself, building capacity and continuously advocating for development in spite of significant vulnerabilities and threats.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

Poverty and vulnerability are intertwined, as the poor are more vulnerable socially, economically and environmentally. Vulnerabilities are not only from

The lack of proper road access makes the settlement vulnerable to fire and other emergencies. Apart from households located on the main taxi route and some service roads, fire engines and ambulances would have difficulty reaching households.

nature but are also aggravated by unstable socio-economic, political and physical conditions coupled with inadequate coping strategies (Tran et al. 2012). The lack of financial (and in some cases institutional) safety nets make the poor more vulnerable, and the NES2 community is no exception. Upon relocation, the NES2 community was settled in tents, as a temporary housing solution. However, this has become seemingly permanent, since the proposed housing project hit a snag, and the NES2 community remains vulnerable in many aspects.

Although the tents have disappeared and been replaced by self-built housing, the structures are poorly built, made mostly of make-shift wattle and daub, in bad condition and over-crowded. Because of the promise of housing, the majority of households have not invested substantially in shelter provision, and so some of the dwellings are in a very bad state. Limited household resources have been channelled towards supplementing livelihoods. The location of NES2 on an undulating site makes building difficult and leads to erosion that damages the structures. The community's vulnerability is increased by the cost of rebuilding and repairing houses affected by rains and storm-water run-off.

The failure of the municipality to provide adequate services, particularly sanitation and refuse collection, has resulted in the community digging its own pit latrines and dumping waste in open spaces. This has led to severe environmental degradation and pollution, leaving the community susceptible to disease. As an interim measure under the Emergency Housing Programme,⁴ chemical toilets replaced the

VIPs, but they are inadequate, and the portable water standpipes frequently run dry at peak hours. In September 1998, additional toilets and water-storage tanks were installed, following an outbreak of hepatitis A in the larger Glenwood 2 township and neighbouring schools. This prompted a ban being placed on any further relocations to the area until permanent services were provided.

The lack of proper road access makes the settlement vulnerable to fire and other emergencies. Apart from households located on the main taxi route and some service roads, fire engines and ambulances would have difficulty reaching households.

Nevertheless, since 2006 the area has experienced a substantial amount of infill development and small-scale land invasions, some through the natural growth of the settlement and some through the alleged illegal sale of plots. The settlement has become denser and the pegs used to demarcate plots have since been lost. The vulnerability of the community has been further increased because of local political patronage, with housing stands and community work opportunities being sold and distributed along party lines.

In spite of all these vulnerabilities, the NES2 community adapted various coping mechanisms to contend with the largely overwhelming impacts of stresses and hazards. The local conditions (strengths and weaknesses) determine community strategies on which to build resilience (Colten and Sauer 2010).

COPING STRATEGIES

Since its relocation, the NES2 community has mobilised itself with the aim of obtaining service delivery and housing. Instead of sitting back as victims of an eviction order, the community has taken a proactive approach. For the purpose of this paper, the coping strategies examined are those directly linked to housing development.

Resilient communities respond to change proactively and make choices about alternative development and livelihood strategies, which requires access to resources, assets and knowledge. They have positive coping strategies that enable them to 'ride through a difficult period and to promptly rebuild or recover what they have lost' (Pasteur 2011: 14), without depleting their productive assets. Vulnerable people without external support are often forced to sell off or consume their assets, which undermines their livelihood strategies in the long run (Pasteur 2011).

One of the coping strategies used by the NES2 community was to build partnerships with neighbouring communities. Such partnerships help to reduce vulnerabilities and consolidate community priorities through shared practices and lessons. When the housing development plan stalled, the NES2 community engaged with the Glenwood 2 community and made use of the Housing Support Centre. The Housing Support Centre advised the community to approach BESG for support. The NES2 community was also exposed to and adopted housing *stokvels* (savings clubs), whereby members support each other in saving towards the purchase or production of blocks for house construction. The Housing Support Centre provided a space for sharing and engaging in community development priorities. The community had chosen the Enhanced People's Housing Process (EPHP) subsidy instrument, which promotes choice and self-management of housing processes among communities. The community would have to be involved and engaged throughout the delivery process and assist in resolving beneficiary and contractor issues affecting development, in line with 'compulsory community contribution' of the EPHP policy. Several community initiatives were taken, including:

- ✦ Creating a community facility, by occupying and fencing in an old farmhouse on the site. This facility is used by residents as a crèche and

meeting place, as well as by several support non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that provide services in the area.

- ✦ Participating in an emergency housing programme in 2008 (managed by BESG and financed by a South American relief agency, SELAVIP) for 40 destitute households whose dwellings were in dangerous condition.
- ✦ Cleaning up the area. In 2011, the city was placed under provincial administration, and municipal maintenance services collapsed. The community organised a clean-up campaign (rubbish collection and grass cutting) that was modelled on a BESG community-based maintenance project, which the then Department of Provincial and Local Government studied as a model for alternative municipal service delivery.

One of the coping strategies used by the NES2 community was to build partnerships with neighbouring communities. Such partnerships help to reduce vulnerabilities and consolidate community priorities through shared practices and lessons.

In addition to the above, the community requested facilitation support from BESG to develop a management and maintenance plan. These community-led actions indicate proactive acquiring of knowledge and skills needed by the community in order to advance community resilience.

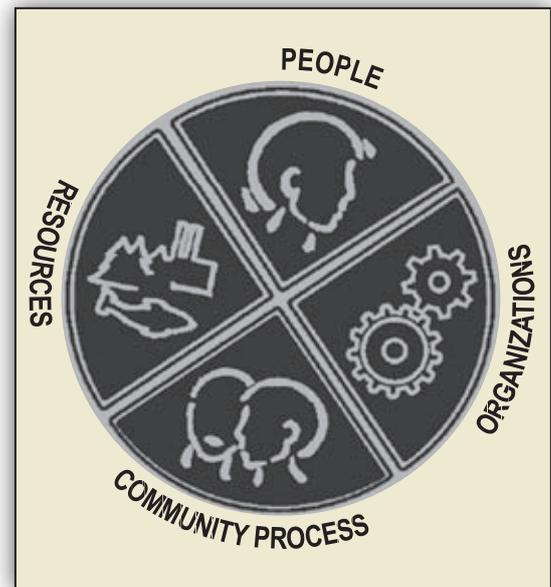
The NES2 development committee was able to decide who would be the beneficiaries of the SELAVIP emergency housing funds thanks to strong internal community capacity and cohesion, as well as meaningful participation from the wider community. The SELAVIP funding was not enough to develop the whole community, and so BESG suggested that the existing shacks be upgraded to a more liveable condition. However, the community opted for the

construction of block houses for the most destitute households, even if fewer households would benefit because of the higher dwelling costs. This action demonstrated the community's ability to identify collective vulnerabilities, risks and hazards. Realising that household sizes differ, the development committee (as part of the social compact with the municipality and the IA) asked if families could keep their well-built existing structures for a period of two years so as to alleviate over-crowding upon them receiving a housing subsidy. After two years, the community accepted that the existing structures would have to be demolished, with the option of recycling old building materials to extend their subsidy houses. This agreement was reached at the behest of the community and with the support of BESG, in recognition that households have invested substantially in meeting their own housing needs.

MAKING COMMUNITIES RESILIENT

The NES2 case study provides a good example of how a community can build resilience, by taking intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity to respond to social and economic stresses. Community resilience determines whether communities survive, merely cope with a declining quality of life or successfully adapt and prosper (Centre for Community Enterprise 2000). All communities possess characteristics that can either enable or constrain their ability to adapt and change. The Centre for Community Enterprise (2000) identifies four components: people, organisations, resources and community processes (see Figure 2). These four dimensions are inter-linked. The ability to understand vulnerabilities, and in turn create the indispensable social capital and manage development trade-offs, has enabled the community to achieve some measure of resilience.

Figure 2: Dimensions of community resilience (Centre for Community Enterprise, 2000: 11)



According to the Centre for Community Enterprise (2000: 11) the first dimension – ‘people’ – refers to an individual or group’s attitudes and behaviours, which create community norms that can either promote or hinder resilience. This dimension explores attitudes and behaviours related to attributes such as leadership, initiative, education and optimism. The NES2 community appears to show some of these characteristics, as it was steadfast in its pursuit of development, refusing to be relocated for the second time. Strong community cohesion and leadership (NES2 Development Committee) has enabled the exploration of new ideas and development alternatives to enhancing livelihood strategies. To effectively strengthen urban resilience, communities need to be engaged as stakeholders and equal partners in development (RSIS Centre for NTS Studies 2013). Positive coping strategies rely on engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

This leads to the next dimension of ‘organisations’ within a community. Organisations within resilient communities must have sufficient capacity or influence to provide the necessary leadership and resources (Centre for Community Enterprise 2000). Through collaborating, organisations, agencies and networks within a community can be an asset in times of social and economic change. Internal and external partnerships in resilient communities have been shown to be an advantage in achieving positive coping mechanisms. In the case of NES2, external stakeholder support was critical in building the capacity of the local community to be able to mobilise, establish a development committee and engage local government. Capacity building enables local citizens and communities to contribute through knowledge, while allowing parties to assess and examine priorities from a learning perspective. The NES2 case study seems to be strong in this aspect, as the community consulted BESE and learned from neighbouring communities.

The third dimension is the ‘resources’ required to make change in communities. What is most important is how resources are viewed and used. Resilient communities use both their own resources and external resources to achieve their goals. Ideally they seek to reduce ‘dependency on outside ownership’ (Centre for Community Enterprise 2000: 12). In the case of NES2, resources took the form of individual resources (household livelihoods, skills and knowledge), group resources (housing *stokvels*, community gardens) and community resources (converting the old farmhouse to a community facility). Mobilising resources differs according to coping mechanisms employed. The focus needs to be on relatively short-term and day-to-day needs, in order to generate support and buy-in, while at the same time planning with a long-term strategic outlook.

The last dimension, ‘community processes’ describes the approaches and structures available to a community for organising and using these resources in a positive way. Resilient communities take the time to research, analyse and plan for development, through a shared vision for the future and involving key sectors in the implementation of goals (Centre for Community Enterprise 2000: 12). Through its collective quest for housing, the NES2 community has managed to develop a shared vision and establish partnerships that involve key sectors. Furthermore, by opting for the EPHP subsidy, the community has contributed towards the development. This affects decision making, which is a critical part of building resilience, for example in the prioritisation and allocation of limited resources.

RESILIENCE THROUGH COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Resilience can be understood as a community transformative force through the understanding of settlement systems beyond the physical environment, encompassing ‘social, economic and ecological sub-systems and processes on which communities are dependent’ (DPCD 2008 in Van Huyssteen et al. 2013: 2). Risk implications are obviously higher in areas characterised by high and increasing development pressures on the environment coupled with high socio-economic vulnerability. In order to build resilience, it is important to harness individual and collective coping strategies that communities employ in the face of vulnerability. Collective coping mechanisms are reinforced by strong social capital with shared expectations for actions (World Bank 2010) such that, despite weak ties among community members, the existence of shared values and expectations can enable a community to achieve common goals. According to the Centre

for Community Enterprise (2000: 7, 8), in order to achieve resilience, vulnerable communities have to:

- ✦ Take a multi-functional approach to create a sustainable (economically, ecologically, politically and socially) development system within the community.
- ✦ Initiate efforts that maximise the use of their limited time and resources in those areas that yields the greatest overall benefits.
- ✦ Develop plans that merge social and economic goals and build local capacity.
- ✦ Mobilise key sectors of the community around priorities.
- ✦ Focus energies on mobilising internal assets (both financial and human) while also leveraging outside resources to achieve their goals.
- ✦ Establish partnerships with external organisations through which locally based initiatives are implemented and evaluated.

These represent a multifaceted, bottom-up approach directed towards attaining community resilience.

Informal settlement communities are at risk of compound, everyday risks, not just major events. Therefore, to build resilience, a broader institutional framework is needed that moves beyond community and local leadership. For such a framework to work, the different stakeholders (in government and society) have a role to play in building resilience.

THE ROLE OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS IN BUILDING RESILIENCE

It is generally recognised that partnerships must be formed across the different sectors of society in order to build sustainable community resilience. In most instances, much of the capacity needed to strengthen resilience already exists across a loosely associated system of groups, networks and organisations (Chandra et al. 2011). However, to harness that

capacity, all stakeholders and partners need to share a common ground in the pursuit of joint action. 'Policy, capacity and intervention are mutually reinforcing', as 'intervention occurs on a short-term basis, while policy and capacity building target longer term benefits' (RSIS Centre for NTS Studies 2013: 12). Building on community-led initiatives is more evident in the areas of basic needs and livelihoods, as within these areas communities experience the greatest vulnerabilities and are in the position to begin to respond (Huirou Commission 2013). The establishment of external partnerships, particularly with NGOs, should be aimed at building the capacity of the local community and leadership. Support should be offered through leadership training, empowerment and organisational development (as in the case of the NES2 community setting up a development committee). Support should be on-going, building on internal community efforts aimed at resource mobilisation and learning for resilience. It is based on a long-term strategy of building capacity for community initiatives agreed upon in a participatory manner.

Apart from seeking support from civic organisations, communities should be able to engage local government. Integration of multi-sector partners can enhance collaboration, which improves community resilience and wellbeing. Intervention at local level can only be successful if it is not politically motivated or influenced, as this will enable a move beyond local action towards addressing the wider structural issues of community vulnerability in, for example, informal settlements. The role of local government should shift from being responsive to being proactive, with local government becoming an effective partner in making human settlements viable, equitable and sustainable. Government's role should not be limited to being the provider of services and resources but should scale up to include informing and facilitating actions by households, communities and civil society

(Archer 2013). The long-term aim is to establish a more facilitative policy framework, which will enable the root causes of vulnerability to be tackled on a wider scale. For this, partnerships are critical in order to identify outcomes and measures of community resilience as well as local vulnerabilities.

CONCLUSION

Given the magnitude of challenges that rapid urbanisation leading to unsustainable urban growth poses, building resilience requires cooperative and complementary actions among multiple stakeholders. Resilience has traditionally been linked with disasters associated with ecological systems. As a result, a huge gap exists in good practice that determines and explores community resilience from the human settlements perspective. However, as shown above, the shift has begun to encompass the interaction between communities and socio-economic and ecological systems. In the case of NES2, resilience is multi-dimensional, based on a community suffering an extended state of vulnerability. The community experienced a major shock of eviction and relocation

but has for the past 16 years built its capacity for adaptation and learning. Although the community has remained committed and resilient in its pursuit of housing, not all coping strategies have tended to be positive. The NES2 community's story should not over-romanticise community resilience, as the NES2 community does not possess all the characteristics of a sustainable, resilient community. However, it shows how a community in distress has managed to use its limited resources to overcome, cope and adapt to its challenges. In reflecting on the various challenges and breakthroughs, the case study portrays some of the possible implications of community coping mechanisms in addressing vulnerability in the context of human settlements. Nevertheless, settlements are dynamic, and actions directed towards building community resilience are not necessarily place-specific. A community's capacity to build resilience needs to draw on formal and informal institutions to leverage resources and access positive coping strategies, through linking community efforts with broader initiatives at different levels of government and society.

REFERENCES

- Aguilar M and de Fuentes F (2013) Climate Change and Water Access Vulnerability in Human Settlements Systems of Mexico: The Merida Metropolitan Area, Yucatan. Reality, Data and Space. *International Journal of Statistics and Geography*, vol. 4 No. 1, January–April 2013.
- Archer D (2013) *Community Driven Actions for City-wide Development as Mechanisms for Building Resilience*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).
- BESG Development Services (2013) Business Plan: Msunduzi Ward 37, Glenwood 2 phase 4 – North East Sector 2 In-situ upgrading and housing project. Submitted to the Msunduzi Municipality and KwaZulu-Natal Department of Human Settlements.
- Centre for Community Enterprise (2000) *The Community Resilience Manual. A Resource for Rural Recovery and Renewal*. Port Alberni: Centre for Community Enterprise.
- Chandra et al. (2011) *Building Community Resilience to Disasters: A Way Forward to Enhance National Health Security*. A Technical Report sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Sciences. Santa Monica, California CA: Rand Corporation.
- Christmann et al. (2012) *Vulnerability and Resilience from a Socio-Spatial Perspective: Towards a Theoretical Framework*. Working Paper, Erkner, Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning. http://www.irs-net.de/download/wp_vulnerability.pdf.
- Colten C and Sauer C (2010) Building Community Resilience: A Summary of Case Studies from Charleston, Gulfport and Memphis. Community and Regional Resilience Institute (CARRI) Research Report 9. Oakridge, Tennessee: Community and Regional Resilience CARRI Institute.
- Huairou Commission (2013) *Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience. What Communities Want: Putting Community Resilience Priorities on the Agenda for 2015*. New York: Huairou Commission.
- O'Brien K and Leichenko R (2007) *Human Security, Vulnerability and Sustainable Adaptation*. Human Development Report 2007/2008. New York: UNDP Human Development Report Office.
- Pasteur K (2011) *From Vulnerability to Resilience: A Framework for Analysis and Action to Build Community Resilience*. Rugby, Warwickshire: Practical Action Publishing.
- RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies (2013) *Expert Working Group Meeting on Advancing Urban Resilience in the Face of Environmental Change, 22-23 April 2013*. Singapore: RSIS Centre for NTS Studies.
- Stats SA (Statistics South Africa) (2011) *Census Report*. Pretoria: Stats SA. <http://www.statssa.gov.za>
- Tran T et al. (2012) *Review of Housing Vulnerability: Implications for Climate Resilient Houses*. Boulder, Colorado: Institute for Social and Environmental Transition–International.
- Van Huyssteen E et al. (2013) Analysing Risk and Vulnerability of South African Settlements: Attempts, Explorations and Reflections. *Jamba: Journal of Disaster Risk Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2.
- World Bank (2010) *Violence in the City. Understanding and Supporting Community Responses to Urban Violence*. Washington: The World Bank, Social Development Department.

NOTES

- ¹ Immediate vulnerabilities refer to fragile livelihoods, weak governance and exposure to hazards and stresses.
- ² Non-erosive refers to strategies that do not lead to depletion or disposal of productive assets.
- ³ According to the Less Formal Township Establishment Act 113 of 1991, this type of development refers to the establishment of townships for less formal forms of residential settlement.
- ⁴ The National Housing Code (2009) Part 3: Incremental Interventions – Emergency Housing Programme.



LANGRUG: MORE THAN MERE TAPS AND TOILETS. CREATING A COMMUNITY SPACE THROUGH COLLABORATION

Thandeka Tshabalala and Baraka Mwau - Community Organisation Resource Centre

Since 1994, the South African government has progressively addressed sanitation and water supply backlogs in informal settlements. However, despite the progress made in providing adequate water and sanitation services, various socio-technical aspects, such as the production, location and maintenance of these facilities, have not been taken into account properly. It is estimated that 'as many as 26% (or about 3.2 million households) are at risk of service failure and/or are experiencing service delivery breakdowns', which, when added to the households without any services, paints a picture of 'service delivery failure on a massive scale' (Department of Water Affairs 2012). While poor planning across government may contribute to the problem of service delivery, what is most needed is to enhance the social utility and sustainability of sanitation spaces. Specifically, this means looking at the individual versus communal uses, community expectations and financial sustainability.



PHOTO: COMMUNITY ORGANISATION RESOURCE CENTRE

GOVERNMENT CANNOT ALONE solve the service delivery problem, especially decisions on how, where and which type of service to provide in informal settlements. Government does not have

sufficient socio-technical capacity, or even the capital, to guarantee the provision of adequate and dignified facilities that are acceptable to urban poor communities (Goldstein 2009). Furthermore,

The innovative design, implementation and management of the WASH facility in Langrug sets a precedent for co-producing infrastructure and services by multi-stakeholders that triggers meaningful community engagement, creates a sense of ownership and redefines government–community relations.

government's top-down approach does not reflect an understanding of communities and therefore cannot meet the imperatives of socio-economic sustainability. For that reason, a multi-stakeholder approach, with urban poor communities at the core, is pivotal to the sustainable delivery of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. Such an approach enhances the dignity associated with the use of communal toilets, contributes towards place-making in communities, creates job opportunities in asset management, and informs policy and practice towards meaningful participatory upgrading of informal settlements.

This paper focuses on the informal settlement of Langrug, located in Franschhoek within Stellenbosch Municipality, where collaborative and participatory models have not only delivered WASH facilities successfully but, in the process, built a resilient community. Like many informal settlements, the community of Langrug suffers from a lack of access to adequate water and sanitation facilities.

This paper argues that community water and sanitation services should be not seen as an addition to the service-delivery statistics or as a basic constitutional right. Instead, the services provided should reflect the needs, aspirations and circumstances of the community where they are being delivered. The theory of resilience is applied in the context of collaborative partnerships as a platform for the community of Langrug to meaningfully partake in water and sanitation delivery. By forging partnerships with CORC, the Informal Settlement

Network (ISN), Stellenbosch Municipality and (later) academic and research institutions, the community was able to improve their severely strained water and sanitation facilities. Various partnerships facilitated the exchanges of information and learning, which are critical aspects of this change-making process. The case of Langrug demonstrates that, by including the community in the design and implementation of the WASH project, the community was able to inform a design that resonates with local needs. Through the process, conventional approaches to water and sanitation service delivery in the settlement were challenged, in favour of a more responsive approach. The paper argues that a collaborative and participatory model of service delivery – at the heart of which lies information exchange and learning – is instrumental in building resilient communities.

The innovative design, implementation and management of the WASH facility in Langrug sets a precedent for co-producing infrastructure and services by multi-stakeholders that triggers meaningful community engagement, creates a sense of ownership and redefines government–community relations. A sense of ownership enhances the sustainability of the project and is built through nurturing social cohesion. The case study shows how the planning and building of the WASH facility produced the building blocks for emergent social cohesion in Langrug. It further illustrates that community resilience is affirmed as well as strengthened when, instead of being passive recipients, communities are actively involved in planning, implementing and monitoring services.

ENHANCING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Resilience is discussed in relation to communicative planning for two reasons. First, CORC/ISN's aim is to facilitate communication between communities

and the local government, creating community–municipal partnerships that communities can use as a platform to voice their challenges and then to construct opportunities to deal innovatively with challenges. Second, communicative planning is an important element in building resilient societies and emphasises collaborative partnerships (Goldstein 2009), whereby decisions on shared issues are made by all concerned. Therefore, the case study reflects on the value of a range of partners who collaborated in delivering services. While sustainability in communities is often defined as reaching a consensus, building resilience goes beyond consensus-making and dispute resolution to pursuing collaboration 'at multiple scales, and in diversifying practice' (Goldstein 2009: 2). Collaborative partnership acknowledges that problem resolution is always shifting and so requires ongoing engagement among key stakeholders.

Resilience theory is also used in relation to the philosophy of 'building communities, building the nation' embraced by the South African SDI Alliance.¹ This implies that community capacitation and empowerment promotes self-reliant communities (CORC 2013). As people struggle to surmount adversity and meet challenges, the accumulation over time of skills, abilities, knowledge and insight (through community exchange of learning and information) builds capacitation and empowerment, which are factors indicative of resilience (Saleebey cited in McCubin 2001). Resilience theory acknowledges that the strength to be resilient is embedded within the individual or the community, while a community's potential to demonstrate resilience depends on social bonds and collective action based on networks of relationships, reciprocity, trust, and community norms (Van Breda 2001). The social component of resilience is the accomplishment of people's willingness and preparation to confront and overcome adversity, and

involves two related elements: community cohesion and motivation (McAslan 2011). Motivation is 'the product of a common will to survive and recover' that requires effective leadership, respect and an understanding of the risks and threats, whereas community cohesion is when individuals achieve a common outcome by staying together and supporting each other, drawing on 'shared experiences, a common sense of worth and an expressed collective identity' (McAslan 2011: 11).

The aim of enabling resilience in communities is to fulfil access to infrastructure that provides individuals and groups with the means to survive and recover. Community resilience refers to 'the ability of a community facing normative or non-normative adversity or the consequences of adversity to establish, maintain, or regain an "expected" or "satisfactory" range of functioning that is equal to or is better than pre-stressor functioning' (Bowen 1998 in Van Breda 2001: 152).

The Langrug community's WASH initiative can be seen as an act of resilience, where the community proactively responded to policy, resulting in an improved state of municipal water and sanitation delivery systems. In this case, the community-driven process and the final product both built and affirmed community resilience.

THE CASE STUDY: LANGRUG INFORMAL SETTLEMENT²

In 1993, Langrug was established in Franschhoek, one of the most affluent farm areas in the Stellenbosch Municipality. Extreme poverty, poor

The social component of resilience is the accomplishment of people's willingness and preparation to confront and overcome adversity, and involves two related elements: community cohesion and motivation.

housing and inadequate water and sanitation facilities are widespread in the settlement, which provides affordable housing to seasonal farm workers who are employed mostly in the vineyards.

Through a partnership with Stellenbosch Municipality, the community of Langrug has been active in shaping the nature of service delivery in the area. The community is included and participates in shaping a better future through incremental and in-situ upgrading of the settlement. This partnership can be traced to November 2010, when the Mayor and Council started engaging with the Slum Dwellers International, through its South African Alliance. This engagement was aligned with the National Upgrading Support Programme and the presidency-driven national programme delivery agreement to upgrade a total of 400 000 households by 2014 (Department of Human Settlements 2012). In 2011, the Stellenbosch Municipality, CORC/ISN and the broader community of poor people in the Stellenbosch signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the joint objective of undertaking a comprehensive process of informal settlement upgrading. One of the targets was to upgrade 7000 households in Langrug.

In March 2011, the first initiative was to carry out a profiling and enumeration exercise of Langrug.³ The exercise found that Langrug contained 1858 households and 4088 people. The ratio of people to toilets was 49:1, and the ratio of people to water points was 72:1, which is far off the South Africa's standard of five families per toilet (SA SDI Alliance and the Municipality of Stellenbosch 2011). Further, the available services were sporadically dispersed through the settlement, and access was unequal. Clearly an upgrade of water and sanitation facilities within the settlement was urgently needed.

Despite the municipality prioritising the upgrading of WASH, the desired threshold had not been attained, and challenges remained in delivering

and maintaining sanitation services in Langrug. According to community leaders (Ratana and Poni interviews 2013⁴), key challenges facing water and sanitation delivery in Langrug included inadequacy, inaccessibility (especially at night), vandalism and poor hygiene. In response, and to demonstrate that a better system of delivering these services was plausible, the initial partnership was expanded to involve academic and research institutions, including the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) and the University of Cape Town. With the entry of the WPI, an entirely different model of a WASH facility was conceptualised. This can be interpreted as an act of affirming and building community resilience, where a community becomes integral in shaping the nature of development that government undertakes in the settlement, as well as influencing policies that result in such developments. It also demonstrates the ability of communities to partner with technical professionals to design innovative and improved systems of delivering WASH in informal settlements.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS

The partnership's first project was to design and implement a grey water⁵ management project, which was long overdue. Prolonged periods of poor and inadequate grey water management in the settlement had resulted in potential health hazards. Although the health impacts of this project have not yet been assessed, the project set the momentum for the establishment of the community-led WASH intervention in the settlement.

In October 2012, the partnership conceptualised an integrated community centre that would satisfy the key needs of hygiene, safety and privacy, and serve multiple functions. The wider community accepted the idea, and WPI committed to sponsor the project. However, the identified site was highly underutilised,

overgrown with weeds, littered with solid waste and home to two vandalised toilets cubicles. The site posed a growing health hazard to the local community and carried the risk of transmittable diseases, particularly to vulnerable groups such as children who often used the site as a playground. Therefore, the partners began a design process of the proposed facility.

DESIGNING THE WASH FACILITY

The existing services were mostly accessed communally in ablution blocks, which were of a standard/uniform design. A technocratic process, not the community, had determined the design and location of these facilities. Such a top-down, technocratic and non-inclusive approach to delivering sanitation facilities had a mixed reception from the community. While the community appreciated the effort made to increase the services, it did not agree with the design and location of the facilities (Masiy interview 2013⁶). For example, in 2012 the Stellenbosch Municipality delivered chemical toilets in Langrug (at Zwelitsha) without consulting the community. Despite being in dire need of the services, the residents rejected the toilets, tipping them over 'because after delivery, the municipality never appointed anyone to clean them, so the residents saw it best to go back to using the bush than smelly toilets' (Ratana interview 2013⁷).

Thus, the underpinning principle guiding the production of the partnership's proposed facility was to design a 'unique', community-driven WASH facility that resonated with the community's preferences.

A technical team (of urban planners and architects) from CORC, community co-researchers (community members coordinating the design process between the residents, municipality and CORC) and WPI engineering students worked with a community team to develop the design of a

'We, as the community, wanted a place that would be more than just a sanitation facility' and 'would cater for the different community needs such as showers and disability units' (Ratana interview 2013⁸).

community centre, which included a WASH facility. 'We, as the community, wanted a place that would be more than just a sanitation facility' and 'would cater for the different community needs such as showers and disability units' (Ratana interview 2013⁸).

The final WASH design produced a product that went beyond mere toilets and taps, to meet various imperatives for social sustainability and place-making. The community centre served as a place for accessing WASH services, as a hall for community gatherings, as spaces in which to work and conduct business, and as a resource centre – a place to learn. The facility also operates as a postal delivery and distribution centre. The community's reception to the facility has been overwhelmingly positive, and the women (who are the dominant users of the facility) in particular find the facility to be the most hygienic and secure in the settlement, not to mention that it integrates multiple uses. 'Some of the residents use the facility when they have visitors' because it provides some privacy, while 'others use it because it is cleaner than the other toilets' (Ntlikithi interview 2013⁹).

The well-ventilated facility contains five hand-washing sinks (two of which are lowered for children), four laundry basins in a central area, two showers, and a total of nine toilets stalls – three each for men and women, two for children, and one unisex cubicle, which is also suitable for handicapped users. A water tap is located at the entrance of the facility. The facility operates between 6am and 11pm and is secured at night. A space is reserved for a caretaker who is responsible for cleaning, distributing toilet

paper and soap, and maintaining and monitoring the facility, with the Stellenbosch Municipality meeting the maintenance costs. The design integrates a business space, providing a stall – preferably for a hair salon business. The community centre also includes a children's learning area (which can be seen from the central area) and serves as an informal post office.

The WASH facility has produced a more welcoming and dynamic communal space, where community members can interact, which is crucial for sharing information and building a resilient community. The design promotes the convergence of different users, thereby enhancing social cohesion and interaction in the community.

LEARNING AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTION

The construction of the facility was a true multi-stakeholder process and used local labour and 'expertise'. Two Langrug community leaders (Masiy and Ratana) with basic building skills led the community construction team. Masiy was also the community's project manager. 'Their building expertise and drive was inspirational and critical for the completion of the facility' (Tshabalala 2013) and was reinforced by technical support from CORC and WPI.

Opportunities for shared learning are important in communities where empowerment and ownership of the project are part of its intended outcomes. Therefore, the CORC technical team also built capacity among the community team, in particular

in scheduling the project activities, managing procurement, technical guidance and overall project management. Community members were empowered by the transfer of skills and knowledge, often fairly technical in nature.

The construction process was not without its challenges. The design was readjusted numerous times, costs increased because of inefficient procurement, and the project took longer than initially planned because of communication breakdowns at certain stages. Nevertheless, the project was completed in six months, and the facility was opened to public in June 2013. The WASH facility is currently fully functional and operating to capacity.

The project showed that community contracting and community-led development is possible. Residents were responsible for the construction, some had been involved since the planning stages, while 'others joined in the construction process' (Madaka interview 2013¹⁰). In addition, the transfer of skills to the community improved the capacity of the community team to execute similar projects in the settlement.

LESSONS FROM THE LANGRUG CASE STUDY

The Langrug case study shows that a community-led approach to WASH in informal settlements is possible and has the potential to build resilient communities in a divided urban South Africa.

The magnitude of the service delivery challenge is too great for the government to solve alone. However, local government's approach to providing these services is often top-down, subsidised, non-inclusive and inadequate. As observed in Langrug, this results in facilities that are typically unhygienic, simply undignified, and regularly subjected to vandalism or irresponsible use. Therefore, collaborative approaches are crucial, as

In addition, the transfer of skills to the community improved the capacity of the community team to execute similar projects in the settlement.

non-government stakeholders have the potential to up-scale the universal access to sanitation provision, enhancing the dignity of urban poor communities.

Efforts to deliver sanitation in informal settlements must be community-driven, rather than using the conservative top-down bureaucratic approach that is typical of service delivery. Even if the government had the financial resources to supply sanitation services to all, the provision would not be successful or even sustainable without meaningful community involvement. Some have argued that the top-down approach is one of the reasons that about half of government-built toilets are used for something other than their intended purpose (Trouba 2010 in WPI 2012). The approach presented in this case study may take time but, with improved efficiency in such partnerships, reasonable up-scaling would be possible.

Community participation is key to building resilient communities. Projects have a greater chance of success when community participation is at the heart of their activities and processes. In Langrug, community involvement in the WASH project illustrates that communities have the capacity to address infrastructure challenges that affect them. Involving the community also helps to eliminate, 'the municipality will do it for me' mind-set that is prevalent in many of South Africa's informal settlements. The act of the community taking lead in constructing the type of facility they desire puts across a critical policy message: that the approach is as important as the end product.

Forming partnerships and involving various stakeholders also allow resources to be pooled and the emergence of a more coordinated process to build change in informal settlements. In this context, the mutual exchange of resources is an empowerment tool for all participants in a collaborative partnership. Furthermore, when the community is involved

Furthermore, when the community is involved and government plays a facilitative role, resilient partnerships are forged based on trust and reciprocity.

and government plays a facilitative role, resilient partnerships are forged based on trust and reciprocity. In some cases, resources are then freed up for other settlements in need of sanitation services. In Langrug, the relationship between the municipality and the community ensured that the municipality's delivery of sanitation services was sustainable and more cost effective than if the construction had been outsourced to private firms.

The case study illustrates that social imperatives of sanitation services are equally as important as the technical (engineering) and financial imperatives. Overlooking social imperatives is a catalyst for mistrust to develop between authorities, such as local government, and disenfranchised urban poor communities. However, if these spaces can address needs such as employment and education, in addition to sanitation, residents would be more likely to own and care for them, and state-citizen relations would improve (WPI 2012). In this particular case, community members were also involved in the management of the facility, which serves to strengthen and sustain community ownership of the project.

In communities where there is a lack of community education, acceptance, entitlement and management, the durability of a government-supplied facility may be limited. To avoid this, in Langrug the community was involved early on in the design and implementation process. The partnership created community awareness and encouraged passive residents to reconsider their role in the settlement's development. This further opened discussions about

community needs that could be linked to the project while solving the sanitation issue. Such discussions helped pinpoint problems and highlight the best possible solutions. Knowledge from the community also helped CORC/ISN, WPI and the municipality to understand the existing conditions and provided a greater chance for positive and meaningful change.

Throughout the process, from planning to implementation of the WASH facility, all stakeholders shared a lot of knowledge, sometimes fairly technical in nature. Shared learning opportunities gave the community the necessary skills that would allow them to share their knowledge with other communities that wish to establish such a facility.

The MoU created a unique relationship with the community, the municipality and CORC/ISN, as the intermediate institution that links other two partners. The partnership has moved beyond the WASH facility delivery to the broader informal settlement upgrading in a sustainable incremental way. Resilience has proven not to be an outcome but a continuous multi-stakeholder engagement process. Continuous engagement enhances political sustainability of incremental upgrading of informal settlements.

The project built social cohesion in Langrug, by bringing the community together in a unique way, as all were striving towards the common goal of establishing dignified, communal, safe, hygienic and private WASH facilities. The community's involvement from the early stages established a sense of ownership in the project. Ownership ensures the longevity of the project, as well as transferability of skills and learning to other contexts of in-situ upgrading. Residents were invested in its success

and motivated to participate in other developmental processes. Their shared experiences also built a collective identity. The Langrug case study shows how the strength to overcome adversity is embedded in the community. Communities that realise their strengths – through inclusion, knowledge sharing and the identification with common goals – build a resilient society (Van Breda 2001).

CONCLUSION

The collaborative and participatory approach used to deliver the Langrug WASH facility demonstrates a potentially dignified way of providing informal settlements with communal services and facilities that resonate with the preferences of communities. Such an approach reinforces community resilience, by providing a collaborative platform, where information sharing and consultation is encouraged, that enhances a strong and cohesive community. The complexities of improving WASH facilities are manageable when those affected (the community) is integrally involved in steering the process, as then the community accepts and owns the project.

Furthermore, such a process produces innovative models that positively challenge existing models of water and sanitation delivery in informal settlements. The process advances the presupposition that addressing the social imperatives of providing water and sanitation in informal settlements enhances community building and community resilience. In that regard, the Langrug case study offers an alternative and desirable method that the government can adopt for improving delivery of community facilities in informal settlements.

REFERENCES

- CORC (2013) *Annual Report 2012/2013: Upgrading Lives, Upgrading People*. Mowbray: CORC.
- Department of Water Affairs (2012) *Sanitation Services – Quality of Sanitation in South Africa*. Report on the Status of Sanitation Services in South Africa. Pretoria: Department of Water Affairs, Directorate of Planning and Information. <http://www.gov.za/documents/index.php?term=&dfrom=&dto=&tps%5B0%5D=12&subjs%5B0%5D=0&p=2>
- Department of Human Settlements (2012) *What is the National Upgrading Support Programme (NUSP)?* <http://www.upgradingsupport.org/news/entry/what-is-the-national-upgrading-support-programme-nusp/>
- Goldstein BE (2009) Resilience to surprises through communicative planning. *Ecology and Society*, 14(2): 33. <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss2/art33/>
- McAslan A (2011) *Community Resilience: Understanding the Concept and its Application*. Discussion Paper. Australia: Torrens Resilience Institute. <http://sustainablecommunities.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/community-resilience-from-torrens-institute.pdf>
- McCubin L (2001) Challenges to the definition of resilience. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA, (24–28 August). <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED458498.pdf>
- SA SDI Alliance and the Municipality of Stellenbosch (2011) *Langrug Settlement Enumeration Report*. Mowbray: CORC.
- Tshabalala T (2013) *The Langrug Wash Facility a New Common Space for the Community*. <http://sasdialliance.org.za/the-langrug-wash-facility-a-new-common-space-for-the-community/>
- WPI (Worcester Polytechnic Institute) (2013) Multi-Purpose WaSHUp Facility. Cape Town Project Centre. <http://wp.wpi.edu/capetown/projects/p2011/wash/wash-facility/>
- Van Breda A (2001) *Resilience Theory: A Literature Review*. http://vanbreda.org/adrian/resilience/resilience_theory_review.pdf

NOTES

- ¹ The South African SDI Alliance comprises CORC, ISN, FEDUP, Utshani Fund and Ikhayalami.
- ² This section is adapted from the article that can be found at <http://sasdialliance.org.za/the-langrug-wash-facility-a-new-common-space-for-the-community>.
- ³ A profiling and enumeration exercise refers to a community-led process that maps out the settlement's existing infrastructure. The results serve as an empowerment tool for communities to understand their settlement better and to use this knowledge to lobby for services from the municipality.
- ⁴ Interviews with Alfred Ratana and Khungeka Poni, Ncedololuntu HIV/AIDS Group, 23 October 2013, Langrug.
- ⁵ Grey water is water that accumulates from wash basins, showers and baths, which can be recycled.
- ⁶ Interview with Trevor Masiy, Community Leader, 23 October 2013, Langrug.
- ⁷ Interview with Alfred Ratana, Community Leader, 23rd October 2013, Langrug.
- ⁸ Interview with Alfred Ratana, Community Leader, 23 October 2013, Langrug.
- ⁹ Interview with Nomthandazo Ntlithi, Wash Facility Caretaker, 23 October 2013, Langrug.
- ¹⁰ Interview Siyanda Madaka, Community Member, 24 October 2013, Langrug.



FROM THE MARGINS TO THE CENTRE THROUGH MOBILISATION: BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE RURAL COMMUNITIES

Boyce Tom and Siviwe Mdoda - Trust for Community Outreach and Education

'Resilience is the capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure' (UN/ISDR in Oft and Tsuma 2006: 6). This paper looks at the initiatives and struggles of self-organised rural communities of small-scale and landless farmers in three local municipalities within the concept of resilience proposed by Oft and Tsuma (2006). The local municipalities are Langeberg in the Cape Winelands District Municipality (CWDM) and Swellendam and Theewaterskloof in the Overberg District Municipality (ODM) in the Western Cape.



PHOTO: TRUST FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

IN THESE RURAL communities, the main sources of income for a great number of households are seasonal commercial agricultural employment and social grants. The food security of these impoverished households is permanently under threat from the continued decline in agricultural labour absorption, the seasonality of employment, rising food prices and high dependency ratios.

The paper argues that one way of expressing resilience can be found in the experience of the Mawubuye Lands Right Forum in organising farming households to overcome dispossession, fight for land and promote food sovereignty. The emphasis is on the role of self-organisation by marginalised groups as a necessary step towards genuine agrarian transformation. In 2005,

Mawubuye was launched with the assistance of TCOE, a non-government organisation. Mawubuye is actively involved in raising awareness, identifying and building local leadership in the struggle for better livelihoods, and engaging in strategies that challenge existing power relations. Its main aim is to bring greater collective organisational and political cohesion to already established, self-initiated small-scale farmers' associations in these municipalities, where previously these associations largely worked in isolation. Mawubuye also provides the means to unite their voices with other impoverished members of their communities. Since 2011, Mawubuye and TCOE have been working with farm workers who live in the same communities and have been evicted from their farms, and for whom small-scale farming also provides a means of accessing food.

The paper examines some of the underlying structural obstacles faced by rural households involved in small-scale production used mainly to meet household needs. These obstacles include a lack of access to land and productive infrastructure and water. In some cases, the land may be available to the farmers but does not have long-term tenure security, water rights and productive infrastructure, thus restricting opportunities for optimal use of the land. The resilience of these farmers is reflected in their ability to adapt, resist and change, and the extent to which they are able to organise, increasing their capacity to engage and challenge government, and clearly articulate their demands and propose alternative policies.

This case study also reflects on research carried out by Mawubuye in conjunction with TCOE that looked at people's own understanding of the root causes of their impoverishment and the importance of collective organisation and action. The research found that, despite existing obstacles, small-scale farmers continue to produce while embarking on

collective efforts to engage government for access to more land, agricultural support and recognition of the significance of small-scale production as a livelihood strategy.

UNDERSTANDING RURAL POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY

Any understanding of rural poverty must include an examination of the underlying structural factors that impede rural households from being active economic players. Two of the critical factors that affect Mawubuye's constituency are agricultural employment and access to land.

THE NATURE OF AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT

The Overberg and Cape Winelands District Municipalities are well-known centres of successful and export-oriented industrial agriculture. However, this measurable success exists alongside rural poverty and food insecurity that affect many rural households. The industrial agricultural sector is one of the major local employers, as Table 1 illustrates. However, the work is seasonal and wages are extremely low (which gave rise to the widespread self-organised farm protests and uprising in these municipalities in November 2012). This means that when the agricultural peak season is over, rural households, which depend on industrial agricultural employment as a source of income, fall into greater depths of poverty and experience food shortages.

In 2007, TCOE and Mawubuye conducted a survey of rural household land needs and found that up to 80% of households had had little to eat during the previous year's off-season (TCOE 2009). The social grant, which is the biggest source of income for many households, is not enough to provide a safety net against destitution.

Table 1: Employment in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing sectors

District Municipality	Local Municipality	Percentage employed in these sectors	Importance of the sectors
Overberg (ODM)	Theewaterskloof	36.1%	Largest employer
	Swellendam	13.6%	Third-largest employer, after 'unspecified' (19%) and wholesale and retail trade (15%)
	Average for ODM	21.3%	Largest employer
Cape Winelands (CWDM)	Langeberg	24.3%	Largest employer
	Average for CWDM	19.2%	Second-largest employer, after community and personal services (27.3%)

Sources: Urban-Econ: Development Economists (2011); Overberg District Municipality (2012)

As Table 1 shows, in these municipalities the agricultural, hunting, forestry and fishing sectors are major employers, of mainly seasonal workers who are among the most vulnerable.

ACCESS TO LAND AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In South Africa, access to land and infrastructure development is a high priority area in policy discussions aimed at addressing rural poverty and unemployment. The government recognises that a root cause of rural poverty is the historical land dispossessions, which limited millions of South Africans to merely 13% of the country's land, in the former homelands. At its 52nd National Conference in Limpopo, the African National Congress (ANC) noted that 'colonialism and apartheid were rooted in dispossession of African people of their land, the destruction of African farming and super-exploitation of wage labourers, including farm workers and their families' (ANC 2007). Historical accounts of previously independent and successful African farmers in South Africa and their subsequent decline are well documented (Bundy 1979).

The chief aim of the democratic government that took over in 1994 was to redress apartheid policies. A comprehensive policy framework, the Reconstruction and Development Programme, was developed as a cornerstone to inform the direction of change with the objective of addressing poverty. This objective was stated as one of the main priorities of the democratic government. The ANC promised to undertake land redistribution of 30% of agricultural land to previously disadvantaged individuals to alleviate poverty especially in rural areas, as a sub-programme of overall land reform.

However, after 20 years of democracy, rural communities continue to be trapped in poverty, with low levels of income, poor access to state services, food insecurity and landlessness. To date there has been very little land or water reform: 'by 2012, some 7.95 million hectares had been transferred, only about a third of the 24.6 million originally targeted' (*Think Africa Press*, 19 June 2013).¹ By 2008 only 1–2% of land in the Overberg District Municipality was in black hands (CNdV Africa Planning & Design 2008). In addition, many of the farms transferred through the national land reform programme are struggling, while

others have completely collapsed. This was because of unrealistic project planning, which was based on maintaining the production regimes on the acquired commercial farms, and limited post-settlement support.

An outstanding example of this unrealistic approach occurred in the CWDM. In 2001, the then Department of Land Affairs randomly identified 147 residents from Zolani (Ashton) as beneficiaries of a 1080-hectare land-redistribution farm, situated about 40 km from where they lived. Since the redistribution, the farm in question – Sandfontein – has not been productive because of an unrealistic farm plan, as well as the lack of water rights and high levels of conflict among the large number of beneficiaries. As a result, some of those who genuinely want to farm are still confined to their backyards and municipal commonage², which in turn leads to overgrazing in the municipal commonage near Zolani.

The minimal land reform means that resource-poor producers are restricted to using backyard gardens and municipal commonage to produce food and raise livestock. However, access to municipal commonage continues to be a struggle, given the lack of compliance by local government to make commonage and the relevant infrastructure available to the previously excluded poor black farmers.

Policy makers do not sufficiently appreciate the critical role of local municipalities in land reform. The Department of Land Affairs (now the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform) attempted a seemingly progressive approach to decentralise the land reform programme by involving district municipalities. The department envisaged incorporating land reform in the municipal Integrated Development Plans, as part of their area-based planning. One of the requirements was for district municipalities to conduct land audits of all available municipal land, which could be linked to land-use plans aimed at nurturing small-scale production.

If existing municipal commonage is not available (which may be for a possible range of reasons), the department has funds available for the purchase of new commonage and to provide infrastructure in all commonages. However, this requirement is largely ignored, particularly in cash-strapped municipalities, which prefer to rent out their available commonage to wealthy white industrial farmers at market-related rates, as an additional source of revenue, and make no efforts to acquire new commonage. The failure to make municipal commonage available to small producers is another instance in which land reform opportunities have been lost. Despite the municipal mandate, black small producers continue to struggle to access municipal commonage, as the following examples show.

In 2012, the Langeberg Municipality decided to put municipal commonage out to tender (in Ashton and McGregor), whereupon Mawubuye embarked on a campaign to raise awareness about people's rights to commonage. Local black farmers then mobilised to challenge local government, on the basis that commonage is an important component of land reform and should be used to address the land needs of previously disadvantaged residents. They demanded meetings with the council and even staged a protest to challenge the decision. As a result of the landless people's mobilisation, the council reconsidered its decision and made its priority to address immediate land needs of the poor in Ashton and McGregor. Furthermore, farmers from across other municipal areas are continuing to demand that local authorities carry out audits of all available municipal land.

The department envisaged incorporating land reform in the municipal Integrated Development Plans, as part of their area-based planning. One of the requirements was for district municipalities to conduct land audits of all available municipal land, which could be linked to land-use plans aimed at nurturing small-scale production.

In Zolani, livestock farmers had been farming for years on municipal land without any lease agreement. As the number of people keeping livestock grew, the farmers began to extend their grazing area, partially occupying adjacent commercial land belonging to an absentee landlord. On the municipal land, farmers erected makeshift kraals and pig pens to keep their livestock without obtaining approval from the Langeberg municipality. After years of discussion, the municipality agreed to let the farmers use the land and made some improvements by building four grazing camps. In addition, the municipality undertook to find the absentee landlord (believed to be in Italy) to discuss the possibility of buying the land for redistribution through the commonage programme.

Over the past six years, in the absence of state support, TCOE and Mawubuye have used participatory-based approaches to understand and build on self-initiated, bottom-up, land-based livelihood strategies.

At the time, this attempt was unsuccessful because the asking price for the land was more than what the municipality was offering (R5 million).

These examples raise questions about the effectiveness of existing national land reform and rural development policies to deliver on the objective of poverty reduction. Government's policy choices have also limited the scope for exploring a range of options and models of production available to land reform beneficiaries (Hall 2009). Over the past six years, in the absence of state support, TCOE and Mawubuye have used participatory-based approaches to understand and build on self-initiated, bottom-up, land-based livelihood strategies. These processes took various forms, such as visioning exercises, drawing social maps for a transformed countryside in the area and speak-out campaigns, all which

were aimed at piloting alternatives that reflected people's resilience and collective ability to imagine and construct an environment that can overcome structural obstacles.

LIVELIHOODS ON THE MARGINS: STORIES OF RESILIENCE

Mawubuye and TCOE continue to support small-scale production in building resilience, through expanding the organisational strength of small-scale farmers' associations in the municipalities mentioned. As an entry point for achieving food sovereignty, Mawubuye encourages people to make use of any available land to produce food for their own consumption. Some of the initiatives supported by Mawubuye include:

- ✦ *Community-based nurseries.* With government support, over the past few years nurseries have been set up in the towns of Bonnievale, Robertson, Ashton and McGregor (CWDM), and Barrydale and Genadendal (ODM) to produce and distribute seedlings to household and community gardens. As a result, over 1000 food production sites have been established. Members of Mawubuye manage the nurseries on a voluntary basis. Furthermore, after a capacity-building interchange with Brazilian land movements, the food programme coordinator has been conducting regular information sessions and oversight at each nursery to build the management capacity of the volunteers. The outcome of TCOE's tailor-made train-the-trainer workshops was 13 skilled coordinators who run the nurseries and offer support to local food gardens. The coordinating team keeps records of every visit to nurseries and a database of gardens, and holds monthly local meetings to identify areas where additional support is required.
- ✦ *Accessing municipal and community land.* A women-led local forum in Bonnievale (CWDM)

has a membership of women, farmers, youth and physically-challenged people. The forum has managed to secure access to 13 hectares of municipal land and build the local nursery on church-owned land, after successful negotiations with the local church.

Another local association, in Buffeljagsrivier (ODM), negotiated with the local primary school to use one hectare of land for growing food and offered, in return, a portion of their produce to the school's feeding scheme. Crop theft led to a security gate being put up, and responsibility for the school garden has since been transferred to the school. The group of 12 women shifted their focus to home gardens but continue to support the school garden by supplying it with seedlings. The group also established a working relationship with a neighbouring commercial dairy farmer, who offers them free compost and use of his tractor.

In Zolani, the crèche made land available for a community garden, while a church also offered land for the construction of a nursery.

At meetings between livestock producers in Swellendam and Rivieronderend (ODM) and municipal officials, the agenda includes a slot for discussing land needs and access to municipal commonage, and to make inputs into the municipal planning processes. Unlike other areas, Rivieronderend has three different farmer associations that use the same five hectares of land. Up until 2012, these farmers were losing large numbers of their livestock because of municipal impounding and killing of livestock by neighbouring industrial farmers and golf estate owners. Despite a successful Cape High Court challenge on 7th August 2012 to municipal impounding of livestock, incidents of private land owners killing livestock found on their land have escalated. This highlights how efforts by poor

farmers to build alternative livelihoods are destroyed because of the lack of land redistribution. Yet despite this, farmers continue to engage the municipality and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to have their land needs addressed.

✦ *Agro-ecology as a farming method.* As part of promoting alternative farming methods to industrial agriculture, members of Mawubuye are learning about agro-ecology and have been on exchange visits to Brazil, Senegal and Zimbabwe. One of the members has been assigned the role of coordinating the food production programme to spread new knowledge through regular visits to various sites.

✦ *Promoting traditional seeds.* Mawubuye food producers have also participated in an on-going, capacity-building course aimed at rescuing, saving, breeding and storing traditional seeds, which are a critical component of agro-ecological farming. The programme was initiated by TCOE in partnership with Brazilian land movements, through an accord between the Brazilian government and the South African government (represented by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform).

✦ *Water campaign.* Access to water is a key challenge for all farmers, whether producing food in backyards (using household water at high costs) or on larger pieces of land. Like land reform, promises of water reform remain unfulfilled. The Mawubuye leadership facilitated the establishment of local water forums, which record the water problems faced by farmers and households. These problems are then taken up with local municipalities and relevant local forums organised by the Department of Water Affairs, such as the Breede Overberg Water Catchment Management Agency (BOCMA). By participating in the BOCMA over the last few years, Mawubuye

captured government's attention and has been invited to information sessions and workshops and other public forums where the issue of water is discussed. Ministers and other high-ranking government officials have also paid visits to the areas affected. The Villiersdorp (ODM) Water Forum has embarked on a campaign of maintaining water sources in their area with no support from government, while the Bonnievale (CWD) Water Forum successfully tackled the municipality over the high water bills incurred by poor households.

✦ *Food production.* Small-scale agricultural production contributes to varying extents to the livelihoods of farming households in the municipalities, as illustrated in studies by TCOE and Mawubuye in the Breede River Winelands – now Langeberg Local Municipality (TCOE 2009) and in the Swellendam Local Municipality (TCOE 2012). The Swellendam study, of self-identified and significantly differentiated farming households, showed that, despite marginalisation, agricultural production by small-scale farmers had increased since 1994 and makes an important contribution to household and community food security. This remains unacknowledged and unaccounted for in official statistics. While many of these producers are unable to produce beyond subsistence, small-scale production is creating opportunities for income generation through sales of food crops and livestock. Even though income from agricultural production remains low,

these farmers have demonstrated their capacity to expand and contribute to the reduction of rural poverty.

Given the magnitude of vulnerability experienced by small-scale producers, the broad spectrum of initiatives (legal interventions, lobbying, expanding access to land and protest marches) all combine to define organisational strength as a necessary ingredient for expressing resilience. The small-scale farming sub-sector has the potential to play a significant role in addressing rural poverty. Investment in small-scale farming is imperative because of its potentially positive impact on poverty (Cousins n.d.). Despite this potential, policy makers do not recognise that small-scale farming is already making a contribution and has great potential for growth, but support is needed to nurture existing small-scale production initiatives. Presently the Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform, the Ministry of Agriculture and local government authorities lack the capacity, methodology, vision and political will to develop and support this sub-sector in a systemic way and thus transform the rural landscape and power relations. Instead of developing appropriate policies to support small-scale production, the policy emphasis has been on building a layer of small black commercial farming elite.

Mawubuye continues to consolidate its membership, through interventions that increase access to land and water, and to build the capacity of members to produce and experiment with environmentally sound and sustainable methods of production. Although the ANC (2007) has stated that a lack of popular participation undermines efforts to accelerate land redistribution, Mawubuye's actions reveal another reality. Land need is expressed in a number of ways: identifying pieces of land and pro-actively engaging the municipality about

Despite this potential, policy makers do not recognise that small-scale farming is already making a contribution and has great potential for growth, but support is needed to nurture existing small-scale production initiatives.

accessing them, presenting plans for production, and approaching the Department of Agriculture for support.

The efforts and initiatives of Mawubuye is an indication of the resilience of communities that are able not only to cope but to thrive in the presence of obstacles, challenges and continual change (Regional Municipality of Waterloo 2010). As a formation of the landless and marginalised small-scale producers, the Mawubuye Land Rights Forum strives to transform the rural countryside by challenging policy makers to consider a pro-poor agrarian policy agenda. Mawubuye mobilises and campaigns for access to land, water and a range of support services, as the basis of building livelihoods and sustaining production of rural farming households to promote food sovereignty. The desire for more land is made politically visible by producer forums, as they continue to engage government at all levels to recognise and act on their demands as economic players in their own right.

CONCLUSION

The case of Mawubuye reveals that resilience is expressed not only as a chain of responses to adapt to and resist prevailing conditions but also translates into a pursuit for alternatives to *change* circumstances. These include confronting

The desire for more land is made politically visible by producer forums, as they continue to engage government at all levels to recognise and act on their demands as economic players in their own right.

landlessness and lack of access to water, and rejecting subjugation to an oppressive industrial model of production. This is expressed through engaging government, adopting production methods that are relevant to their material and environmental conditions, and building relationships with like-minded organisations.

Organised small-scale producers and landless rural communities continue to fight poverty and ensure food security through land use. The experiences of these interventions demonstrate that resilience is a sustained effort both to claim space to articulate the demands of the small-scale producers and to implement practical production and distribution solutions. Politically, the issues of land, water and seeds, which are essential for sustainable food production, form the basis of Mawubuye's work with various organisations to build their capacity, express their interests and explore alternatives. In addition, the scope of Mawubuye's work has expanded, to include seasonal farmworkers and building farm workers' unions, with the aim of unifying and developing resilient rural communities.

REFERENCES

- ANC (African National Congress) (2007) 52nd National Conference Resolutions, 20 December. Polokwane: Limpopo Province.
- Bundy C (1979) *The Rise and fall of South African Peasantry*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- CNdV Africa Planning & Design CC (2008) Overberg District Municipality Area-Based Plan. Prepared for the Department of Land Affairs. Cape Town.
- Cousins B (n.d.) *What is a 'Smallholder'? Class-analytic Perspectives on Small-scale Farming and Land Reform in South Africa*. Working Paper 16. Cape Town: PLAAS (Institute for Poverty, and Agrarian Studies), School of Government, University of the Western Cape.
- Hall R (2009) Land reform for what? Land use, production and livelihoods. In R Hall (ed.) *Another Countryside. Policy Options for Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa*. Cape Town: PLAAS (Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies), School of Government, University of the Western Cape.
- Cousins B (n.d.) Smallholder and Land Reform in South Africa. Cape Town: PLAAS, School of Government, University of the Western Cape.
- Oft P and Tsuma W (2006) *Mobilising Resilience from Below Linking Institutions to Actors and Knowledge to decisions: A Case of the Netherlands*. Bonn: Centre for Development Research, University of Bonn.
- Overberg District Municipality (2012) *3rd Generation Integrated Development Plan 2012/16*.
- Regional Municipality of Waterloo (2010) Building Resilient Communities: Understanding the Role of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo in Poverty Reduction. Waterloo: Social Planning, Policy and Programme Administration, Regional Municipality of Waterloo.
- TCOE (Trust for Community Outreach and Education) (2009) *Land Reform and Rural Livelihoods in the Breede River Winelands*. Cape Town: TCOE.
- TCOE (2012) Small-scale Agricultural producers in the Swellendam Local Municipality, Western Cape Province. Unpublished report. Cape Town: TCOE.
- Urban-Econ: Development Economists (2011) *Cape Winelands District Municipality Local Economic Development Strategy*. Mowbray, Cape Town: Urban-Econ: Development Economists.

NOTES

- ¹ Cieplak P, South Africa: Land Reform Debates Heat Up Again, 100 Years after the Natives Land Act, *Think Africa Press*, 19 June 2013. <http://www.thinkafricapress.com/south-africa/south-africa-land-reform-debate-natives-land-act>.
- ² Municipal commonage is land owned by a municipality or local authority that was usually acquired through state grants or from the church. Unlike other municipally owned land, residents have acquired grazing rights (or other benefits) on the land. Municipal commonage is not the same as communally owned land held in trust by the state and usually occupied and administered by tribal authorities.



THE ROLE OF MICROFINANCE GROUPS TO BUILD WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.

A CASE STUDY OF IZANDLA ZIYAGEZANA

Thandiwe Dlamini, Linzi Lewis and Mamokete Matjomane - Khanya-African Institute for Community-Driven Development

This paper looks at the role of informal microfinance groups and networks in improving community resilience. Through a case study of Izandla Ziyagezana in KwaZulu-Natal, the paper argues that local emergent, savings-led microfinance groups can play a major role in improving the adaptive and transformative capacity of low-income populations, by smoothing income and consumption, providing social networks, and empowering women in their households and communities. The poor are often the most vulnerable to disturbances, be they economic, social or environmental in nature, and the least able to respond to stresses and shocks. In the face of disturbances, informal microfinance groups create more resilient individuals, households and communities.



PHOTO: ANTON KRONE

THROUGH AN ANALYSIS of a women's savings-led microfinance organisation, this paper positions locally driven informal microfinance mechanisms as an option for ensuring access to savings, credit and capital-generating services. The role of the informal finance sector has direct and indirect effects on the resilience of the local community. Women are an important target group because of how labour is

divided in the household and the gender disparities in how income is used. Therefore, empowering women within the household and community is an essential component to ensure the development of resilient communities.

The two dimensions of resilience – adaptability and transformability – form the crux of the argument for microfinance institutions. The structure, the

investment, savings and borrowing rules, and the benefits of belonging to a microfinance group create an environment in which women can adapt to and thereby overcome challenges or stressful events – and, in the longer-term, the empowerment potential inherent in these groups enable the women to transform their lives. Individual members of these groups, their households and their communities become resilient. According to Arnoff (2011), empowerment is the process that gives power to the disempowered and increases their ability to make strategic decisions and choices. This paper's contention is that microfinance groups – through enhancing the adaptive and transformative capacities of its members – can potentially empower their female members to become involved in household decision-making and participate equally in various socio-economic spheres of their lives.

After describing how microfinance groups strengthen community resilience (by empowering poor women in particular), the paper distinguishes between savings-led and credit-led microfinance groups. The paper then looks at the case study of Izandla Ziyagezana and the benefits for its members, and examines what are resilient systems and resilient communities.

THE ROLE OF MICROFINANCE IN STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Microfinance mechanisms help strengthen resilience, particularly at the local community level. Community resilience refers to the ability of a population to adapt to and function following a shock or disturbance (Folke et al. 2005). Individual resilience can be regarded as both a catalyst and a by-product of what transpires at the community level. The resources available (and the capacity to use them) allow individuals, households and communities to become more resilient to change (Norris et al. 2008). According to Folke et al. (2005),

resilience is the process of self-organising through the adaptability and transformability of systems. Adaptability here refers to the capacity of people in a socio-ecological system to manage resilience through collective action, while transformability refers to the capacity of people within a socio-ecological system to create an entirely new system when conditions make existing systems unsustainable (Walker et al. 2004). Within various socio-ecological systems, political, social, and economic conditions interplay with the biophysical and socio-cultural. Therefore, within this context, where a variety of disturbances may cause imbalance to any community, the ability to access finance and/or capital is crucial to be able to adapt or transform under changed conditions.

The need to be able to respond effectively to challenges and/or disturbances is as important for low-income communities as for any other income group, but often the poor are at a greater risk of severe destruction and destitution, and even death. The poor are also less equipped to mobilise support following a disaster (Norris et al. 2008). In these contexts, access to microfinance has become a central development goal, and many NGOs have attempted to establish financial services accessible to the poor. Such local solutions, which respond to the local socio-economic and socio-cultural context, should be used to develop and expand future projects related to access to micro-finance.

Formal financial mechanisms, including savings, credit, insurance etc., have historically not been available to the low-income population because of the high collateral required and perceived high risk of this social group, leaving a high percentage of the population without access to financial services (Mashigo and Schoeman 2010): only about 28% of adult South Africans have access to credit (World Bank 2013). The unequal access to economic resources for the poor, especially

women, is economically and socially disempowering. Furthermore, micro-lending, which was thought to be a solution to finance inequity, is highly regulated in South Africa, and does not serve the interests of the poor because of its high cost and interest rates (Mashigo and Schoeman 2010).

Enhanced access to informal financial services, through microfinance groups, promotes access to savings and credit facilities. These types of income-support structures can improve the resilience of poor households and communities, which has positive effects on the socio-economic status of a household. Income support ensures that families are able to deal with shocks (such as death and funerals), instead of becoming a disaster and embarrassment to the family. The social networks created through membership maintain the social order and requirements of a community-based savings system and improve social capital (Mersland and Eggen 2007). This should also have a direct impact on the resilience of households and communities when faced with large-scale shocks. Through mechanisms such as micro-savings groups, economic empowerment is encouraged, and the women who partake in these groups gain human capital and are able to become decision-makers within their households (International Year of Microcredit 2005)

SAVINGS- AND CREDIT-LED MICROFINANCE GROUPS

Savings and micro-credit groups exist around the world as a strategy to alleviate poverty. Women mainly form and join these groups, which provide greater flexibility and affordability than formal financial institutions. They are also easy to access because they exist within the community where members live (Allen 2013).

Traditionally, informal microfinance groups have provided a range of services to poor households,

contributing to their survival and smoothing income and consumption (Mashigo and Schoeman 2010). In South Africa, *stokvels* (in the form of savings, credit and capital-generating groups) act as economic and social instruments that provide finance for predictable (marriages, education) and unpredictable (funerals, natural disasters) events (Mashigo and Schoeman 2010).

Dynamic microfinance initiatives seem to attract a large number of the poor, especially in rural settings. These initiatives are variously known as Rotational Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) or *stokvels*, Accumulated Savings and Credit Associations (ASCAs), self-help groups and solidarity groups lending to the poor (Allen 2013). A few examples of microfinance groups are briefly portrayed to show some of the history, achievements, lessons and challenges experienced by microfinance groups. While it is not possible to go into much detail on the specific cases, it is worth mentioning that women-led savings and micro-credit groups are not a new phenomenon, and have evolved in various societies, catering for particular needs.

SAVINGS-LED MICROFINANCE GROUPS (SLGS)

SLGs (or community-managed microfinance) is an alternative savings option offered to communities that often have no other access to financial services, such as banks and microfinance through formal institutions (Goss and Bill and Melinda Foundation 2010). Key features of SLGs are: 1) they are community based and use specific models, 2) members have access

Through mechanisms such as micro-savings groups, economic empowerment is encouraged, and the women who partake in these groups gain human capital and are able to become decision-makers within their households.

to their savings at the end of a one-year cycle, 3) members are required to contribute a specified amount, 4) the security of pooled fund is everyone's responsibility, and 5) members earn a 100% return of their contributions. SLGs are flexible, as the participants determine the constituency of the group and draw up the constitution that guides the group's activities. Some SLGs include SaveAct (South Africa), ROSCAs (Uganda) and the Savings Development Movement (Zimbabwe).

The case study of Izandla Ziyagezana also shows how the group assists its members to become resilient to risks associated with poverty, unemployment and inequality.

CREDIT-LED MICROFINANCE GROUPS

The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh is regarded as the pioneer of credit-led microfinance organisations. Credit-led organisations mainly provide credit to the very poor in their villages using a particular micro-credit model or system. This is done through: 1) clearly establishing the eligibility criteria for the selected target market, 2) giving more priority to women, and 3) gearing credit towards meeting diverse socio-economic development needs of the poor (Yunus 2007). The Grameen Bank concept is based on the assumption that if people are provided with working capital such as small loans, they will create self-employment without relying on the government. As a result, the members of the bank use the loans for business activities such as livestock and poultry farming, manufacturing, trading and shop keeping, as well as for agricultural activities.

Both the savings-led and credit-led models focus on marginalised groups. The case study of Izandla Ziyagezana, a savings-led microfinance group situated in Table Mountain in KwaZulu-Natal,

shows how, when faced with unequal access to opportunities, women have devised their own way of addressing these challenges, by creating and joining savings and micro-credit schemes with the intention of building a platform to access financial services such as credit. The case study of Izandla Ziyagezana also shows how the group assists its members to become resilient to risks associated with poverty, unemployment and inequality.

IZANDLA ZIYAGEZANA

In September 2013, Khanya-aicdd conducted field research in Table Mountain, Pietermaritzburg, with the aim of using a case study to understand how a savings-led microfinance group functions and operates, as well as to recognise the elements that promote community resilience in the group. This case study was chosen because of the concentration of microfinance groups in and around Pietermaritzburg as a result of SaveAct. SaveAct targets marginalised rural women, including the unemployed and pensioners, to improve their socio-economic status through community-based savings activities.

Table Mountain, also known as Mkhambathini, is located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal near the city of Pietermaritzburg, which is the province's capital and second-largest city after Durban (www.KwaZulu-Natal.co.za). Table Mountain is affected by a number of socio-economic ills. These include high levels of poverty, unemployment, inequitable access to infrastructure and basic services such as potable water, unequal levels of development with other areas in the municipality, and a lack of access to quality housing (Mkhambathini Local Municipality 2012). There is high unemployment and limited livelihood options due to poor access to resources, and particularly financial resources. With a high number of women-headed households, women are particularly vulnerable to socio-economic insecurity.

Established with the assistance of SaveAct in 2008, Izandla Ziyagezana is primarily savings-led but has a component of credit. Its constitution stipulates the number of group members, the minimum and maximum amount to save, the interest rate and the rules of participation. Members must pay a minimum of R50 and a maximum of R250 per month. This decision is based on the belief that every participant can afford an amount within this range, as most of them receive social grants from the state. In fact, women in this locality have little or no income, and mainly use their social grants to participate in the group. Members cannot borrow more than three times what they have saved. This rule is based on the rationale that credit can create great risk for the borrowers and the group as a whole, as borrowers might not be able to repay their loans. This is also based on SaveAct's savings methodology, which promotes the culture of savings over credit, by teaching people to save before taking credit (Nonjeke-Dlanjwa 2013). It is important to note that the interest charged is 10%, and the group determines the rate. Furthermore, even though the monthly payment towards one's loan is compulsory, the terms of payment are more flexible than in the formal sector.

SaveAct offers the members of Izandla Ziyagezana various training opportunities. Some of the training relates to improved financial management, life skills, debt control, leadership and enterprise development (www.saveact.org.za). The research found that training needs are on-going, and some members still struggle to make *sustainable* investments. Members spend a large portion of their capital and dividends on items such as groceries and blankets, which have short-term benefits. Nevertheless, the main aim behind the training is to equip the women with skills and knowledge of how they can (better) manage and invest their finances.

These groups empower women, who are generally a marginalised segment of the population, to become independent and not rely on their male counterparts for survival, even and especially in abusive situations.

A microfinance group such as Izandla Ziyagezana (like the Bangladesh Grameen Bank described earlier) prioritises the participation of women, thereby heightening its empowerment potential. These groups empower women, who are generally a marginalised segment of the population, to become independent and not rely on their male counterparts for survival, even and especially in abusive situations. However, when implementing similar models that focus on women, understanding the particular and peculiar gender dynamics within households and communities is important, in order to ensure such initiatives do not cause conflicts and create more vulnerability for women.

BENEFITS TO MEMBERS

Izandla Ziyagezana offers several benefits for the women who participate. The savings and credit facilities enable women to manage shocks that are not budgeted for, such as ill health and funerals. The women can also use the money for planned seasonal needs, such as buying blankets or crops for farming, or even for accumulating assets such as houses – both types of responses aptly reflect the resilience dimensions of adaptability and transformability (Folke et al. 2005). Many women prefer this collective saving method to formal banking institutions, not only because the costs are lower than in the formal banking sector but also because of the sense of belonging associated with such a group. The women who participated in Izandla Ziyagezana also gained in confidence and improved self-esteem, while some have even taken up leadership roles within the group.

These advantages of belonging to a microfinance group are a means to empowering and strengthening the resilience of the communities within which these organisations are located.

STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF COMMUNITIES

Microfinance groups are a valuable system for empowering poor women, especially in areas such as Table Mountain, which contains many female-headed households surviving off minimal social grants. These women need to become socially and economically empowered, so that they can continue to provide for their families. However, in such a context, any stress or shock can cause greater vulnerability and risk. Therefore, it is crucial to enable women within such communities to create more resilient social systems in order to withstand certain stressful events.

A microfinance mechanism has the power to enhance household and community resilience through empowering those involved to become agents of change within their locality. The members of Izandla Ziyagezana have been able to adapt to and transform aspects of their lives and become agents of change in their households and communities because:

1. Members have the autonomy or power to make decisions about how to invest their money, access loans and spend their savings at the end of every one-year cycle. They are not compelled to use formal systems, which do not suit their needs or circumstances, and are also less inclined to take exploitative, expensive and often exorbitant loans from moneylenders.
2. As the members themselves develop the constitution, the women have the power to decide who should participate and how much they should contribute or borrow from the group.
3. Members self-organise. For instance, even though SaveAct provides support for members during

its establishment, the group is responsible for making sure that a replacement member is found for every member that leaves the group.

4. Through the training support provided by SaveAct, the women learn about different ways of handling money and become more disciplined and conscious about debt control. As they participate, they are able to devise means to mitigate against shocks and stresses.
5. Women are able to draw on social capital, create social networks based on cooperation and build trust, which is a useful resource for their social development. For example, during the September 2013 fieldwork, at a monthly group meeting, all members were invited to another member's home to partake in wedding preparations underway at her home and a meal.
6. The savings and micro-credit groups assist the women to create and strengthen their assets. Some of the women have used their savings to start enterprises, such as chicken breeding or food gardens, and to improve their houses. Some women had previously started businesses, which did not survive because of a lack of skills, capacity and financial support. However, being involved in the savings and micro-credit group has instilled the interest to restart those businesses. They also receive support through the training conducted by SaveAct, such as financial management and starting of business enterprises. Upskilling usually forms a key component of this type of network and allows women to develop their business and other skills.

By having access to financial resources, especially short-term loans, members were able to change their lived reality in some way to adapt to immediate shocks or challenges. The savings component of the

mechanism allows women to access resources in the long-term for the use of, for example, venturing into profitable livelihood strategies. Microfinance groups not only strengthen community resilience but also women in their individual capacities become more resilient.

RESILIENT SYSTEMS AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Savings and micro-credit groups play an important role in women's lives and in building resilient systems and resilient communities. While certain characteristics could be regarded as limitations from the members' perspective, through the 'lens' of resilience, they become positive features that help to build and strengthen the resilience of both the finance groups and the communities within which they are located. One feature that extends the life of and strengthens these structures is the setting of a minimum and maximum monthly contribution. This rule could be seen as exclusionary by women who are unable to participate because they cannot save a minimum of R50 per month (incidentally this amount is determined by the group). However, the setting of a minimum contribution provides the necessary assurance to the group that members will be able to contribute towards their savings, improve the capital of the group and be able to service their debts over a specific timeframe.

Similarly, the conditionality attached to loans drives the sustainability of a microfinance group. As mentioned, the group sets the interest rate at 10%, which borrowers may perceive as expensive, although the terms of repayment are more flexible than in the formal sector. However, this condition encourages its members not only to save more and borrow less, but also to pay back the loans efficiently, so that they do not incur more debt. It also gives the group some security over their money and, perhaps most

importantly, in the longer term, the money lent is returned to the group and its members in the form of capital and dividends.

Another requirement is that members are only allowed to borrow what they have saved. For instance, if a person has saved R250, they can only borrow up to R250. Although this means that, occasionally, members resort to moneylenders to address their immediate financial needs, in the long term, this requirement encourages the payment of monthly contributions with the view to extracting a loan in the future. It also increases the capital of the group and builds a more sustainable organisation in the process.

While certain characteristics could be regarded as limitations from the members' perspective, through the 'lens' of resilience, they become positive features that help to build and strengthen the resilience of both the finance groups and the communities within which they are located.

The condition that members can only access credit between defined time periods builds resilience into the microfinance group. Borrowing is not allowed during a certain period, which is usually towards the end of the year when money is about to be divided. While this may create problems for those members who want to borrow money during this period, it is an important measure that gives members enough time to settle their debts before the capital and dividends are shared out.

The constitution of microfinance groups such as Izandla Ziyagezana emerges and evolves from the group itself, and its regulations are meant to protect, not exclude or exploit, group members. The structure and method of operation enhance the longevity and sustainability, and hence resilience, of the group and, by extension, the community.

CONCLUSION

The most vulnerable households, especially in poor areas, are often led by women. High poverty and unemployment exacerbate the vulnerability of these households to a range of potential risks and disasters. Therefore, empowering women within the household and community is an essential component of building resilient communities. A resilient community is one that is able to respond to economic, natural and other shocks and disturbances, through adaptability and transformability. Local emergent microfinance groups can build the adaptive and transformative capacities of their members, through developing skills, strengthening assets, improving decision-making and creating social networks. The way in which these groups are structured and how they operate (the members agree on the rules of participation, the minimum and maximum monthly contribution etc.) enhance the sustainability and resilience of the group

and the community. Through such initiatives, many individuals, households and communities have been capacitated to respond effectively following shocks and disturbances.

The Izandla Ziyagezana case study illustrates that even rural women who survive off meagre social grants are able to withstand and be resilient towards some of the shocks they experience. They are able to self-organise and become agents of change in situations that directly affect their lived realities. An external player, SaveAct, contributed to the success of Izandla Ziyagezana, offering a variety of skills and leadership training. However, most importantly SaveAct allowed locally defined solutions to emerge, in the image of a traditional ROSCA/*stokvel*. This is an important lesson for other external players¹, such as the state², NGOs and the private sector³, all of which have a role to play in development of microfinance initiatives.

REFERENCES

- Allen H (2013) Savings Groups. What Are They? Presentation by VSL Associates at the Financial Inclusion workshop (15 July 2013), held at Newtown, Johannesburg <http://www.saveact.org.za/images/15%20july%20workshop%20-%20what%20are%20scgs.pdf>.
- Arnof E (2011) A literature review on the conceptualization of women's empowerment. A paper presented to the faculty of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Public Health in the Department of Maternal and Child Health.
- Calvin B and Coetzee G (2010) *A Review of the South African Microfinance Sector*. Volume II – Background Papers: Section IV – Special Products. Pretoria: Centre for Microfinance. University of Pretoria. <http://web.up.ac.za/sitefiles/file/1/3841/Volume%20II%20Section%20IV%20Special%20Products.pdf>.
- Folke C et al. (2005) *Adaptive Governance of Socio-Ecological Systems*. Stockholm, Sweden: Centre for Transdisciplinary Environment Research and Department of Systems Ecology, Stockholm University.
- Goss S and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2010) *One Early Success Story: Savings Led Groups* <https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/Documents/one-early-success-story.pdf>
- Gingrich, CD (2004) Community-based savings and credit cooperatives in Nepal: A sustainable means for microfinance delivery? *Journal of Microfinance*, Vol. 6 (1), 21-39
- International Year of Microcredit 2005. *Why a Year? About Microfinance and Microcredit*. http://www.yearofmicrocredit.org/pages/whyayear/whyayear_aboutmicrofinance.asp.
- Kzn.co.za (2006) Pietermaritzburg Fact File. <http://kwazulu-natal.co.za/13.Fact-File-Pietermaritzburg.htm>.
- Lapenu C (2000) *The Role of the State in Promoting Microfinance Institutions. Food Consumption and Nutrition Division*. Washington DC: International Food Policy Research Institute. <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/16461/1/fc000089.pdf>.
- Mashigo P and Schoeman C (2010) Stokvels as an instrument and channel to extend credit to poor households in South Africa: an inquiry. University of Johannesburg, Policy Paper Number 19.
- Mersland R and Eggen Ø (2000) *Financial and Social Mobilisation in Savings and Credit Groups*. Discussion series 8/2008. Oslo, Norway: Norad.
- Mkhambathini Local Municipality (2012) Mkhambathini Spatial Development Framework, <http://www.mkhambathini.gov.za/technical/spatial/2012/sdf.pdf>.
- Nonjeke-Dlanjwa N (2013) Broad Trends and Impact – Learning From Ground in South Africa. Presentation at the Financial Inclusion workshop (15 July 2013), held at Newtown, Johannesburg. <http://www.saveact.org>.
- Norris FH et al. (2008) Community resilience as a metaphor, theory, set of capacities, and strategy for disaster readiness, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol 41, pp 127-150.
- SaveAct (2006) Save Act, <http://www.saveact.org.za>.
- World Bank (2013) *South Africa Overview*, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southafrica/overview>.
- Walker B, Holling CS, Carpenter SR and Kinzig A (2004) Resilience, adaptability and transformability in social-ecological systems. *Ecology and Society* Vol 9 (2): 5.
- Yunus M (2007) *Banker to the Poor. Micro-lending and the Battle Against World Poverty*. Philadelphia, PA: Public Affairs, Perseus Books Group.

NOTES

- ¹ The large pool of microfinance institutions in South Africa include the National Stokvels Association of South Africa, SEF, Kuyasa Fund, Beehive Finance, SACCO and Indlu Finance, WDB Micro Finance Group, Phakamani Foundation, Tetla, Marang Financial Services and SACCOL.
- ² The South African state's role in defining the regulatory framework for microfinance institutions and justifications for using public funds in these initiatives are as yet unclear (Lapenu 2000).
- ³ The first initiative involving the formal sector was establishing collective Saving Societies accounts for the members of microfinance groups (Calvin and Coetzee 2010).



APPRECIATING CONTESTATION: INVESTIGATING THE VALUE OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FOR STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Adoné Kitching, Tristan Görgens, Pamela Masiko-Kambala and Mirjam van Donk - Isandla Institute

Violent protests have taken place again around the country in the past few weeks. Also worrying is what appears to be premeditated violence, as is the case with the use of petrol bombs and other weapons during protests. The democratic government supports the right of the citizen to express themselves. The right to protest, peacefully and unarmed, is enshrined in the Constitution. However, when protests threaten lives and property and destroy valuable infrastructure intended to serve the community, they undermine the very democracy that upholds the right to protest.

(President Jacob Zuma, State of the Nation Address, 13 February 2014)



PHOTO: STRING COMMUNICATION

IN RECENT YEARS South Africa has seen the proliferation of violent protests over service delivery and labour conditions. These protests are occurring at an alarming rate, with one protest taking place almost every two days (Municipal IQ 2014). Although protests are not new in South Africa, their frequency and intensity have increased. Citizens across the country now take to the streets with weapons, while

the police have a tendency to respond to the unrest with violence and brutality of their own. The protests serve to illustrate the tumultuous relationship between local government and communities, with violence and unrest typifying the interactions between these two parties. They also signal the level of frustration of citizens, who doubt the government's ability to provide for their basic needs and feel that

they have no other means of making their voices heard. The proliferation of violence, therefore, also indicates the anger of citizens who are disappointed and disenchanted with local government and their elected representatives.

Furthermore, more subtle and often invisible forms of conflict add to the anger and frustration levels. While local government and development initiatives often represent or imagine communities as coherent and cohesive wholes, in reality they are heterogeneous spaces within which multiple views and identities exist. Too often policies based on the conception of 'the community' regard it as a homogenous, static and harmonious actor that has knowledge and opinions (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Guijt and Shah 1998; Mohan and Stokke 2000; Williams 2004). However, in practice, communities are dynamic, deeply unequal and heterogeneous. Indeed, there is growing evidence that in South Africa 'community-based organisations engaged in community governance fall under the rubric of civil society, yet the behaviour of stakeholders in these community-based organisations is a replica of the behaviour of politicians engaged in state politics' (Katsaura 2011: 340; Piper and von Lieres 2008; von Holdt et al. 2011).

Given the prevalence of contestation in South Africa – whether between communities and the state or within communities themselves – it is imperative that development practice begins to engage with conflict and contestation as a means through which to bolster the resilience of those who are most vulnerable. In a context characterised by poverty and scarcity, conflict exacerbates the vulnerability of the poor. Conflict can therefore be immensely destructive. However, conflict can be managed in a way that generates useful outcomes. The core assumption underpinning this paper is that processes of planning, decision-making, and development are inherently contested. Informed

by an 'agonistic' view of power and contestation as inescapable and generative (Mouffe 2000) but wary of the various ways in which power can be exerted 'invisibly' (Cornwall and Gaventa 2001), this paper will argue that the creation of participatory spaces, which allow communities to express disagreements, contest power and outcomes, and reach decisions, have a vital role to play in improving resilience. If structured in a manner that expands dialogue and enables new solutions to be created, contestation can contribute substantively to building the resilience of a community. Understanding the role of contestation in planning processes leads to a better understanding of how to develop people's capacity to build resilience through collective action. The paper will also examine the different methodological options for building these forms of resilience from the asset-based community development, participatory planning and conflict resolution literatures. Finally, it will conclude by briefly reviewing the possibilities for institutionalising such methodologies within the local government system in South Africa.

UNDERSTANDING CYCLES OF CONTESTATION AND VULNERABILITY IN POOR COMMUNITIES

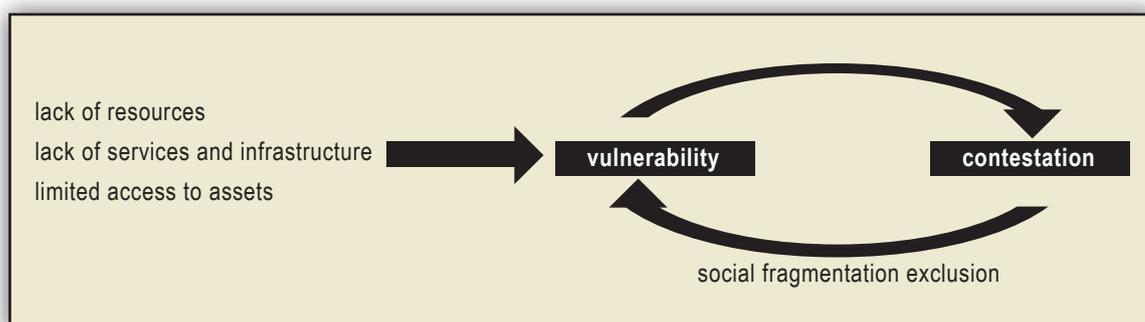
Post-apartheid South Africa is facing up to the reality that community politics are complex and often intertwined with 'bigger politics' at national, provincial and local level (von Holdt 2011). Furthermore, service delivery provision is bound to be contentious and contested, when a large section of the population is weakened by a daily preoccupation with the struggle for survival, in the most unequal country in the world that is crippled by high levels of poverty and unemployment. Despite this reality, however, 'cookie cutter' interventions are often meted out when dealing with service delivery and development across these communities. A

general fault of development planning is its tendency to romanticise the coherence of communities and, in doing so, underestimate their complexity. This failure to recognise complexity often leads to inappropriate interventions and blowback from ‘beneficiaries’ (Guijt and Shah 1998), as the needs of communities are not adequately addressed. In South Africa, dissatisfaction with public housing provision is well-documented and often baffles government officials. In Braamfischerville in Soweto, residents were disgruntled over the quality of RDP houses, which lacked adequate bathroom and kitchen facilities (Moolla et al. 2011). In 1996, the first phases of housing provision were set in motion, and the upgrading plans were meant to provide residents with basic services and amenities. However, by 2002 very little infrastructure had been put in place, and research conducted in the settlement showed that roads were only paved in 2008 (Moolla 2011). Such ill-tailored development creates the illusion that ‘people in a particular location, neighbourhood, ethnic group are necessarily cooperative, caring and inclusive ... whereas power differentials in gender, race and class relations may result in exclusion, and threaten the apparent cohesiveness of the group in question’ (Mathie and Cunningham 2003: 475).

Communities are dynamic, deeply unequal and heterogeneous, and so recognising the danger of the ‘vulnerability-contestation loop’ is important, especially in poor communities that are vulnerable in a number

of different ways. In South Africa, poor communities are made vulnerable by a lack of infrastructure to support their livelihoods. In informal settlements across the country, basic services, such as the provision of water, sanitation and electricity, are outside of the reach of a large section of the population. The vulnerability of the poor heightens the possibility of contestation over scarce resources. Contestation (particularly when external resources are introduced) leads to fragmentation and fracturing in communities, as relationships take strain under conditions where conflict is prevalent. A case study of Matjhabeng in Johannesburg shows that conflict and contestation cannot be understood independently of the poverty that characterises these spaces (Molapo and Ngubeni 2011: 83). In 2008, a cement company doing work in the area evicted squatters in the settlement from privately owned land (Molapo and Ngubeni 2011: 85). The company wanted the shacks of non-employees to be demolished, while their employees, who were mostly foreign nationals, were allowed to continue living on the land. As a result, residents mobilised against local government and petitioned for the provision of emergency housing. Evicted residents also turned their frustrations towards foreign nationals and targeted not only spaza shops owned by foreigners, but also foreigners themselves. In a struggle over land and housing resources, foreign nationals became scapegoats for the anger and frustration over the lack

Figure 1: Vulnerability-contestation loop



of security against sudden eviction. In communities where conflict over resources is sustained, resilience is eroded, and so these communities are less able to deal with new external shocks.

Figure 1 illustrates the interplay between vulnerability and contestation. Vulnerable communities are more likely to experience conflict over resources. In turn, contestation can intensify social fragmentation, which again increases the vulnerability of the community.

The designing, planning and decision-making process of external interventions creates an opportunity to foster a different kind of resilience in communities, particularly if targeted at improving the ways in which communities deal with conflict (thereby intervening in the negative feedback loop identified in Figure 1). This argument is grounded in Mouffe's view that contestation and conflict is part and parcel of democratic decision-making, and can result in positive change if allowed to 'surface' and addressed (Pernegger 2013: 5). Mouffe's agonistic model prefaces conflict (and contestation) as a necessary tenet of democracy. South Africa could apply a similar approach when dealing with development planning and service delivery provision. Participatory spaces should be designed in a way that allows communities to express disagreements, contest power and outcomes, and reach decisions, which in turn will go a long way to improving their resilience.

WHAT DOES RESILIENCE THINKING ADD TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF DEVELOPMENT?

Resilience describes the ability of a community to absorb shock and to respond to crisis (Berkes 2007, Folke 2006). As such, resilience thinking emphasises local resources and networks that may contribute to a community's survival in the face of devastating circumstances. This school of thought

By drawing attention to specific factors that can contribute to reduced vulnerability, resilience thinking points the way for community development and sets out an agenda for future development initiatives.

also acknowledges the value of re-organisation, so that a community's capacity to adapt to change – or its 'transformability' (Walker et al. 2004) – greatly contributes to its resilience. The community development and resilience literatures share a number of crucial commonalities. Both bodies of work take local assets as a point of departure, emphasise collaborative decision-making processes and advocate for a new kind of relationship between the state and the community. Despite these similarities, however, resilience thinking does offer a number of useful lessons for understanding of development. By drawing attention to specific factors that can contribute to reduced vulnerability, resilience thinking points the way for community development and sets out an agenda for future development initiatives.

Berkes (2005) draws on the work in Folke et al. (2003) when examining the ways in which vulnerability may be reduced through improved resilience. Four critical elements contribute to the bolstering of resilience: '(1) learning to live with change and uncertainty, (2) nurturing diversity in its various forms, (3) combining different types of knowledge for learning, and (4) creating opportunity for self-organization and cross-scale linkages' (Berkes 2007: 287–288). Thus, these factors would advance a community's ability to survive and adapt to changing realities. For participatory community development, these factors signal key areas of interest where resources must be targeted. Development will therefore improve the community's resilience (and in turn reduce its vulnerability), by improving the community's ability to learn to live with uncertainty, to cultivate diversity, to combine knowledge and to create opportunities for self-organisation.

However, as mentioned above, resilience is not only measured as the ability of a system to return to its original state after a disruption has occurred. Resilience thinking acknowledges that responses to a crisis may be complex and varied, and that each response may result in a situation that requires the system to be restructured and reorganised. As Berkes notes, the 'recognition of the pervasiveness of non-linear responses and threshold effects are part of the revolution in the current science of ecology. The traditional notions of stability ... have given way to the idea of non-equilibrium systems, multiple steady states and surprises' (2007: 286–287). Therefore, being resilient also means being able to evolve in a way that allows for adequate responses to the demands of a changing environment. In attempting to strengthen the resilience of communities, development must not only emphasise the ability to return to the status quo but rather, through mediation and processes of collaboration, enhance the 'transformability' of a community (Walker et al. 2004). Development that is geared towards buttressing resilience acknowledges that there are multiple conditions under which the wellbeing of a community could be sustained and that the relationships and networks making up these conditions are continuously in flux.

By acknowledging the possibility of multiple responses to disruption, resilience thinking also acknowledges the propensity for contestation and conflict inherent in planning and mediation processes. In South Africa, political contestation and factionalism

often stifles the progress of these processes. In his examination of the often unexplored darker side of active citizenship, Mayson (2013) reflects on the work of Planact in an informal settlement in Johannesburg. In Eryka there was tension between the Landless People's Movement (LPM) and a particularly active member of the community (Doreen) who had become aligned with the Democratic Alliance. The LPM accused Doreen of corruption and mismanagement, and Planact was called in as a neutral arbiter to facilitate between the actors (Mayson 2013: 50). However, when Planact was later asked to facilitate an IDP proposal process for the community in Eryka, allegations from the LPM suggested that the organisation was working against the community and had no interest in its wellbeing. Mayson draws attention to the underlying tensions that influence the workings of development initiatives in communities in South Africa, showing that accusations and allegations were used as tools to secure resources or support and to exclude conflicting interests from power. Similarly, Bénit-Gbaffou (2011) illustrates the ways in which a particular interest group appropriates resources and distributes them to its members, using a case study of a low-income neighbourhood in Johannesburg where food parcels were to be given to the poor (2011: 454). Local government turned to the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) to distribute the parcels on their behalf, as the organisation was thought to have a better sense of the situation on the ground. Bénit-Gbaffou suggests that, rather than assessing the circumstances of all residents in the area, SANCO members were given preferential access to food parcels (2011: 454). Here, as in Eryka, political affiliation or alignment with a particular interest group is seen to influence development processes. As such, interventions become sites of contestation over who is given access and who is excluded from enjoying

In attempting to strengthen the resilience of communities, development must not only emphasise the ability to return to the status quo but rather, through mediation and processes of collaboration, enhance the 'transformability' of a community (Walker et al. 2004).

the benefits of development. Similar realities are described in Diepsloot in the north of Johannesburg (Harber 2010).

The four elements identified in the resilience literature serve as key objectives for community development, and each hold the potential for tremendous tension and rivalry. In learning to live with precariousness, myriad responses to changing circumstances may emerge from a single community, and multiple stakeholders may contest one another in an attempt to assert the legitimacy of their response (Katsaura 2011). In South Africa, multiple stakeholders often struggle for political and economic legitimacy in a single area. Using a case study of Yeoville in Johannesburg, Katsaura considers how tensions play out between four community organisations and the varying interests that influence relationships between the organisations (2011). Here, the Yeoville Stakeholders Forum (YSF), the Community Policing Forum (CPF), the Ward Committee and the Yeoville Community Forum (YCF) each attempt to claim symbolic, cultural and economic capital. For example, in an effort to claim political legitimacy, the Ward Committee, YSF and CPF 'deploy their association with government structures', while the YCF (which is not government mandated) is discredited (Katsaura 2011). These kinds of struggle over legitimacy add a level of tension to planning and mediation processes and intensify already existing conflicts within communities. Furthermore, in attempting to nurture diversity, identity politics and struggles over belonging may stifle progress in strengthening resilience.

In community development, conflict management must therefore run as a parallel process, so that tension and contestation may be mediated in a way that contributes to the four elements of resilience. This can be done by: (1) systematically revealing the sources of contestation, the motivations behind

different claims and the imbalances and inequalities between participants within communities – individual members, and the community as a whole, should be better equipped to collectively respond to change and uncertainty; (2) understanding that diversity within the community is a valuable aspect of community life, rather than as a threat or potential scapegoat; (3) understanding better the value offered by different voices and different approaches to issues, which should be cultivated, along with a better sense of how to mobilise and combine these; (4) employing these processes in development practice as a means to encourage clearer and more pragmatic alliances between groups within the community, as well as initiatives beyond the community.

Central to this paper's argument is the assumption that conflict permeates all levels of development practice, but this conflict need not compound the vulnerability of communities. In taking note of heterogeneity and revealing conflicts, development initiatives could contribute greatly to strengthening those four elements that together result in heightened resilience. Acknowledging and engaging with the potential generative power of conflict, and mediating effectively tensions and disputes, may lead to a deeper understanding of issues and to resilience generated through participation. The following section examines pragmatic ways of managing conflict constructively and imagines a new methodological approach for a new kind of practice in community development.

ENVISIONING A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Asset-based community development (ABCD) is an approach to development that emphasises the assets and capabilities of a community (Mathie 2006; Mathie and Cunningham 2003; Mathie and Cunningham 2005). The ABCD approach starts with

Conflict management and mediation processes must therefore take into account a community's capacity to deal with conflict in idiosyncratic ways.

a community's existing strengths and builds capacity through recognising the community's own resources. With its focus on positive practices and relationships that strengthen the development process, ABCD is an alternative to needs-based approaches, which begin by taking stock of the needs and shortages of a community (Mathie and Cunningham 2003: 474). ABCD also advocates for an endogenous approach to development – where community members are at the heart of development strategies – rather than simply introducing exogenous strategies. The methods used aim to enable communities to better understand and mobilise around their own strengths, and to capitalise on opportunities. Essentially, the ABCD approach seeks to carve out a space for citizenship engagement in the development process by highlighting the significance of a community's existing strategies and networks. In South Africa, the ABCD approach to development is well established and advocated by organisations such as the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition (ECNGOC). In partnership with the Coody Institute – who offers technical support and training – organisations such as the CS Mott Foundation, the Ikhala Trust and the Gordon Institute of Business have contributed to the growth of an ABCD community in South Africa (Leading Change 2012).

ABCD's methods are geared to highlighting a community's assets and facilitating processes that take advantage of existing good practice. These methods are influenced by a range of ideas, of which appreciative enquiry and social capital are particularly useful. Appreciative enquiry refers to those

techniques through which narratives of community successes are told (Mathie and Cunningham 2003; Mathie and Cunningham 2005) and relies heavily on experience and memory, as tools with which to identify prominent assets. The social capital concept focuses on the fundamental importance of social relationships for the wellbeing of a community (Mathie and Cunningham 2003); through relationships of trust, reciprocity and mutual recognition, communities build social networks that they can rely on in times of crisis. ABCD provides a valuable and comprehensive approach to development, and some of the practical techniques that can be used include: gathering narratives of community successes and analysing them for reasons for success, mapping assets, forming a steering group, building relationships among local assets, convening a representative planning group and leveraging investments from outside the community (Mathie and Cunningham 2003; Mathie and Cunningham 2005).

ABCD offers some useful insights for thinking about ways to manage conflict in the development process. The techniques used to implement the approach – and the underpinning theoretical work – draw attention to existing assets and local mechanisms. Conflict management and mediation processes must therefore take into account a community's capacity to deal with conflict in idiosyncratic ways. Furthermore, the ABCD literature emphasises the value of endogenous development that places communities at the centre of processes related to their daily lives, and so practitioners must be acutely aware of the role of residents in shaping strategies and solutions when dealing with contestation and conflict.

The insights offered by the ABCD approach for conflict management lie not only in its positive aspects, but also in its shortcomings. Although this approach steers development practices in the

right direction, channelling its energy towards the strengthening of existing community capacities and focusing on strategies generated from within, it (and its methods) takes community consensus for granted. Yet stories of community successes may serve to obscure contentious realities and marginalise a range of actors whose opinions were not considered in the making of these successes. The formation of steering groups also signals a potentially conflict-ridden process, as relationships between community members may be characterised by animosity and distrust. These processes also fall victim to a phenomenon that initiatives in South Africa are particularly prone to: 'elite capture', whereby resources are hijacked and channelled towards the benefit of a certain group or individual. Furthermore, the leveraging of external resources may inflict massive strain on a community, and decisions about which stakeholders to include in development processes cannot be made merely in terms of consensus. Indeed, development practitioners and local government officials must be aware of the dangers of processes that assume consensus, as these may result in silencing disparate views and concealing power differentials within a community (Agger and Larson 2007).

This is not to say that consensus-driven decision-making is inherently bad or misguided. Rather, the intention here is to draw attention to the ubiquity (and potential value) of conflict in the practice of development. A unilateral focus on consensus runs the risk of side-lining the views of particular groups within a community. Therefore, development needs to shift its attention to a deeper engagement with conflict and cultivate an attitude towards disagreement that allows for the excavation of its generative potential. Indeed, as Brand and Graffin (2007: 308) note:

while collaborative planning recognizes that there are different sites of knowledge production, including the tacit and experiential knowledge of community, agonistic approaches seek to validate the implications of this plurality by endorsing multiple forms of candid expression. Thus, instead of planners being in the business of advocacy and knowledge transfer, they can be in the business of knowledge exchange within the framework of smart pluralism, whereby each faction learns that its interest can be best advanced through persuasive engagement rather than coercive dominance.

Conflict is mediated by reframing the issues that gave rise to the conflict: the mediator reframes the debate by taking the emphasis away from the personal and emotionally charged disagreements and directing it towards common goals and desired outcomes.

The question is, how can development practitioners and local government officials deal with conflict in a way that reinforces community resilience rather than plays into the destructive dimensions of conflict? One understanding of conflict management, from the experiences of planners and mediators, suggests that successful engagement with conflict can result in practical ends that serve multiple interests (Forester 2006). Conflict-mediation processes draw attention away from grievances and strengthen communities' ability to deal with future antagonisms. Conflict is mediated by reframing the issues that gave rise to the conflict: the mediator reframes the debate by taking the emphasis away from the personal and emotionally charged disagreements and directing it towards common goals and desired outcomes (Forester 2007: 451). In so doing, conflict mediation allows mutual vulnerability and common challenges to

be acknowledged, which contributes to stakeholders' understanding of one another. Furthermore, moving towards joint learning directs discussion towards mutual challenges and benefits, listening for (and analysing) underlying interests when stakeholders voice their grievances and desires, and valuing anger among participants in the planning process as a sign of energy – as opposed to apathy – for, and investment in, the outcomes of development and the wellbeing of their communities.

Finally, Forester (2007) highlights the important difference between the processes of mediation and moderation. Mediation allows participants to construct their own agreements and to work through issues in their own way. Therefore, the mediator who facilitates such a process simply guides an organic debate towards uncovering strategies for the future. In contrast, moderation refers to a process in which the reasons for conflict are faced head on. Here, a facilitator will ask parties to voice their grievances with one another in an open and straightforward manner. While this process can indeed be useful, it can also result in escalated antagonism and weakened relationships between parties (Forester 2007: 454).

Complementing Forester's thinking are the ideas emerging from the conflict resolution literature. Spangler (2003), drawing on Lederach (2003), outlines the need to create a new language with which to think about how to deal with conflict.

Concepts such as conflict resolution and conflict management are problematic, as they respectively imply the erasure and control of conflict. Lederach (2003) suggests an alternative understanding of conflict, which can result in a deeper knowledge of the elements contributing to conflict and a sustained understanding of how to harness the positive implications of conflict. Here, the term 'conflict resolution' is used to describe actions through which immediate problems caused by conflict may be addressed in conjunction with the underlying relationships that are at the origin of the conflict. The particular understanding of conflict, as an inevitable yet useful aspect of social life, guides the methods of conflict transformation. Therefore, in order to transform conflict, practitioners should cultivate a capacity to view immediate issues without becoming anxious about immediate solutions, to integrate short-term responses with long-term change, and to reframe debates to reflect the legitimacy of disparate views. Furthermore, practitioners should view complexity as a positive attribute and allow for identity to be articulated in relation, not reaction, to others.

Table 1 synthesises the lessons drawn from the ABCD, community planning and conflict resolution literatures. A number of attitudinal shifts need to occur in order to deal productively with conflict and contestation. Attitudes refer to crucial aspects that make up a conflict-sensitive approach to development, while approaches refer to the ways in which these aspects may be drawn out or strengthened. The table may be seen as the beginnings of a methodology for development that is aware of both the destructive and generative potential of conflict and contestation, and that mediates tensions in a way that contributes to the resilience of a community.

Lederach (2003) suggests an alternative understanding of conflict, which can result in a deeper knowledge of the elements contributing to conflict and a sustained understanding of how to harness the positive implications of conflict.

Table 1: Attitudes and approaches for a development practice to deal with conflict and contestation.

Attitude	Approach
The experiences of community members are valid and valuable for developing strategies for conflict management.	Through appreciative enquiry , practitioners can draw out these experiences and reflect on them with community members.
Social relationships are crucial aspects of resilience. Understanding these allows practitioners to make sense of existing assets as well as the places relationships are strained.	Practitioners must be aware of the social capital generated within communities and between community members.
Conflict focuses attention on the disagreements between parties, while the purpose of resilience-building development should be to highlight both common struggles and opportunities for wellbeing that benefit all .	By reframing debates between stakeholders, practitioners will be able to draw attention away from grievances. In order to reframe the discussion, practitioners must invite stakeholders to think over shared struggles and, together, to envision ideal outcomes.
Conflict is not something that is easily (if ever) resolved . Conflict remains a part of the interaction between individuals and groups, and must be transformed in a way that makes it useful to development processes, while ensuring that the rights of the most vulnerable are safeguarded.	Through conflict transformation , practitioners will be able to channel the destructive energy of conflict towards constructive processes. Conflict then becomes a generative tool, rather than a destructive hindrance.

CONCLUSION

In South Africa today, frustration with the state is being expressed through violent protests. Citizens are taking to the streets, armed with burning tyres and petrol bombs, in an attempt to make their voices heard. Although protests in general, and violent protests in particular, are by no means unfamiliar in South African history, in recent years the intensity and frequency of protests have increased. Furthermore, while development thinking often represents communities as coherent and cohesive wholes, the reality speaks of heterogeneity and communities as spaces of contestation within which multiple identities and views clash and mingle.

In South Africa, conflict and contestation occur at multiple levels. Conflicts between the state and

communities, as well as those that persist within communities (and within the state), have immense destructive power, tearing away at both social and material resources. In poor communities, daily life is characterised by a struggle over available resources. Here, conflict fragments social relationships and, as such, heightens the vulnerability of the poor. In order to break this cycle, the resilience of a community needs to be strengthened through an active recognition of the origins of conflicts and disagreements. The purpose of this paper has been to argue for the emergence of a new kind of development practice – one that takes seriously the workings and consequences of conflict and contestation. In so doing, local government officials and development practitioners will be able to cultivate

spaces within which the generative, rather than destructive, dimensions of conflict may be extracted.

An examination of existing literature found that attitudinal shifts will have to occur, if a development practice that aims at a deeper engagement with multiple dimensions of conflict is to emerge. A number of suggestions (refer Table 1) may serve to guide practitioners in dealing with conflict. In a context where gross inequality and a lack of resources are the order of the day, conflict –and the potential exploitation of contestation and conflict by groups or individuals seeking personal gain –cannot be

ignored. While apartheid-era politics left a *modus operandi* that prefers to sweep tensions and disagreements under the rug rather than face them head-on, the radicalisation of conflict over recent years proves the out-datedness and inefficiency of such an approach. By taking conflict seriously and institutionalising conflict management as an approach to development, local government and development initiatives will harness the generative power of contestation and, in doing so, contribute to the increased resilience of communities across the country.

REFERENCES

- Agger A and Larsen JN (2007) Public deliberation, community capacity and neighbourhood dynamics. Paper presented at 'The Vital City', European Urban Research Association, EURA, 10th Anniversary Conference, University of Glasgow.
- Béniit-Gbaffou C (2011) Up Close and Personal - How does local democracy help the poor access the state? *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 46: 453–464.
- Brand R and Graffikin F (2007) Collaborative planning in an uncollaborative world. *Planning Theory* 6(3): 282–313.
- Berkes F (2007) Understanding uncertainty and reducing vulnerability: lessons from resilience thinking. *Nat Hazards* 41: 283–295.
- Cooke B and Kothari B (2001) *Participation: The New Tyranny?* London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Cornwall A and Gaventa J (2001) Bridging the gap: citizenship, participation and accountability. *PLA Notes* 40: 32–35.
- Folke C (2006) Resilience: The emergence of a perspective for social–ecological systems analyses. *Global Environmental Change* 16: 253–267.
- Forester J (2006) Making participation work when interests conflict: from fostering dialogue and moderating debate to mediating disputes. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 72(4): 447–56.
- Guijt I and Shah MK (1998) *The Myth of Community: Gender Issues in Participatory Development*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd.
- Harber A (2010) *Diepsloot*. Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers.
- Katsaura O (2011) Community governance in urban South Africa: spaces of political contestation and coalition. *Urban Forum* (23): 319–342.
- Leading Change (2012) ABCD in South Africa. <http://leadingchange.co.za/2012/10/19/abcd-in-south-africa/>
- Lederach JP (2003) Conflict transformation. In G Burgess and H Burgess (eds) *Beyond Intractability*. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/transformation>
- Mathie A (2006) Does ABCD deliver on social justice? Panel Discussion for the International Association of Community Development. CIVICUS Conference, Glasgow, June 2006.
- Mathie A and Cunningham G (2003) From clients to citizens: asset-based community development as a strategy for community driven development. *Development in Practice* 13(5): 474–486.
- Mathie A and Cunningham G (2005) Who is driving development? Reflections on the transformative potential of Asset-Based Community Development. *The Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 26(1): 176–187.
- Mayson SS (2013) The 'underbelly' of 'active citizenship': An interpretive analysis of a project facilitating participation in informal settlement upgrading. In GGLN (Good Governance Learning Network) *Active Citizenship Matters: Perspectives from Civil Society on Local Governance in South Africa*. Cape Town: GGLN and Isandla Institute.
- Mohan G and Stokke K (2000) Participatory development and empowerment: the dangers of localism. *Third World Quarterly*, 21(2): 247–268.
- Molapo S and Ngubeni K (2011) Gladysville: Xenophobic Violence in South Africa after Apartheid in Von Holdt K, Langa M, Molapo S, Mogapi N, Ngubeni K, Dlamini J and Kirsten A (2011) *The Smoke that Calls: Insurgent Citizenship, Collective Violence and the Struggle for a Place in the New South Africa*. Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and Society, Work and Development Institute.
- Moolla R, Kotze N and Block L (2011) Housing satisfaction and quality of life in RDP houses in Braamfischerville, Soweto: A South African case study. *Urbania Izziv* 22(1): 138–143.
- Mouffe C (2000) *The Democratic Paradox*. New York: Verso.
- Municipal IQ (2014) 2013 Protest Tally. http://www.municipaliq.co.za/index.php?site_page=press.php
- Pernegger L (2013) The Agonist State? The Case of Johannesburg: City of Strife. Paper presented at the International RC21 Conference 2013, Session 27.1: Contentious Mobilisation, Conflict and Agonistic Pluralism in Urban Development: Transformative Potentials and Trajectories.
- Piper L and von Lieres B (2008) Inviting failure: citizen participation and local governance in South Africa. *Citizenship DRC Special Issue Vol. I No. 1*, January 2008.
- Spangler B (2003) Settlement, resolution, management, and transformation: an explanation of terms. In G Burgess and H Burgess (eds) *Beyond Intractability*. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/meaning-resolution>
- Von Holdt K, Langa M, Molapo S, Mogapi N, Ngubeni K, Dlamini J and Kirsten A (2011) *The Smoke that Calls: Insurgent Citizenship, Collective Violence and the Struggle for a Place in the New South Africa*. Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and Society, Work and Development Institute.
- Williams G (2004) Evaluating participatory development: tyranny, power and (re)politicization. *Third World Quarterly* 25(3): 557–578.
- Walker BH, Holling CS, Carpenter SR and Kinzig AP (2004) Resilience, adaptability and transformability in social–ecological systems. *Ecology and Society*. <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol9/iss2/art5/>
- Zuma J (2014) State of the Nation Address: Opening of Parliament 13 February 2014. Cape Town: South Africa. <http://www.gov.za/>



ADDRESSING WOUNDEDNESS, RESILIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH NETWORKED HEALING SPACES

Ronald Eglin¹ - Afesis-coplan

Although South Africa has made some progress in building a unified post-apartheid country, the society's wounds have not been adequately confronted and healed. This deep-rooted woundedness, anger and collective trauma must be addressed if South Africa is to advance along its development path² and create a resilient society.



PHOTO: AFESIS-COPLAN

RESILIENCE IS 'THE capacity of a society to absorb disturbance [like a shock] and reorganise while undergoing change, so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedbacks' (Walker et al. in Hopkins 2008: 54). Resilience is also described as 'bouncebackability' – when something knocks us off our stride, we can recover and resume our activities (Hopkins 2011: 44). Persistent and unresolved woundedness limits the capacity of individuals and communities to manage and mitigate, or 'bounce back' from a variety of shocks and risks associated with stressful events. Therefore, for a society to be able to withstand inevitable future

social, economic, cultural or even naturally occurring disturbances, woundedness needs to be appropriately addressed. In other words, mechanisms that directly heal a wounded nation need to be put in place for a resilient society to emerge. Networked Healing Spaces (NHS) is one such mechanism.

The introductory sections of this paper lay the groundwork for the core argument that, while South African society has shown signs of resilience – bouncing back from decades and even centuries of oppression, it has not adequately addressed its woundedness and so is unable to achieve its full development potential. The paper begins by

contextualising how South Africa's history has contributed to the nation's woundedness, through consistent shocks over a long period of time. Many of the long-term effects of shocks, such as anger, aggression, collective trauma, historical trauma, and unresolved grief, are manifestations of woundedness and have never been truly addressed. After examining ways in which societies have confronted their collective trauma and woundedness, the concept of NHS is introduced and presented as one of the pillars on which community resilience can be built. The aim of this paper is not to detail how NHS should operate, but rather to open up the debate for establishing such spaces and motivate for more experimentation in implementing NHS.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROOTS OF THE NATION'S WOUNDS

Like many African nations, South Africa's wounds can be traced to the colonial era and the associated territorial wars, land dispossessions, slave trades, forced labour, and the disruption of families as men were sent to work in the mines or sold as slaves.³ Apartheid followed, bringing racial segregation, forced removals, forced labour, and more disruption of families, households and livelihoods. The oppressed groups resisted and organised protest actions. For decades, the country was at war, as the oppressed groups fought to make the country ungovernable (especially in the 1970s and 1980s), while those in power fought back to suppress the dissent. Many people died in the struggle against apartheid, many disappeared without a trace, and many were physically and emotionally wounded. Despite the arrival of the first democratic government in 1994, levels of anger and woundedness remained.

A country does not generally emerge from a state of war in one year to peace and cooperation in the next year.⁴ South Africa's first democratic government

understood this, and in 1995 introduced the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act (Act No. 34). This Act regulated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that ran between 1996 and 2000. The introduction of the TRC points to the government being conscious of the need to address trauma, as a necessary step towards healing and development.⁵ However, a study by the South African Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and the Khulumani Support Group (1998) surveyed several hundred victims of human-rights abuses during the apartheid era and found that most felt that the TRC had failed to achieve reconciliation between black and white communities. Most believed that justice was a

The introduction of the TRC points to the government being conscious of the need to address trauma, as a necessary step towards healing and development.

prerequisite for, not an alternative to, reconciliation, and that the TRC had been weighted in favour of the perpetrators of the abuse.

In South Africa, many citizens still portray signs of woundedness, anger and aggression, as evidenced by the high rates of violent crime, xenophobic attacks, violent protests and the widespread abuse against women and children. Service delivery protests are increasing, as communities are frustrated by the government's lack of delivery and feel that their frustration is not being heard (SAHRC 2006). In 2012, there were 113 violent public protests against municipalities, compared to 27 in 2008, while during the first six months of 2013, 'there were more protests against local government ... than in any other year since 2004' (Newham 2013).

This increase in violence, it is suggested, is an indication of the woundedness felt by many of

South Africa's citizens. This woundedness is 'the malaise which is holding South Africa back' (Hoffman 2013). Apartheid 'left many in the nation with what psychologists might call "an inferiority complex" (self-disrespect or even self-hate) and those guilty of oppressing with a "superiority complex" engendered by a false belief in the veracity of their own humiliating propaganda' (Hoffman 2013). The implication is that a sustainable future is almost impossible unless a space is created to help facilitate some kind of healing or coming to terms with this woundedness and collective trauma.

DEALING WITH COLLECTIVE TRAUMA: SOME EXAMPLES

Collective trauma is 'trauma that happens to large groups of individuals' and may be transmitted across generations and across communities. Collective trauma can be the result of 'war, genocide, slavery, terrorism, and natural disasters', and symptoms include 'rage, depression, denial, survivor guilt and internalised oppression, as well as physiological changes in brain and body which can bring on chronic disease'.⁶ Throughout history and the world, different approaches have been used to address this trauma.

In Europe, after World War II, the Allied Forces established a series of military tribunals in Germany: the Nuremberg Trials tried those accused of war crimes who were predominantly senior political leaders. While these trials differ in intent and methodology to the South African TRC, many consider them to be the forerunner of the TRC-type approaches that emerged at the end of the twentieth century (Clapham 2003).

In the United States of America, the Wabanaki Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in 2010 by five senior chiefs of the Maine tribes. The commission documents the experiences of Native American (Indian) children who were forcibly removed from their parents and placed with white foster families or in boarding schools where the government believed they would experience 'civilisation'. The commission created a space for healing, the sharing of experiences and the collective sharing of trauma.⁷

As a culture of pardon, rather than punishment, slowly takes hold on the African continent, many countries have also established reconciliation commissions. These reconciliation mechanisms aim to achieve national healing as a first priority and assume that personal healing will occur during the process. In Rwanda, a traditional method of conflict resolution (*gacaca*) was resurrected in 2001 to deal with the 1994 crisis, when Hutus massacred 800 000 Tutsis in an effort to thwart the political power-sharing. The primary intent of *gacaca* was to restore social order, and so the punishments dispensed sought to restore harmony between the community and those responsible for discord (Graybill and Lanegran 2004). Another example is the Sierra Leone Truth Commission, which was established in 2002 to create an impartial record of human rights violations committed during the 1991–1999 war. President Tejan Kabbah reportedly gave the commission the mandate to reconcile the population (Graybill and Lanegran 2004).

As mentioned earlier, the South African TRC process of the mid-1990s went some way towards reconciling a divided nation and was an example emulated by other countries. However, the TRC failed to achieve national healing and, years later, no other mechanism has been put in place to address South Africa's national healing.

In Rwanda, a traditional method of conflict resolution (*gacaca*) was resurrected in 2001 to deal with the 1994 crisis, when Hutus massacred 800 000 Tutsis in an effort to thwart the political power-sharing.

NETWORKED HEALING SPACES: A MECHANISM FOR HEALING

This paper proposes that developing an understanding of, and dealing with, woundedness, anger and collective trauma is a necessary step in South Africa's development path and for the creation of a resilient society. The concept of NHS is presented as one possible mechanism through which this healing can be achieved.

Afesis-corplan first conceptualised NHS as part of unpublished research conducted for the Eastern Cape Planning Commission. This research highlighted the deep-seated woundedness found in people living in the Eastern Cape, which Afesis-corplan regards to be a barrier to the province's development (Afesis-corplan 2013).

NHS refer to different healing spaces that relate to independent but interlinked healing spaces, which are controlled by participants. NHS are conceptualised as platforms where people can, in a safe environment, confront, understand, release, and transcend woundedness,⁸ by providing them with an opportunity to talk and express themselves (Leveton 2010). This expression can take the form of storytelling, art, and drama because people often struggle to put into words their deep-seated anger, woundedness and aggression. Many people find it easier to express themselves by acting out the experience or drawing pictures (Leveton 2010). The sharing of stories is also important because '(w)hen people are hit by car on the street, they don't just get up, brush off the gravel, go on to work and forget about it. The very least they will do is to tell others about what happened, get it off their chest, tend their wounds' (Ramphela 2012: 178).

A useful framework to draw on for structuring conversations within NHS is the concept of hosting dialogue, as promoted by Peter Block (2009) and implemented by, among others, the Democracy

A NHS is a space where people who experience trauma can vent their frustrations. It also provides an opportunity for those responsible for causing the trauma and woundedness to confront their potential guilt.

Development Programme (DDP).⁹ To help groups (and society) shift their focus from problems to opportunities, the hosting dialogue uses five conversations: 'possibility', 'ownership', 'dissent', 'commitment' and 'gift'.

When people feel aggrieved and hurt by injustices done to them by others in the past, both parties must have an opportunity to speak and listen.¹⁰ A NHS is a space where people who experience trauma can vent their frustrations. It also provides an opportunity for those responsible for causing the trauma and woundedness to confront their potential guilt. To move from dealing with the past to planning for the future, a transition phase may be necessary. To assist people to make this transition, various rituals could be considered, such as prayer, meditation, forgiveness sessions, fasts and the handing over of symbolic artefacts.

Those involved in the NHS process may also need to work through the difficult issue of compensation to redress past trauma. Compensation can be viewed on a continuum that runs from 'no compensation' to 'full compensation'. At 'no compensation', a person simply has an opportunity to talk and get their grievance and anger off their chest. The next step towards 'full compensation' is when the person also feels that those who are listening to their story have truly heard what he/she is saying. This is followed by the perpetrator apologising to the victim involved in the trauma. Some form of token compensation could also be offered, meaning that the apology is more than just words. 'Full compensation' will involve, for example, giving back land, or

providing significant court-determined fair financial or material compensation, or even disciplining and bringing to justice the wrongdoer.

NHS can be contrasted to hierarchical decision-making structures or spaces (White n.d.). In hierarchies, decisions flow from the top to the bottom or from the bottom to the top, whereas a network does not have a hierarchy or top and bottom; everyone in the network has equal decision-making power (White n.d.).

Various stakeholders have their roles to play within NHS, whether from government, community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, media, academics or the international community. It is suggested that organised civil society¹¹ is best placed to initiate and oversee the operations of NHS. It is further suggested that NHS should ideally be decentralised down to the local or regional level.

An example of a NHS is the Letsema Circle¹² in the Eastern Cape. The Letsema Circle considers South Africa to be a 'wounded nation', which needs to 'deal with the woundedness and replace it with dignity' before any real progress can be made. Therefore, healing is at the heart of the organisation's work. The Letsema approach 'encourages individuals and communities to confront their lack of self-confidence and self-respect and support one another in the healing process'. This is because the potential for community wellness will be unlocked only once social pain has been addressed and self-esteem built.

HOW NETWORKED HEALING SPACES CAN SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT

A resilient society is a healed society that is able to confront, transcend and bounce back from future shocks stresses and trauma. Therefore, resilience can only come about after dealing with the collective wounds of the community or society.

This paper argues that NHS are one of the pillars on which a resilient society is built. Another pillar is a clear, broadly understood and agreed-upon development vision and path. The National Development Plan (NDP) provides such a vision and plan for the country, but it does not address the need to come to terms with a difficult, traumatic, and often violent, past. While the NDP recognises that future development needs the active involvement of all its citizens (National Planning Commission 2012: 1), it fails to incorporate a mechanism for the country to deal with woundedness, anger and aggression from past trauma or from inevitable future shocks (be they economic, social or environmental).

NHS can provide such a mechanism and could be incorporated into the broader development process through the NDP. NHS would be the 'backwards-looking' structures or spaces that complement the more 'forward-looking' planning committees and forums, such as the integrated development planning (IDP) forums and ward committees being promoted by government. NHS would become a permanent feature of South Africa's socio-political landscape, responding to needs and requirements at each particular point in time and location.

NHS can help to overcome the tensions and shocks that can lead to divisions in society as a result of, for example, future migratory movements and unemployment. The displacement of many people is one of the impacts of climate change. As these people move from areas affected by desertification, greater water scarcity, floods and other climate change-related phenomena into new areas, tensions and conflicts with existing inhabitants can arise over scarce land, water and other resources (Eastern Cape 2011: 7; Wakeford 2008; Hopkins 2008). The increase in economic

inequalities, as South Africans struggle to find and maintain employment, could also lead to conflict between those with and those without income opportunities (Dietz and O'Neill 2013, Korten 2010). NHS could play an important role, by allowing people to come together to confront and transcend such stressful periods, then to support each other, as partners, in IDP, ward and other structures, in implementing mutually agreed development plans.

CONCLUSION

South Africa is running a development race with wounds that have largely been ignored. Unless collective mechanisms are in place that allow citizens and communities to address past (and future) traumas, the country will not be able to achieve its potential and provide a quality of life for all. Without such mechanisms, violence and social unrest – and other manifestations of woundedness – will continue. Attention and resources will continue to be diverted from future planning processes towards interventions that deal with the impact of our inability to confront these wounds.

Healing wounds is a prerequisite for a resilient society, able to bounce back from past shocks and trauma and able to move into and respond to whatever shocks the future brings. NHS is just one mechanism that can be used to address the nation's woundedness.

More research will help in understanding how the concept of NHS can help South Africa address and heal the wounds of the past and move towards a brighter future. More importantly, experimentation is needed of running NHS in different contexts: from informal settlements trying to come to terms with xenophobic violence, to rural communities with a history of land dispossession and violence, to municipalities trying to bring previously disjointed communities together to develop a common plan. Different stakeholders need to follow different approaches for establishing and operationalising NHS. Such research and practices will produce better ways of facilitating such spaces, confronting our past, healing our nation and building a more resilient population, and, overall, improving the quality of life of all citizens.

REFERENCES

- Afesis-corporation (2013) Role of Civil Society in Building a Capable and Democratic Development State in the Eastern Cape Province. Report prepared for the Eastern Cape Planning Commission.
- Andani A and Naidu R (2013) From subject to citizen: building active citizenship through community dialogues and radio stations. In GGLN (Good Governance Learning Network) *Active Citizenship Matters: Perspectives from Civil Society on Local Governance in South Africa*. Cape Town: GGLN and Isandla Institute. <http://www.ggln.org.za/publications/state-of-local-governance-research-project>.
- Block P (2009) *Community: the Structure of Belonging*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Civicus (2013) *State of Civil Society 2013: Creating an Enabling Environment*. Johannesburg: Civicus, http://socs.civicus.org/?page_id=4289.
- Clapham A (2003) *From Nuremberg to the Hague: the Future of International Criminal Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.31
- Dietz R and O'Neill D (2013) *Enough is Enough: Building a Sustainable Economy in a World of Finite Resources*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- Eastern Cape, Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs (2011) *Eastern Cape Provincial Spatial Development Plan, Chapter 2: Key Development Issues*. <http://drupal6dev15.econsultant.co.za/sites/psdp.ecprov.gov.za/files/PSDP%20Chapter%202%20Key%20Development%20Issues.pdf>.
- Foster D, Davis D and Sandler D (1987) *Detention and Torture in South Africa: Psychological, Legal and Historical Studies*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.
- Graybill L and Lanegran K (2004) Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation in Africa: Issues and Cases. *African Studies Quarterly* 8(1). <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v8/v8i1a1.pdf>.
- Hendricks F, Ntsebeza L and Helliker K (2013) *The Promises of Land: Undoing a Century of Dispossession in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jakana Media.
- Hoffman P (2012) *The Cure for a Wounded Nation*. Cape Town: IFAISA http://ifaisa.org/The_cure_for_a_wounded_nation.html.
- Hopkins R (2008) *The Transition Handbook: From Oil Dependency to Local Resilience*. Totnes: Green Books.
- Hopkins R (2011) *The Transition Companion, Making our Community more Resilient in Uncertain Times*. Totnes: Transition Books.
- Korten D (2010) *Agenda for a New Economy: from Phantom Wealth to Real Wealth*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc.
- Leveton E (2010) *Healing Collective Trauma Using Sociodrama and Drama Therapy*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- National Planning Commission (2012) *National Development Plan 2030: Our future – make it work*. <http://www.npconline.co.za/MediaLib/Downloads/Downloads/NDP%202030%20-%20Our%20future%20-%20make%20it%20work.pdf>.
- Newham G (2012) Violent protests muscled in on the 2012 South African crime statistics. *ISS Today*, 21 September 2012. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies. <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/violent-protests-muscled-in-on-the-2012-south-african-crime-statistics>.
- Platzky L and Walker C (1985) *The Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Raven Press.
- Ramphele M (2012) *Conversations with My Sons and Daughters*. Johannesburg: Penguin Books.
- South African Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and the Khulumani Support Group (1998) Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: survivors' perceptions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and suggestions for the final report. <http://www.csvr.org.za/index.php/publications/1705-submission-to-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-survivors-perceptions-of-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-and-suggestions-for-the-final-report.html>.
- SAHRC (South African Human Rights Commission) (2006) *Reflections on Democracy and Human Rights: A Decade of the South African Constitution*. Johannesburg: SAHRC.
- Wakeford J (2008) Climate change: our most pressing economic and social issue. In *Bending the Curve: Your Guide to Tackling Climate Change in South Africa*. Cape Town: Africa Geographic.
- White DR (n.d.) Networks and Hierarchies. In *A New Perspective on Innovation and Social Change*. European Union Project ISCOM (Innovation Society as a Complex System). <http://intersci.ss.uci.edu/~drwhite/pub/White5-5b.pdf>.

NOTES

- ¹ The significant contributions of Nontando Ngamlana, Musa Sebugwawo, and Sibulele Poswayo of Afesis-corporation in conceptualising, writing and editing this paper is acknowledged and greatly appreciated.
- ² Development is a contested term but can generally be understood as a process of moving from an existing, less desirable situation to a desired future situation. Development is essentially about empowering people to become the best they can be. It is about looking at what obstacles people need to overcome to build on the assets they already have and open their eyes to their own possibilities. It is about implementing actions in the present, and building and responding to what has happened in the past in a way that works towards a desired future (Coady International Institute. *About ABCD*, <http://www.coady.stfx.ca/themes/abcd/>).
- ³ This section draws from generally available knowledge of South African history, including www.sahistory.org.za; www.history.com; Platzky and Walker (1985); Foster et al. (1987); and Hendricks et al. (2013).
- ⁴ From the "Marshall Plan" speech at Harvard University, 5 June 1947, accessible at www.oecd.org/general/themarshallplanspeechathavarduniversity.html
- ⁵ *Welcome to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/>
- ⁶ *What is collective trauma?* <http://www.healingcollectivetrauma.com/>.
- ⁷ *Background*. <http://www.mainewabanakitrc.org/about/background/>
- ⁸ <http://www.healingcollectivetrauma.com/>.
- ⁹ Andani and Naidu (2013) provides more detail on DDP's implementation of the Block hosting dialogue methodology.
- ¹⁰ <http://www.healingcollectivetrauma.com/>.
- ¹¹ Civil society in this context is understood to mean 'the arena, outside of the family, the state and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests' (Civicus 2013).
- ¹² Letsema Circle is a pioneer path-finder programme that facilitates community-centered interventions in the primary health care system through the walking together approach <http://www.letsemacircle.co.za>.



BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH SOCIAL COHESION: A CASE STUDY IN LAVENDER HILL

Sarah Watson and Colleen Ryan - Democracy Development Programme

Between 2010 and 2012, the Democracy Development Programme (DDP) ran the 'Creating Visions of Hope' programme in the Cape Flats suburb of Lavender Hill. The programme aimed to bring together prominent local actors to engage with the state, in order to strengthen their capacity for creating positive change in the community. Along the way, the DDP learnt some critical lessons about vulnerability and resilience, which are explored in this case study. Overall, the case study demonstrates that social cohesion is integral to the development of resilience, especially in communities fraught with a multitude of challenges and vulnerabilities.



PHOTO: http://peaceandloveinternational.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/4807640289_8334a76de1b_z.jpg

THIS PAPER DESCRIBES the vulnerabilities that the Lavender Hill community confronts on a daily basis and then outlines DDP's intervention and the ideology underpinning it. Finally, it explores the challenges, successes and lessons learnt in the course of programme implementation.

VULNERABILITY IN LAVENDER HILL

Lavender Hill is a suburb on the Cape Flats that overlaps the boundaries of wards 67, 68 and 110 and falls within Subcouncils 18 and 19. Created during

the early 1970s, the suburb was a dumping ground for coloured people removed from areas that were classified as white under the Group Areas Act – mainly District Six, Lower Claremont, Newlands and Plumstead.

Lavender Hill can be characterised as a vulnerable community, based on the five elements of asset vulnerability identified in Moser's framework (1998: 4): labour (evidenced by a high unemployment rate); human capital (undermined by high rates of drug abuse and a failure to complete schooling or access tertiary education); productive assets (housing

is often a valuable asset for poor urban households, but the vast majority of properties in this community are owned by the state or are informal structures); household relations (mechanisms for pooling income fail women and children when absent fathers make insufficient maintenance payments); and social capital (trust from social ties has been eroded by the divisions between those who benefit from and those who feel victimised by the drug trade).

EDUCATION AND INCOME

According to the 2011 Census, the total population of Lavender Hill is 32 598, with 95% of the population regarded as coloured (StatsSA 2012). Only 19% of those over the age of 20 have completed Grade 12 or higher and, although 58% of the potential labour force (ages 15–64) is employed (compared to a national average of only 39%), 59% of households in the area have a monthly income of R3 200 or less (City of Cape Town 2013).

WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Levels of fear in the Lavender Hill community are high. Residents fear revenge from gangsters for standing up against drug trading and violence. Women comprise the majority (51.7%) of residents (City of Cape Town 2013) and, like in many troubled communities, face additional risks related to high rates of domestic abuse and financial vulnerability because of the failure of men to support their children through regular maintenance payments (DDP 2012).

Children are especially vulnerable (Bowers 2005: 167). The environment of poverty, overcrowding, high rates of abuse, malnutrition and foetal alcohol syndrome make children in Lavender Hill particularly susceptible to recruitment by gangs and to drug addiction. There is also a high drop-out rate in schools in the area (DDP 2012).

HOUSING

The township consists predominantly of low-cost council housing in the form of double and triple storey blocks of flats – known as Courts. These flats were poorly constructed and have not been maintained over the years. During the past three decades, informal dwellings have been constructed in the area, and 16% of residents of the area now live in shacks (City of Cape Town 2013). Poor housing is intricately linked to vulnerability, not only in terms of threats to good health but also leverage of capital, social security and a sense of 'belonging' to the community.

SOCIAL COHESION

The inhospitality of the living environment is one of the reasons for the high incidence of gangsterism and drug abuse in the area (Bowers 2005). Forced removals destroyed the social fabric and cohesion among members of uprooted communities across South Africa, and those who were re-settled in Lavender Hill were no exception. The high levels of unemployment, poverty and overcrowding amplified existing problems, and criminality and violence became entrenched in the area. Today, the media commonly refers to the area 'Gangland' or 'the most dangerous area on the Cape Flats'.¹

Gang- and drug-related activities have had substantial impacts on the social cohesion of the community. Although statistics for Lavender Hill specifically are difficult to ascertain, crime statistics from the South African Police Service (SAPS) illustrate the prevalence of drug-related crime in the area: between April 2011 and March 2012, Grassy Park (ward 68) recorded 1 810 cases of drug-related crime (SAPS 2012). Local gangs hold the bulk of economic power in the area and recruit many community members by offering financial support. For example, they offer to pay rent or electricity bills in exchange for hiding parcels (Bowers 2005).

Popular education is education that is aimed at transforming personal lives, the community, the environment and society. It 'recognizes the energy and potential within each person and each community, and tries to empower them to make their full contribution to the process of building a new society in which it is possible for all people to meet their fundamental human needs' (Hope and Timmel 1995: 16).

As Merton reports (in Bowers 2005: 164), 'gangs have largely replaced Council authority and filled the vacuum left by lack of jobs, social services and recreation facilities. They organise everything from cash to school uniforms, a free taxi ride to the hospital, rent money and soccer tournaments'. At the same time, the selling and use of drugs lead to high levels of violent crime, both in turf wars between gangs and within domestic spaces,² where drug users are often known to steal from and/or physically abuse family members (DDP 2012). As a result, while a large part of the population is dependent on the gangs for their survival, the rest of the population feels under direct attack from those very same gangs.

THE DDP INTERVENTION: 'CREATING VISIONS OF HOPE'

The DDP's mission is to deepen democracy through the promotion of good governance, citizen participation and human and socio-economic rights. The objective of the organisation is to contribute to the creation of a democratic society in which the governed can articulate their aspirations and those who govern are able to do so efficiently and inclusively.

In early 2010, the DDP went into Lavender Hill with the idea of activating citizens to develop a vision for their community and to engage with decision-making processes that affect daily life.

The specific objectives of the intervention were to:

- ✦ strengthen relationships between local actors, including staff and volunteers at civil society

- organisations and community activists, and
- ✦ build citizens' capacity to engage with the state.

The DDP Cape Town coordinator spent a substantial period of time identifying local organisations and explaining the proposed project to local leaders, and then checking that the project was aligned to their needs and aspirations. At the first public event hosted by DDP in Lavender Hill, the organisation made a public commitment to work in the community for two years. However, as DDP was unknown in the community, the initial reaction of community members was that the organisation must have a political interest to promote. Breaking down this perception could not happen overnight, as the only way to overcome such suspicion was for DDP representatives to act in a transparent, accountable and consistent manner – by following through on commitments, allowing the programme to be guided by the steering committee and building personal relationships with those involved.

UNDERLYING IDEOLOGY

Paulo Freire's principle of 'popular education' informed the DDP's intervention in Lavender Hill. Popular education is education that is aimed at transforming personal lives, the community, the environment and society. It 'recognizes the energy and potential within each person and each community, and tries to empower them to make their full contribution to the process of building a new society in which it is possible for all people to meet their fundamental human needs' (Hope and Timmel 1995: 16). The Freirean approach emphasises that learning is not only about reason and action but is also bound up with emotions. Any resistance and apathy, which have built over time as a result of blocked and frustrated efforts, can be overcome when facilitators concentrate on issues that individuals

feel strongly about. Freire refers to these issues as 'generative themes'. Some of these issues may be discussed freely in communities (for example, the maintenance of housing structures), while others (for example, domestic abuse and drug addiction) require courageous individuals to break the taboo of discussing these personal issues in a public space.

In addition, DDP has adopted the methodology proposed by Peter Block in his book *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (Block 2009). Block's approach has two main dimensions: the physical structure of meetings and the emphasis on certain kinds of provocative and personal questions. Meetings and workshops are structured around meaningful conversations which take place in small groups, with feedback in a large circle. The small groups create intimacy between participants, deepen personal reflection and provide safe spaces for even the quietest voices to be heard. The questions asked explicitly create space for personal reflection on the individual's contribution to the place where they find themselves. The questions allow for dissent to be expressed and emphasise possibility and gifts rather than problems to be solved. The process of individual reflection in a shared space with other members of the community can create a profound sense of 'connectedness' between participants.³ This methodology was used wherever possible in the events and workshops that fell within the 'Creating Visions of Hope' project.

BASELINE STUDY

The intervention in Lavender Hill began with a survey of 50 local leaders and youth. The survey focused on people's understanding and perception of political leaders and structures. Levels of understanding about the functions of government were found to be poor. For instance, few knew the length of term of a South African president or understood the branches

and levels of government. Community leaders were clearly not engaged with the state: although 83% of the respondents were involved with a community-based organisation in the area, only 7% were in any way involved with their local ward committee. In fact, 40% of those polled did not even believe that voting – the most basic form of democratic participation – was important.

This lack of political involvement is related to the poor perception of the state and minimal trust in state organs. Belief in the efficacy and trustworthiness of local government appeared to be higher than that of the president, but the majority of people surveyed believed that ward committees were largely ineffectual. A lack of engagement in state structures is linked to a failure to harness the assets of the state – in Lavender Hill, 'political powerlessness was identified as a reason for a lack of basic services' (Wilson and Ramphela in Bowers 2005: 155).

These findings of political apathy among residents of Lavender Hill informed the focus area of the DDP's intervention.

BUILDING CAPACITY TO ENGAGE THE STATE

To encourage citizen engagement with the state, some capacity-building training was required. During the first year of the project (April 2010 to February 2011), DDP introduced the concept of active citizenship and stressed the importance of public participation. Workshops and public forums were held on topics that included the Dinokeng Scenarios,⁴ building partnerships for community development,

The process of individual reflection in a shared space with other members of the community can create a profound sense of 'connectedness' between participants.

reinventing the culture in local government (from relief to transformation), municipal elections and the role of civil society in deepening democracy.

During the second year of the project (March 2011 to July 2012), DDP worked to deepen community leaders' understanding of the structures and functions of government, as people who have the capacity to engage meaningfully are more likely to take up such opportunities. Several workshops were held on various aspects of integrated development planning, on the role of councillors, the importance of voting in local government elections and by-elections, the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy, and preparing submissions in terms of the Western Cape Petitions Act 3 of 2006. Representatives from the Community Development Workers (CDWs) and Public Participation Directorates in the Western Cape provincial government also attended some events and, in fact, requested special training sessions on using the Block approach in community development.

BUILDING NETWORKS OF LOCAL ACTORS

The DDP intervention allowed generative themes to emerge, by encouraging the local steering committee to select topics for public forums and training. The steering committee consisted of local activists and community leaders, with representatives from the Christian Benevolent Society, Hope Sanctuary, Women Hope 4 the Nation, the Greater Retreat Youth Forum and Gender Steps. Additional partnerships were forged with RAPCAN (Resources Aimed at the Protection of Child Abuse and Neglect), the New World Foundation, Black Sash, SCAT (Social Change Assistance Trust) and Earthlife Africa. Topics for forums and training suggested by the steering committee included local government elections, councillor accountability and the role of the ward forum, local health challenges and the National

Health Insurance, the rates billing system, problems with Eskom, child maintenance, and understanding gender and gender-based violence.

Additional elements of the intervention included an internship programme that gave selected local youth the opportunity to build their capacity by working at the DDP, and workshops on leadership and personal mastery for the steering committee and other community leaders, which allowed participants to interrogate their own value system and leadership style, develop a vision for their organisation and manage a team more effectively.

Community leaders were also exposed to Block's work on structuring dialogues to build community. The community dialogues and governance-training events used methods that were learned at an experiential-learning workshop on 'Connecting Community' and proved beneficial. As Tiffany Joseph from RAPCAN stated, 'people are hurt and need to be heard and comforted. Speaking needs to happen as it helps the healing process. All people want to feel like they belong and knowing your identity plays a huge part in that' (Joseph interview 2012).⁵

However, building local networks required addressing some challenges. The idea of connecting local leaders was somewhat easier than the reality. In addition to the rifts in Lavender Hill caused by drug- and gang-related crime, genuine community building was inhibited by different levels of economic power and perceived class differences. Even the choice of venue was contested terrain, as some community members were hesitant to attend events at venues outside their usual comfort zones.

Another challenge was getting all relevant stakeholders into one room. Government officials resisted going to grassroots community venues, preferring middle-class venues. They were also unwilling to extend their working day in order to

attend meetings outside working hours. Yet many of the community leaders were unavailable for meetings during working hours, as they rely on day jobs for survival and work as volunteers in their organisations.

Shifting the prevailing ‘problem-solving’ approach was difficult, as many participants struggled to move away from discussing problems to considering possibilities and gifts. With the problem-solving approach, the tendency is to identify a list of resources needed to solve the problem, e.g. more training, more money, more influence. Then, when the required resources are not available, apathy and helplessness often emerge, and solving the original problem seems impossible. However, when the approach is to look at assets instead of problems, possibilities and opportunities emerge, and people feel empowered and inspired to build on those gifts and resources. Such a sense of energy and possibility is intimately tied to resilience, as opposed to apathy and hopelessness that maintain and magnify vulnerability. This approach also requires people to move from competition to collaboration, which is not a smooth, seamless or quick process, especially overcoming the element of competition across organisations faced with constrained access to funding and other resources.

STORIES OF EMERGING CHANGE IN LAVENDER HILL

During and after the project period, several stories from participants illustrated increased social cohesion among community leaders and, in turn, increased capacity to overcome challenges, shocks and stresses. These are not ‘DDP successes’ but are stories of members of the community using their assets, skills and newfound connectedness. These are stories of communities that clearly show that they have become resilient. Some of these stories are presented below.

STANDING UP AGAINST VIOLENCE

During the last week of June 2012, Soraya Nordien, a long-time resident and prominent local activist, was one of six people killed in Lavender Hill. Nordien, along with close friend and colleague Aysha Davids, was a founding member of Women Hope 4 the Nation, an organisation that offers counselling services to victims of domestic and child abuse. She was also a member of the Community Policing Forum and the neighbourhood watch, and an outspoken opponent of gangs and drugs.

The week before her death, a known local gangster threatened Nordien outside her home and pointed a gun to her head. On the day of her death, two men rushed into her boyfriend’s shack and shot her dead while she lay in bed. Nothing was stolen. Family and friends believe that she was targeted because of her opposition to the illegal activities common in the area. A man who is believed to be a local gangster has been arrested.

Nordien’s colleague Davids was told that she was ‘next on the list’.⁶ Davids is one of the local activists who has attended many of the DDP workshops. When asked by our Cape Town facilitator about the progress of the Nordien murder case, Davids reported that she had petitioned the court and managed to get the accused’s bail denied. She ascribed this idea directly to having attended the DDP training on the Western Cape petitions process.

Facilitators of early workshops remember Davids as a shy person, who sat and quietly listened in workshops, without raising her voice. Her refusal to acquiesce to violence – instead actively involving

However, when the approach is to look at assets instead of problems, possibilities and opportunities emerge, and people feel empowered and inspired to build on those gifts and resources.

herself in protecting the community and seeking justice for her fallen friend – illustrates her resolve, courage and commitment to the transformation of her community. The story also illustrates how motivated and committed people use the skills and assets at their disposal (in this case knowledge of the Western Cape petitions process) in unpredictable ways to overcome their particular struggles.

COURT COMMITTEES

After attending a Connecting Community workshop, several residents of the Courts joined together to take action on issues affecting residents. This idea had previously been suggested by a local NGO but had not taken off. However, this time some residents independently established Court Committees, which organised residents' meetings to identify and try to resolve local problems. The actions taken by the Court Committees demonstrate the power of the Connecting Community process to empower communities to take action and change their environment. This case also demonstrates that social cohesion serves to build more resilient communities.

Building community spirit: one of the first actions was to organise a social evening, where adults and children played dominoes, cards and darts, and shared food. Such an event shows how community members do not need formal structures, expensive workshops or external facilitators in order to build personal relationships and community spirit.

Building confidence to make a change: another initiative was to start a cleaning programme, in which residents committed to sweeping and maintaining the buildings and immediate surroundings. It is an example of how confident and committed individuals can make a change, no matter how seemingly small.

Using their collective voice: the Court Committee members have also engaged with their local councillors to advocate for improved maintenance of

buildings. They understand that their collective voice is much stronger than individual complaints about specific housing units. Through this engagement with the councillor, several members have obtained work through the Expanded Public Works Programme.

FOCUS ON ASSETS

Creating linkages between active local leaders produced beneficial results almost immediately. Participating organisations reported that getting to know who was doing what in the community allowed them to improve their referral services and get people the support they need at times of crisis. For example, Gender Steps and Hope Sanctuary both placed orders for clothing with the volunteer-based Women Hope 4 the Nation, whose members have sewing skills. Gender Steps passed on a donation of office stationery to Women Hope 4 the Nation. The existing neighbourhood watch also grew and has been extended to surrounding areas.

These examples illustrate the principle that building on community assets (which motivates and inspires), instead of focusing on problems to be solved (which can seem overwhelming and beyond the capacity of the community), enables these assets to be leveraged in the interests of community development. People have the capacity and assets to start to respond to their own challenges and to make positive changes. In the case of Lavender Hill, many people were already active in the local community, and so building relationships between them has helped to expand the impact of their efforts and renew their commitment.

ADOPTION OF DIALOGUE METHODOLOGY

Several organisations have adopted the DDP methodology and begun hosting their own community dialogues at Lavender Hill High School, with religious

groups and with other groups of interested residents. The events at the High School were aimed at getting youth involved in community development and building a vision for the school. RAPCAN facilitators reported that teachers, parents and children interacted for the first time at that school. The time was right for such a conversation, as one of the facilitators explains:⁷

It was amazing to see people speaking in a place in which they felt safe and coming up with solutions to problems which started the process of change. It was good to see people coming up with solutions to their own problems and I think this workshop allowed them to think critically and relatively about their problems and what they can do about it.

BUILDING LOCAL LEADERSHIP

The project was based on a leadership concept that emphasises creating the space and context for change to emerge, not providing expert-driven answers to problems.

Ellen Pakkies, who is notorious in Lavender Hill for killing her drug-addicted son, attended many of the events and has since started a Foundation. She now gives motivational talks to abused women and other groups.

As mentioned, Aysha Davids runs Women Hope 4 the Nation. She explains that 'we feel more confident and secure when working with the community'. The DDP workshops taught her how to be a leader, run meetings and record discussions. Her eyes were opened by seeing how DDP allowed 'people to find their own voices'. In the past she would never have developed a relationship or taken on the councillor. However, '[g]oing to the debates and roundtables and workshops helped us to sit in the same room as people who were clever but we learnt a lot. We did not always speak but we could listen and understand' (Davids interview 2012⁸).

It was amazing to see people speaking in a place in which they felt safe and coming up with solutions to problems which started the process of change.

NETWORKS OF CARE

The City of Cape Town runs an initiative called Local Networks of Care (LNOC). These clusters of community-based organisations are organised by local ward councillors and are aimed at improving the lives of those in deepest poverty, with an emphasis on rehabilitating and reintegrating people living on the streets (City of Cape Town 2012). The City has established approximately 16 such networks. In early 2013, a Lavender Hill LNOC was set up with eight participating organisations. Of these, five had participated in the Lavender Hill steering committee that DDP co-ordinated. The ward councillor for ward 68, who is driving this LNOC, also participated in DDP Connecting Community workshops.

The participating organisations in the LNOC decided to focus primarily on youth and are working to prevent vulnerable youth from becoming homeless. They have established various programmes that include a school holiday project, skills and entrepreneurial workshops, networking and referral services, and a prevention of school drop-out programme. The City identified this drop-out prevention programme as one of the best initiatives of any of the networks and awarded a cash prize. Of the 16 young drop-outs identified by the Lavender Hill group, nine have returned to school.

INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY STRUCTURES AND WARD COMMITTEES

In 2010 the Retreat/Square Hill Civic Association had no members and had not held an AGM in two years.

However, when the Civic Association held an AGM October 2011, 89 people attended the AGM at which board members were elected. The majority of the people at the AGM had participated in DDP forums and training events. Lavender Hill Civic Association has also been re-vitalised and now has offices based at the New World Foundation.

When DDP started working in the community, the local ward committees were composed mainly of representatives from minstrel groups. In 2011 a by-election was held following the death of the local councillor for ward 68 and, around the same time, the ward committee was re-elected. Several people who had participated in the DDP project are now actively involved on the ward committee. Local councillors and officials have observed change in the community. In 2012 and 2013, community meetings were well-attended, and residents are demanding accountability from their elected representatives.⁹

CDWs from Lavender Hill and surrounding areas who also attended DDP training reported that the training helped them to understand democracy and democratic processes. The legacy of apartheid in the area has left many uneducated and under-capacitated and, as one CDW pointed out, 'If you don't understand how our democracy works, you won't be able to access the benefits' (Afrika interview June 2012¹⁰).

LESSONS LEARNT

The Lavender Hill experience shows that an external organisation can be the catalyst for a community to become resilient. Work in communities often emphasises structures and processes. However, creating meaningful change is possible through the collaboration of people with a common vision and values and the power of impassioned and empowered individuals. The DDP learned some important lessons from the 'Creating Visions of Hope' programme.

Shifting the power to the community means letting go of preconceived or predetermined outcomes. Since DDP's partial exit from Lavender Hill, the steering committee had ceased to meet regularly, which was a worry for DDP. Did this mean that the gains made in coordinating community organisations were not sustainable? However, many of the individuals previously active on the steering committee are now involved in ward committee meetings, and meetings are held using the structures of the Block methodology. New structures have emerged (such as the Court Committees), and conversation and dialogue in the community continue but not in the spaces initiated by DDP.

Empowered people are more willing and able to engage with the formal state-created spaces for participation. The initial survey showed no trust or respect for ward committee structures, but today several participants are involved in these structures and are using them to push their developmental agenda. They have overcome the distrust and suspicion of these state-initiated structures using information provided to empower themselves and possessing a new-found sense of capacity.

Laying the groundwork for the project is essential. Groundwork is not about identifying problems to solve or structures to replicate. The most important preparation for the project is to create and develop relationships between the host organisation (in this case DDP) and the 'beneficiaries' – the members of partner organisations who participate. Trust, honesty and commitment emerge through these relationships, which enabled DDP to recruit local leaders into the project.

Building trust between stakeholders in a community - a critical element of establishing resilience - is important. Speaking honestly and listening deeply are skills that are often taken for granted, yet many people struggle with these aspects

of community life. When people are able to develop these skills, community members are able to heal and to build nurturing and productive relationships. The Block methodology of setting up the physical space to promote meaningful conversation in small groups and feedback in a big circle provides a useful vehicle for deepening provocative and transformational conversation.

NGOs must understand that development and increased resilience cannot be 'given' to a community. Instead, as DDP has come to realise, NGOs must

simply be the catalyst for community-driven action. Building social cohesion between local role players provides a basis for courage, motivation and commitment, and is one of the ways to facilitate a community's ability to overcome challenges, shocks and stresses. In other words, 'Work WITH the poor and oppressed, not for them. Development is an awakening process. Let the people grow. Build up the people's solidarity. Build up the people's organisation' (Hope and Timmel 1995: 27).

REFERENCES

- Block P (2009) *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. San Francisco, USA: Berret-Koehler.
- Bowers NF (2005) Development as Transformation: The Local Church in Lavender Hill as Agent of Change in a Post-Carnegie II Context. Doctoral thesis: University of Stellenbosch.
- City of Cape Town (2012) Local Networks of Care: Doing Things Differently, PowerPoint presentation.
- City of Cape Town (2013) 2011 Census Suburb Lavender Hill, http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/2011CensusSuburbs/2011_Census_CT_Suburb_Lavender_Hill_Profile.pdf
- DDP (Democracy Development Programme) (2012) Minutes of meetings from community profiling exercise in Lavender Hill.
- Hope A and Timmel S (1995) *Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers* Volume 1. Kleinmond, South Africa: Training for Transformation Institute.
- Moser C (1998) The Asset Vulnerability Framework: Reassessing Urban Poverty Reduction Strategies. *World Development* Vol 26, No 1: 1-19.
- SAPS (South African Police Service) (2012) Crime Stats: Grassy Park. <http://www.crimestatssa.com/provinceselect.php?ShowProvince=Western+Cape>
- StatsSA (Statistics South Africa) (2012) Quarterly Labour Force Survey Quarter 2. Pretoria: Stats SA.

NOTES

- ¹ T Mackay, iKapa boards up the long street to freedom, *Mail and Guardian*, 23 August 2013, <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-08-23-ikapa-boards-up-the-long-street-to-freedom>
- ² *Cape Argus*, Cape Flats gang war claims more lives, 15 July 2013, <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/cape-flats-gang-war-claims-more-lives-1.1546762#.UhyC4H9y2ls>
- ³ For more on DDP's application of the Block methodology to its various programme activities, see Andani A and Naidu R (2013) From Subject to Citizen: Building active citizenship through community dialogues and radio stations. In GGLN (Good Governance Learning Network) *Active Citizenship Matters: Perspectives from Civil Society on Local Governance in South Africa*. Cape Town: GGLN and Isandla Institute.
- ⁴ The scenarios imagine the future development of South Africa with various levels of citizen engagement and emphasise the importance of active citizen participation in governance.
- ⁵ Interview with Tiffany Joseph from RAPCAN, June 2012, Cape Town.
- ⁶ C Dolley, Slain woman 'was next on list', *The Post*, 5 July 2012, <http://www.thepost.co.za/slain-woman-was-next-on-list-1.1335036#.Uh8VX39y2ls>
- ⁷ Interview with Shane Lentoer, RAPCAN facilitator, June 2012, Cape Town.
- ⁸ Interview Aysha Davids, Women Hope 4 the Nation, July 2012, Cape Town.
- ⁹ Y Kamaldien, Lavender Hill residents feel 'ignored by City councillors', blog post 18 September 2012, <http://yazkam.wordpress.com/2012/09/18/lavender-hill-residents-feel-ignored-by-city-councillors>
- ¹⁰ Interview Shahied Afrika, CDW in Bonteheuwel, June 2012, Cape Town.



CONCLUSION

The key ingredients for resilience include learning to live with change and uncertainty, nurturing diversity, combining different knowledge systems for learning and renewal, and creating opportunities for self-organisation and cross-scale linkages.

CONSIDERING SOUTH AFRICA'S violent history, and the continued experience of material deprivation, dispossession and political marginalisation by many of its residents, it is not surprising that people are resorting to tactics that involve violence and aggression. However, South Africa is replete with examples of peaceful self-organisation around critical development concerns, able to achieve impressive results, often against the odds. But the limitations of what communities can achieve, particularly those without the wherewithal and influence that wealthier sections of society have, are real, especially as many factors influencing their social vulnerability are beyond their immediate sphere of control.

This publication presents various examples of community resilience from within/from below. The resourcefulness, commitment to change and willingness to learn and collaborate that emanates from these examples gives reason to pause and celebrate. But if that is all we do, we will ultimately reinforce social vulnerability, inequality and powerlessness by holding communities responsible for situations beyond their control. The role of the state and other actors, including the non-governmental sector and the private sector, is imperative in bolstering the strategies employed by the poor and in bringing about development outcomes that are in line with the Bill of Rights and progressive legislation.

Helping to bring about and sustain community resilience requires significant reform and renewal in the state. This is to some extent about leadership and state capabilities, but it is also about validating a culture of learning (within the state and with other stakeholders), deliberative and collaborative engagement, and development partnerships. As the President mentioned in his 2014 State of the Nation Address, 'We need to enable our people to play a greater role in development'. Crucially, it's about proactively addressing poverty, inequality, joblessness, socio-political exclusion, precarious living conditions and low levels of human development in a meaningful and sustained manner.

Much more attention needs to be paid to what are often considered soft issues: trauma and woundedness, ethical values, respect and belonging.

As South Africa approaches its fifth national elections this year, let us take stock of how far we have come and remain conscious of the need for sustained renewal and transformation to address the complex development challenges besetting the country.

The Secretariat of the GGLN is hosted by Isandla Institute

Tel: 021 683 7903

Fax: 021 683 7956

Email: ggln@isandla.org.za

www.ggln.org.za

