

# Community Participation in the Management of Development Projects towards Capacity Building

Duncan Village Presidential Projects, East London, South Africa

*Peter K A Gyan*

Town and Regional Planner  
Department of Housing and Local Government  
Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

## Introduction

Development initiatives under the apartheid South African government especially in the black communities have been characterised by a top - down decision making approach which often resulted in the forced imposition of development projects on the communities. Blacks were without any form of mouthpiece in decision-making at all levels of government. The result of such actions was the rejection of these projects by the communities and often led to the vandalisation of the completed projects, which were viewed as edifices of apartheid policies.

In the new dispensation with a democratic government in place however, every effort is being made to ensure that development programmes are driven by the recipient communities through their active participation which should culminate in the capacity building of the communities to maintain and undertake future projects.

In order to fast track the Reconstruction and Development Programme (R.D.P), which has been formulated to drive the government's development projects, Presidential Projects which in themselves comprise packages of projects were identified throughout the country for immediate implementation; one of which is the Duncan Village Presidential Project in East London.

This Paper seeks to give an overview of the Project with a view to assess (a) how community participation has been built into the process, (b) lessons drawn from promoting community participation and (c) measures that could be adopted to entrench community participation in development projects to enhance capacity building.

In this context therefore, it is imperative that the objective and the strategic development approach be clearly outlined to gain an insight into the implementation of this project.

## Objective of the Duncan Village Presidential Project

To initiate, develop and implement an integrated development programme to provide housing and basic services and human resource development in which the community of Duncan Village shall be empowered through their active participation and benefit.

## Background

### The Country

South Africa is located at the southernmost tip of the African continent with an area of 1 219 090 sq. km and a population of 40 583 600 people. 53,7% of the population are considered urban and live in cities and towns. Over 76% of the total population are Blacks. Of the economically active population of 13 785 500, only 4 671 700 (34%) are employed. South Africa is divided into 9 administrative Provinces of which Eastern Cape is one. There are 3 spheres of government, namely National, Provincial and Local.

### The Province

Eastern Cape Province (169 580 km<sup>2</sup>) is the second largest Province in terms of surface area and represents 13,9% of the country. It has a total population of 6 302 600 people representing 15,5% of the country's total. The population is predominantly black (86,4%) and has an unemployment rate of 48%. The major cities are Port Elizabeth, East London, Umtata, King Williams Town (Provincial Capital), Queenstown and Grahamstown.

## The City

East London, with a population of 720 000 is the second largest city after Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape Province. Founded in 1838, the city, which is the only river port in South Africa, was originally established as a supply port to serve the military headquarters in King Williams Town. The city has since grown and developed as an important commercial and tourist centre and ranks as one of the six largest urban areas in South Africa. Given the legacy of apartheid, the residential areas still reflect a character of separate suburbs occupied by distinct predominant racial groups although every conscious effort is being made to break the barriers of racial segregation. Duncan Village is the second largest black suburb after Mdantsane.



Figure 1 Section of City showing Duncan Village in relation to the Central Business District.

## The Project Area

Duncan Village, with a population of 80 000 people is an integral part of the City of East London in South Africa. Located just peripheral to the north-west of the Central Business District, the suburb comprises 50 % of the core city population crammed on 300 hectares of land which comprise only 2 % of the city area. There are 3500 formal dwellings and 14000 informal housing structures commonly referred to as shacks. In certain areas, population densities are in excess of 2500 per hectare and are an entirely black community.

Duncan Village is unique in its position at the core of East London. The area is an 'island' of poverty within the East London Municipal boundaries, and is located a mere 3 km from the city centre. Its redevelopment is therefore seen as fundamental to the transformation of the apartheid social, economic and spatial relationships currently evident in the city as a whole.

## Administration

Like all black townships in South Africa, Duncan Village has suffered from years of administrative and institutional

neglect throughout the years of apartheid domination. The residents have had a long and active history of resistance to the apartheid policies of the recent past. Community organisations first successfully fought the forced removal of the entire community to the then newly established Mdantsane Township which had been developed as a black dormitory settlement for East London within the black "Homeland" area of Ciskei. They then destroyed the illegitimate Black Local Authority system forced upon them, and finally organised themselves to campaign for the upliftment of their lives and community.

Today, Duncan Village has achieved its legitimate status and is now a fully-fledged part of the East London Local Authority, the Transitional Local Council.

## Land Tenure and Accessibility

Basically, three forms of tenure exist.

- Freehold: Where individuals have full title to their properties.
- Deed of Grant: Where individuals have limited rights to their properties but are not registered in their names but rather the State.

Local Authority: This relates to land registered as Council-owned. Much of this land has since been taken over by people for the development of shacks.

## Housing Situation

Over 80 % of the population live in horrific housing conditions. The provision of government housing was stalled and discontinued with the implementation of the "forced removal" policy of the late 1960s through to the early 1980's. The result is the emergence of a largely dominated shack township characterised by very high residential densities with no formal town planning. The major building materials used to construct these shacks are card boards, wooden boards and planks, plastic, iron and tin sheets. Most of these shacks cover a floor space of less than 12m<sup>2</sup>.



Figure 2 Section of Duncan village with recently constructed low-income houses in the foreground.

## Economic Activity and Employment

Over 80 % of the economically active population remain unemployed. The primary source of employment is in the major industrial areas of the city. Hawking as an informal economic activity is mostly undertaken by women and youth. 97 % of the population live on household incomes of less than R 1500 (USD 250).

## Engineering Services

In areas where they have been installed, they are overburdened and in most instances have collapsed. Very few water tap points are available and there are no toilet facilities in the informal settlement areas. Although vacant sites were planned and serviced prior the 1994 elections, they remain unoccupied. This development was viewed as a measure of political expediency by the then government to attract the support of the community. The project was initiated as a site and service scheme but the community insist that these be linked with the provision of top structures. Electricity is limited to the formal dwellings.

## Accessibility and Road Network

The Douglas Smit Highway is the main artery linking Duncan Village to the city. The most common nodes of transport are walking and taxi buses. Internal road network is restricted to the formal housing area. However, these are rarely maintained and have degenerated in certain areas into solid waste disposal sites. In the informal areas, although attempts have been made to provide some form of access to dwelling units, these are no bigger than walkways.

## Environment

The environment is characterised by a situation of abject neglect and squalor, littered with rubbish and unkempt bushes. There is very limited open space restricted to the bottom of valleys, much of this having been taken up for informal housing development. Storm water management is non-existent with flooding and erosion in the flat and steep areas respectively. The environmental degradation has been compounded by the absence of sanitation in the squatter area.

## Safety and Security

Owing to the high rate of unemployment, acute poverty, insecurity and neglect, the crime within the local context is rather high. Given the rather limited facilities in place to combat crime, community-policing forums have been established to assist the law enforcement agencies.

## Social Services

Health clinics are few and unable to meet even basic health requirements. Only five primary schools out of a projected requirement of twenty-five are available and in certain instances the pupil classroom ratio is in excess of 1: 80. A library has just been constructed, but no books are presently available. Sports fields can only be found at the existing schools.

## Institutional

There is a developed community organisational and leadership capacity; established development structures with well established professional support relationships and a general recognition of and willingness on the part of the general community to tackle the immense problems inherent in the area.

# Strategic Development Approach

## Positive Attributes

### Existing Community Development Forums

These have emerged to perform the developmental role which had to date been neglected by previous Local Authorities and has brought together agencies and structures which have hitherto been historically at loggerheads with one another to jointly forge a vision of reintegration into the wider community of East London.

### Newly Established Democratic Local Authority

The post 1994 elections has ushered in a more credible, transparent and representative Local Authority which has brought on board representatives of all communities within the City; on which Duncan Village is represented.

### Active Provincial Government Support

The Provincial Government of the Eastern Cape (within which East London falls) as a second sphere of government has a responsibility to assist and support its Local Authorities to perform their developmental and management roles.

### Central Government Funding Support

The Duncan Village integrated development programme has been identified and prioritised as a Presidential Project and an amount of R140 700 000 has been allocated to the project. It is estimated that a further amount of R480 000 000 could be levered into the programme through public and private sector partnerships.

Presidential Projects have been identified throughout South Africa to provide immediate remedial measures through a package of development projects to

communities that have been subjected to severe neglect and degradation under the apartheid regime.

### **Structured Developmental Guidelines**

The Reconstruction and Development Programme: This is an inclusive process aimed at bringing about societal transformation and advancement to all South Africans through capacitation to gain control over their social, economic and physical environments based on needs and energy resource. It is essentially a human centred development process based on collective, legitimate and inclusive participation. To implement this programme, special funds are set aside on an annual basis and it is from these funds that Presidential Projects are funded.

### **Defining and Identifying the Target Community**

The programme's primary focus is the Duncan Village Community of 80 000 people. The upgrading of bulk services, road links, internal services, schools, health facilities and other community based facilities coupled with residential de-densification and housing provision will be of immense benefit and contribute significantly to the upliftment of the quality of life of the residents.

### **Establishing the Scope of the Programme**

The Duncan Village Presidential Project is an integrated programme for development encompassing all aspects necessary for a holistic life. The programme therefore recognises that while housing, electrification, sanitation etc are all important components of development, it is only through a holistic development approach that sustainable development will be achieved in the development area. The rationale is that any programme, which closes after five years when RDP funding ceases, will be a failure in real developmental terms for it would have failed to achieve sustainability.

### **Establishing an Institutional Framework for Delivery**

This has been modelled around a partnership between state and civil society in decision making on overall policy and direction of the programme. In this regard, a joint venture agreement between the Local Authority and the Community Based Organisations that have since united under the umbrella of the Peoples Forum has been advocated and established.

### **People's Forum**

All organs of civil society have been encouraged to nominate representatives to form the nucleus of the Peoples Forum whose primary function shall be to serve as a conduit for communication; to define the needs and priorities of the community to ensure that the programme builds in the process of community participation, as well as the responsibility within the community for services delivered. It has established sub-committees to consider and make decisions around specific issues.

### **Programme Development Vehicle**

In terms of the RDP delivery approach, the Local Authority shall be the responsible developer. In this context, it shall also have the responsibility to implement and deliver on Presidential Projects.

### **Programme Co-ordination: Steering Committee**

This is a structure with sufficient flexibility and capacity to draw in all the role players and funding agents and guides the overall implementation of the many different projects being carried out by the many different actors.

### **Programme Facilitation Unit**

This is established by the Steering Committee and consists of an appointed Programme Facilitation Manager and members of various task teams with specific functions outlined by the Steering Committee. The task teams are grouped under Finance, Human Resource Development, Technical Support, Community Liaison and Information and Project Liaison and Monitoring.

The various structures would be dealt with at length under the role of Actors.

## **Developing Action Programmes**

This involves a process of synthesising priority needs and translating them into achievable programmes. The Duncan Village Presidential Projects Programme has been generated through a carefully structured needs identification and prioritisation process, which is grassroots driven in the sense that the community identified its own needs and priorities to ensure the legitimacy, acceptability and ownership of the final product.

### **Enhancing Existing Community Based Organisations**

- Develop a community coalition that primarily involves Duncan Village organisations and residents as well as representatives from the national and provincial governments, local authorities, other affected communities, unions, non-governmental organisations, and private sector business and financial institutions.
- Utilise RDP intervention to assist and help focus the East London Local Authority in its approach to project implementation.
- Expand and initiate capacity building programmes for all layers and sectors of community leadership in practical and policy issues concerning development.
- Ensure that marginalised sectors of the community are informed and empowered to participate equally with other sectors of society in the development process.

## Installation and Upgrading of Basic Services

- Provide immediate services upgrading such as indoor plumbing, toilets, electrical connections, increase the frequency of refuse collection, and upgrade of water and sewer lines.
- Assess problems of cost recovery on services provided and negotiate a package agreement between the Local Authority and the Community which will address levels of services, tariff structures, billing systems, and maintenance of such services.

## Housing Provision

- De-densify Duncan Village through the identification of peripheral land for residential development.
- Submit township development plans to the Provincial Housing Board for approval and allocation of once-off housing grants in terms of the National Government's Project linked Housing Subsidy Scheme aimed at assisting first time home owners in the low income brackets.
- Implement housing provision through co-ordination with local, provincial and national line departments to facilitate the provision of the required community facilities.

## Economic Development Framework for Job Creation

- Undertake an economic development analysis and monitoring programme for Duncan Village as the foundation for economic development planning.
- Prepare an economic development programme, which ensures that the needs of women and youth are targeted in all educational and skills development programmes to prepare them for the job market.
- Establish a building resource centre to provide technical assistance and management training towards the production of building materials for use in all development projects.
- Encourage and employ small contractors from the community in all development projects.
- Utilise labour-intensive construction methods to maximise job creation and skills development in the implementation of development projects.
- Develop a scheme to provide financial support for the emerging local entrepreneur to promote small business development.

## Social Services to Address Educational Development and Medical Needs as well as the Special Needs of Women

- Construction of sufficient numbers of educational facilities to meet the needs of the community

- Provide a network of mobile and stationary medical centres and clinics for preventative health care including immunisation ante-natal care as well as the expansion of long term care facilities
- Assist women entry into the work force through the provision of subsidised child care facilities for the poor and unemployed women in the community

## Develop and Upgrade new and existing Access Roads and Linkages to strengthen Duncan Villages integration into the City

- Initiate the immediate construction of a bridge across the Buffalo River in recognition of the eventual development of the West Bank as a residential centre for Duncan Village expansion and to facilitate access to the employment centres located there
- Design and construct a linkage from the Douglas Smith Highway within Duncan Village to the Ziphunzana/Sunnyside intersection
- Initiate the immediate extension of Sunnyside Road to its intersection with the Ziphunzana Bypass.
- Prepare a Transportation Plan to integrate the transportation network of Duncan Village into the City.

Table 1 Funding Allocation for Priority Projects

PROJECT TITLE	BUDGET(Rm)
Land acquisition – West Bank and Haven Hills	4.25
Footbridges over Ziphunzana Bypass	0.90
Duncan Village Access Roads	5.15
Fitchett Access Road	1.90
Sunnyside Access Road	1.60
Bridge over Buffalo River and Access Road	11.90
C – Section Electrical Upgrade	6.00
C – Section roads Upgrade	6.00
West Bank Bulk Water	6.65
Housing Facilitation and Roads Upgrade	14.30
Duncan Village: Water and Sewerage Works	3.00
Toilets Upgrade	2.00
Street Lighting	3.00
Domestic Electrification	2.00
Gompo Hall Upgrade	5.30
Post Offices	0.90
Recreational Grounds	4.05
Old Age Home	6.00
Entrepreneurial Development Centre	0.50
Small Markets	1.30
Materials Production Yard	0.30
Community Gardens	0.90
Refuse Collection	2.00
Garden Nurseries	1.20
Teacher Enrichment Project	1.00
Skills Training	3.10
Small Contractor Training	1.00
Urban Management Training	0.30

PROJECT TITLE	BUDGET(Rm)
Information and mobilisation	0.70
Project Management	3.75
Community housing Fund	5.00
Community Based Organisations	0.75
Tertiary Training Fund	3.00
Cambridge Sewerage and Roads	1.50
Vegetation Control	0.80
Child Care Facilities and Pre-Schools	2.35
Braelyn Primary School	4.00
Haven Hills and Area P Primary Schools	8.00
Haven Hills and Cambridge Secondary Schools	3.00
Braelyn Clinic	0.50
Alphendale Clinic	0.10
Centre for the Marginalised Child And Family Support	3.00
Fire Station	0.75
Library Development	1.50
Police Station	0.20
Cemeteries	0.80
Development Corridor(Link between city centre Mdantsane)	1.50
Project Preparation	1.50

Source: RDP Duncan Village Presidential Project (1994)

## Actors in the Development Process

The Habitat Agenda on “Enablement and Participation” states, “we commit ourselves to the strategy of enabling all key actors in the public, private and community sectors to play an effective role – at the national, state/regional/provincial, metropolitan and local levels – in human settlements and shelter development”.

“An enabling strategy, capacity-building and institutional development should aim at empowering all interested parties, particularly local authorities, the private sector, the co-operative sector, trade unions, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations, to enable them to play an effective role in shelter and human settlements planning and management. Concerted efforts in human resource and leadership development, institutional reform, organisational and management development and continuous training and retooling are necessary at all levels. Governments should accord a high priority to implementing a comprehensive policy for capacity-building” (Habitat Agenda, 1996).

The Duncan Village Presidential Projects programme is underpinned by the need for the co-operation of all parties. The combined efforts of all role-players and stakeholders are considered very critical, as the success of the programme will depend upon effective co-ordination between human, administrative and financial resources. The foundation towards the attainment of a successful development process rests with a well motivated beneficiary community with a developed organisational

and leadership potential; established development structures with professional support relationships; an efficient administrative structure; an overall planning framework for development and, amongst the key role-players a recognition of and willingness to tackle the immense developmental problems facing the community. Given the above scenario, several stakeholders and role-players whose participation is deemed fundamental to the success of the programme have been identified.

## The Beneficiary or Target Community

All residents are deemed to have individual as well as collective interests in the programme and are encouraged to attend meetings of local development forums organised by community based organisations to ensure that their developmental needs are accommodated.

## Community Based Organisations and Local Development Forums

Local organisations are seen as the development mouthpiece of the communities they represent and are responsible for the articulation of their community’s needs and priorities for transmission and representation at the broader Peoples Forum, as well as providing feedback to their communities on decisions arrived at. They act as a conduit between the communities and the broader Forum.

## Community Development Forum or People’s Forum

All organisations of civil society that exist in Duncan Village or from communities who are directly affected and will benefit by the Presidential Projects Programme are encouraged to send representations to a broader Community or Peoples Forum

The following broad criteria for participation has been adopted to ensure as wide participation as possible:

- Organisations that exist and are active in Duncan Village or areas which will be directly affected by the programme, and can exhibit their interest in the programme
- Organisations that exist within the municipal boundaries of East London and represent the interests of members of the community in any way.
- The main organised bodies comprise the branches of the South African National Civic Organisation, major political parties with constituents in the community, the church and other credible organisations in Duncan Village as well as external organisations whose activities impact on the community.

The primary functions of the Forum are to:

- Receive reports and information on the progress of the programme and the different projects
- Discuss and make recommendations on policy issues, development priorities and programme progress to the Steering Committee

- Nominate representatives to represent the interests of the community on the Steering Committee
- Provide a platform for all local development forums to express ideas and opinions to be addressed by the Steering Committee
- Report back to their constituents on Steering Committee decisions for direction

Under the Forum, sub-committees on sectoral areas notably housing, education and skills development, health, social welfare, sports and recreation, business and job creation and employment have been established to interact with the technical and other task teams within the Programme Facilitation Unit and to provide advisory support to the Peoples Forum.

## The Steering Committee

The realisation of real community participation and a sense of co-ownership and responsibility for the ongoing articulation and prioritisation of development and service needs for implementation require a partnership agreement in the form of a Steering Committee whose sole aim shall be to ensure the successful implementation of the programme.

The primary functions of this committee are to:

- Decide on programme priorities and an implementation strategy
- Consider recommendations from the Facilitation Unit and make decisions on matters relating to information and liaison, human resource development, project funding and financial leveraging and on technical related issues
- Establish principles, guidelines and operating procedure for programme and project implementation
- Appointment of a Project Facilitation Manager and Consultants necessary for the overall programme facilitation and implementation
- Ensure overall programme monitoring, reporting and compliance with project business plans including the attainment of key performance indicators.

The committee has the following composition:

Local Authority	10
Peoples Forum	10
Provincial Government	2
Private Sector	1
N.G.Os	1

An executive committee has been elected to ensure that day to day attendance to decision making and a close working relationship between the Steering Committee and the Project Facilitation Unit is maintained. The Steering Committee meets every fortnight.

## The Project Facilitation Unit

This Unit consists of the Programme Facilitation Manager and members of the various Task Teams. The Manager's role is vital to the success of the overall programme and is related to:

- Reporting and making recommendations to the Steering Committee and implementing decisions arrived at
  - Establishment of Task Teams and responsibility for the management of the work carried out by these teams
  - Liaison with the RDP Unit to ensure compliance with the guidelines
  - Ensuring the implementation of the approved business plans and the realisation of key performance indicators
  - Make recommendations on outsourcing and the appointment of developers to undertake projects
  - Co-ordination of mentor programmes
  - Programming and time management of projects
- To accomplish the above, specific Task Teams have been established.

### Finance Task Team

- Assessment of project budgeting and costing
- Monitoring of funding disbursements and spending
- Sourcing and mobilisation of external funding
- Preparation and submission of regular financial reports

### Human Resources Development Task Team

- Identification of required skills and organisational development needs
- Targeting appropriate education and skills development training programmes for implementation
- Securing agencies and funds to meet training and skills development needs
- Monitoring results and progress of training programmes

### Project Liaison and Monitoring Task Teams

- Monitoring project implementation in terms of RDP guidelines
- Facilitation of liaison between line departments of all spheres of government, private and non-governmental agencies, and between these agencies and the respective RDP and programme structures
- Reporting on the general progress of the programme

### Technical Support Task Team

- Assessment of proposed projects viability and suitability
- Providing policy interpretation and options around housing, land tenure, services and other development issues
- Carrying out additional project documentation preparation
- Ensuring that necessary statutory procedures and planning are undertaken timeously and adhered to
- Co-ordination of programme phasing and meeting Key Performance Indicators

### Community Liaison and Information

- Providing administrative support to the Peoples Forum
- Devising and implementation of a community information dissemination strategy for the beneficiary community
- Ensuring open lines of communication between all actors and interest parties
- Problem identification within the community and providing for conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms

### The Local Authority: East London Transitional Local Authority

The Duncan Village Presidential Projects programme will undoubtedly have an enormous impact on the whole of East London in terms of economic development, physical consolidation of the City as well as the development of both civil society through the enhancement of its development capacity.

The potential to utilise the programme to inject stimuli into the local economy through the maximisation of its multiplier effect is clearly evident. The East London Transitional Local Authority which is the democratically elected local authority has been identified as the developer to undertake the implementation of the programme in partnership with the local Duncan Village community to ensure that the necessary skills are immediately available to expedite implementation. Steering Committee decisions are channelled through the statutory procedures of the Council prior to the implementation of priority projects. The Council is responsible for:

- Giving administrative and technical support to the established structures in the programme

participation

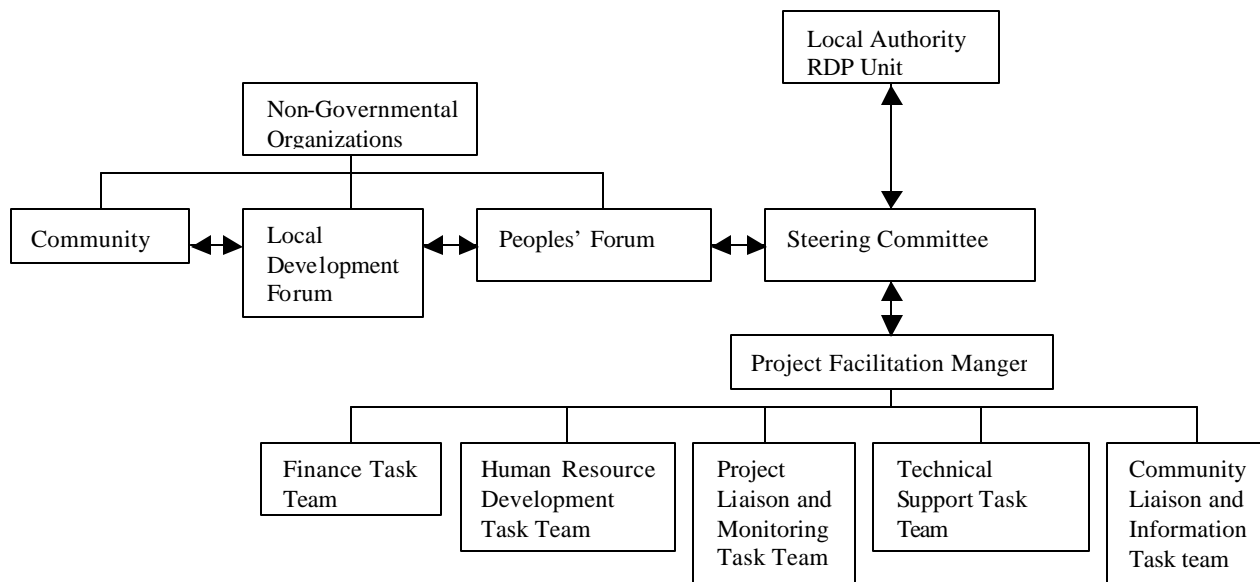
- Providing inputs into the development programme
- Sharing resources and skills towards the empowerment of those for whom the programme primarily targets
- Monitoring the implementation of development projects through the established structures
- Ensuring compliance with agreed tendering procedures and appointment of project implementation agencies
- Facilitating healthy relationships and interaction between all role players and established structure

Figure 3: Projects Implementation Structure

### The Reconstruction and Development Programme (R.D.P) Unit

One of the key RDP requirements linked to the implementation of the Presidential Projects is the establishment a Unit whose responsibility shall be to ensure that RDP guidelines and principles are adhered to from the inception to completion of the programme. The general principles for the implementation of RDP Presidential Projects are as follows:

- Community ownership of the process underpinned by inclusivity and consultation
- Understanding of the RDP by all actors
- Integration and co-ordination of all activities related to the programme
- Consultative decision making
- Appropriate accounting and reporting mechanisms
- Unbiased facilitation
- Mobilisation of community’s own resources prior to request for RDP funding





- Targeting the disadvantaged sector of the community
- Providing for recurrent expenditure
- Capacity building

This Unit is established by the Local Authority and acts closely with the Steering Committee.

### The Provincial Government

As a second sphere of government, the Provincial Government has a responsibility to ensure that the Local Authority is empowered to implement the programme. It therefore has a dual responsibility as a facilitator, technical and funding support provider. Its presence is however primarily limited to serving on the Steering Committee. Officials may however be requested to serve on specific task teams where additional skills are required. Payment for work done is processed and made at the Provincial level through its Treasury.

### The National Government

As the primary donor of RDP funds, the National Government exercises the overall monitoring of the programme through the National RDP co-ordination unit that has close liaison with Provincial and Local RDP units.

### Consultants

Given the limited technical capacity at both the community and Local Authority level to undertake all activities related to the programme, consultants are employed for specific assignments through outsourcing and are responsible to the Programme Facilitation Manager.

### Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

The NGO coalition is represented on the steering committee to ensure their involvement at the highest decision making level. NGOs are playing a pivotal role in facilitation and capacity building and empowerment of community based organisations to take meaningful part in the overall programme.

### The Private Sector

Most of the construction work is undertaken by the private sector with special preference for emerging local small-scale entrepreneurs. Organised private sector is represented on the Steering Committee.

## Programme Implementation

### Evaluation and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Benchmarks have been developed as Key Performance Indicators to enable a systematic assessment of the programme and consist of series of milestones that indicate what is supposed to be achieved at a particular time and its financial implications. These are applied as yardsticks to measure actual work done in relation to the action plan to facilitate a progressive review and monitoring of the implementation programme.

Key targets identified relate to physical development achievements, community empowerment and improvement in the quality of life of the community. KPIs are reviewed at the end of every project implementation phase to ensure that realistic targets are set.

### Time frame

The overall implementation programme is spread over a period of 5 years and start-up dates, phasing and completion periods have been estimated for each prioritised project. To date, a total amount of R 98 200 000 has been expended on the programme, which represents about 70 % of the RDP budget allocated. The delay in the completion of some of the projects is attributed to problems around the processes of participation and consultation.

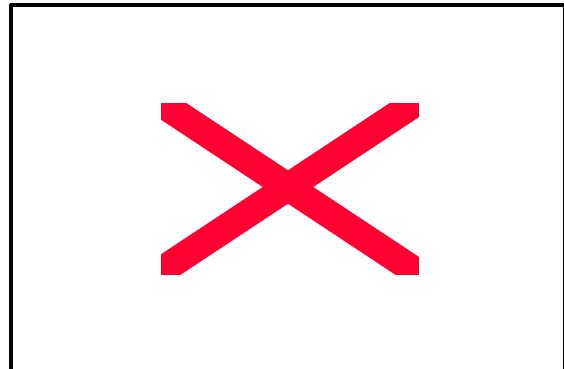


Figure 4 Electricity Upgrade in C-Section, Duncan Village

## Promoting Community Participation: Lessons Learnt

The long-term sustainability of initiating and implementing development projects will depend largely on the extent to which communities become actively involved in the planning, implementation and management of projects. As evidenced from the inception to implementation stage of the Duncan Village, it becomes clear that:

- Community participation allows for a more sensitive planning response to the physical resources and human aspirations of a community since local people know the context better than any outsider.
  - Structured participation and absolute inclusivity results in a well articulated decision making process that is capable of synthesising development needs into tangible and realisable priority projects.
  - Participation expedites the implementation of action plans. People are more often than not either insensitive or unwilling to carry out plans devised by others; regardless of their merits.
  - Community participation deepens democracy as it ensures that communities have a direct say in issues that affect their lives.
  - Participation results in greater commitment to sense of ownership to ensure the maintenance, minimal vandalism and better utilisation of the facilities and services as the community feels it has a stake in the development programme.
  - Community participation has been seen to satisfy a basic emotional need for involvement and it renews self-worthiness and dignity of participants as it enables individuals and communities to have some control over their own destinies.
  - It builds up the collective spirit of a community as it provides the opportunity for people to identify common problems and act in concert to solve them.
- Such leadership structures may be in place but are either not recognised by the community or are not representative of the majority of the residents
  - The de facto control of the community may be in the hands of a civic organisation or youth association which may not be widely representative
  - A self-imposed leader may dominate the community through intrigue or coercion and would forcefully strive to maintain his position through the monopolisation of local resources, especially access to land
  - The community may be plagued with conflict where a number of leadership structures battle for domination and control.

At the beginning of the Project, there was a great sense of uneasiness and anxiety amongst the local forums and the community leaders from the civic and political formations on representation and ownership of the process. This was however diffused through a series of workshops and political interventions to align the interests of all actors in the community.

### **Creating or Raising Expectations**

The involvement of a community in the development programme inevitably raises expectations that are often not achievable or unfulfilled. The result is likely to be frustration, disappointment and perhaps anger. The development programme and further initiatives then stand to lose credibility and future co-operation is less likely to be enthusiastic or forthcoming.

Participation should avoid raising expectations. In this regard, it is important to clearly spell out from the inception, the limitations of the project and avoid rash promises that are way beyond the scope and capacity of the project. Before commencing a project with community participation, ensure that there is commitment to the implementation of the project. Finance for implementation should preferably be budgeted for prior to detailed planning.

A development programme should have manageable objectives and should produce tangible benefits for the community as soon as possible. Focus should initially be on relatively simple but very visible projects, which are likely to succeed since early successes would prepare the way for more adventurous projects later on.

At the inception of the project, all decision-making powers relating to needs and priority definition were vested in the hands of the community. The practical implications of each decision were then assessed with the assistance of the Technical Support Structure to ensure a realistic programme.

It is an acknowledged reality that community participation could be “time-consuming, often nerve wracking and can become a pandora’s box of problems” (Hollnsteiner, 1978).

Nevertheless, the implementation of this project has amply shown that while the above may often be the case, it is however imperative that due cognisance and uncompromising emphasis is placed on participation to ensure the legitimacy and transparency of the process.

It is a democratic principle that it is the prerogative of any community to be given “its right to exercise choice and make mistakes, to explore and experiment, to play a productive part in the development of their living environment” (Muller, 1980).

### **Challenges to Community Participation**

Whilst participation provides an appropriate platform for communities to engage directly and actively in the development process, it is nevertheless imperative to “highlight the difficulties it entail not to discourage but to promote realism and awareness of the problems so that they can be most effectively tackled” (Coombs, 1980).

#### **Lack of Credible and Representative Structures**

The lack of widely representative organisations and democratic leadership could be a major stumbling block preventing effective community participation. In certain instances, there are no clearly established or identifiable forms of organisation or effective leadership. In such instances:

#### **Establishing a Harmonious and Amicable Relationship between Communities and Authority**

Given the history of Duncan Village, initial interaction especially when dealing with government officials was met with scepticism. Officials should be adequately placed to work with communities. Experience from the programme implementation has shown that one of the key aspects in enhancing the participation of communities in

development projects is the attitude of officials. An official with an arrogant and unsympathetic attitude or a well-meaning officer who does not understand the interests, norms and values of a community can have a very negative effect on any project. An officer involved in community development should:

- Be acceptable and trusted by the community
- Know and respect the community
- Have good communication skills and have their interest at heart
- Be reliable
- Move as far as possible, at a pace acceptable to the community
- Recognise the established political or legitimate institutional structures

Suspicion of authority is deeply rooted in several marginalised communities of which Duncan Village is no exception. Forced removals and the arrogant and paternalistic attitude of officials in the past are not easily forgotten. The great challenge is to overcome these suspicions by demonstrating that government is genuinely concerned with the welfare of disadvantaged communities and that they are seen as partners in the development process.

### **Problems of Communication**

This is a very real problem in an environment like Duncan Village where government officials and consultants in the technical arena are still predominantly middle-class whites who are dealing with poor black communities. The most obvious difficulty is the language barrier. However, poor communications also results in suspicion and a limited understanding and appreciation of the values and norms especially of the beneficiary community. This had to be overcome gradually by forging a close working relationship between the technocrats and the community and forum leaders who acted as interpreters.

### **Internal Community Conflicts**

Several forms of conflict may occur notably between the informal areas (shack dwellers) and residents of the formal housing areas particularly regarding the control and ownership of the development process as well individuals over leadership and even amongst local forums as to who serves as the community's mouth piece. In reality, communities could be divided deeply along political, income, gender, tenure, ethnic, age and religious lines, which often frustrates any attempts at community organisation. There is therefore a need for greater sensitivity on the part of those involved in development initiatives regarding the nature and causes of conflict, which may arise due to intervention.

### **Limited Capacity of a Community to become involved in the Development Programme**

It is possible that an emphasis on participation may overwhelm the organisational capacity of a community as people with limited formal managerial skills are drawn into the decision making process. Care should be taken of equating formal learning with knowledge, but note should be taken of the need for certain skills within the

community if the development process is to be self-sustaining. Such skills may include the management of funds, conduction of meetings, monitoring of projects and maintenance of development projects. It must be emphasised that there is no point in pushing for community control of development projects without first building local organisational capacity. Skills training must therefore be a key component of any community based development programme.

### **Length of Time Required to Ensure Participation**

This should be a very practical consideration. Community participation involves considerable time and effort, and is often frustrating. In the long term, it may be a time-saver as communities will be more inclined to accept the end product and be committed to its implementation; but the short-term difficulties remain a reality. Flexibility to accommodate additional time required for participation should be built into the participation programme bearing in mind escalation costs especially at the implementation stage.

### **Institutional Framework for Delivery: Where does the ultimate decision making rest?**

The Duncan Village programme implementation experience has clearly shown that it is of utmost importance to derive an acceptable institutional arrangement with the different role players having clearly defined functions, reporting and feedback mechanisms depicted in an organisational chart. This is very essential to avoid conflict of interests relating to decision-making powers. In this instance, the Council was from the outset identified as the developer in a joint venture with the Community, hence the establishment of the Steering Committee with equal membership from both Council and the Community.

### **Avoiding the Entrenched Domination of Professional Support Structures**

Participation should serve to empower communities rather than entrench dependency. In this regard, Bunch (1983) wrote, "All of us working in development must remember that our job is not to become heroes, but to make heroes out of the people with whom we are working". Bunch further argues that professionals should learn to phase themselves out and that the main purpose of each activity apart from its own results is that the community learns to handle it they themselves.

## **Recommendations**

A key objective of this Programme is to ensure the maximum community participation as a means to build the capacity of the community to take their development destiny in their own hands as is enshrined in the Reconstruction and Development guidelines.

A participatory process should always be viewed as a learning process. A blue print approach to community participation towards empowerment is not feasible since a once-and-for all fixed reference document on

participation simply cannot be produced. Actors should always take into account the dynamics of the social, economic and political environment in which they operate. This requires a high level of flexibility, tolerance and accommodation coupled with the willingness to constantly review and adjust programmes. Technocrats and community workers must have the capacity for rapid and creative adaptation in the field.

Participation should be broad based and requires constant liaison with all groups without alienating any constituency. Various factions should be persuaded to view development as matter of common concern, which transcends political, religious, ethnic and all other sectional interests. Good neighbourliness and cordial relationships should be fostered and built between all actors. In certain instances, formal "social contracts or development protocols" may be appropriate to ensure responsibility and commitment of all parties in the development process.

The long-term sustainability of any integrated development will depend largely on the extent to which communities become actively involved in the planning, implementation and management of development programmes. Community participation will allow for a more sensitive planning response to the physical resources and human aspirations of a community since local people know and understand the context better than any other.

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