



*CAPACITY BUILDING FOR WARD COMMITTEES IN KWAZULU-NATAL*

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## Introduction

This report covers the workshops that had been implemented from May 2005 to November 2005 as well as the mid-term evaluation. The report states the impact that these workshops had, including issues and observations; the findings of the evaluation process and the gaps identified during the process.

## The Project

The project started in September 2004 by conducting a training of the trainer workshop for 15 DDP Volunteers to become community facilitators. 3 District Municipalities (Zululand, Umgungundlovu and Uthungulu) were identified within which DDP would implement the project. It was initially agreed that 40 workshop would be conducted by the end of November 2005. Despite the challenges that we encountered during the process, we are pleased to report that the project was completed on time. Though eThekweni Municipality was not part of the targeted municipality, DDP identified the need to intervene in KwaMakhutha Township due to problems regarding poor service delivery, poor leadership and lack of public participation. This workshop enabled local communities to collectively identify their challenge. By the end of the workshop they had developed an implementation plan that will assist them to fulfil their developmental objectives.

The following are the municipalities that were reached by the programme throughout the three District municipalities by end of October 2005.

Uthungulu District Municipality	Zululand District Municipality	eThekweni District Municipality	Umgungundlovu District Municipality
Ntambanana LM Umlalazi LM Mbonambi LM Umhlathuze LM Mthonjaneni LM	eDumbe LM Abaqulusi LM Pongolo LM	KwaMakhutha Township	Umngeni LM Richmond LM Mkhambathini LM

### Methodology and Approach

The workshops were highly interactive workshops. They were based on experimental learning where delegates had the opportunity to interact with each other, share experiences and come out with practical solutions. Two main approaches are being used during these workshops:

*Role-plays:* This was probably the most effective and interesting exercise of each workshop. The participants had the opportunity to express their feelings on what happens in real life, regarding their roles and functions as well as co-operation, causes of conflict and means of resolving them.

*Plenary Discussions:* During the plenary discussions the participants would get the chance to express their views. Although these views often caused negative feelings in other participants (e.g. ward committee members would accuse councillors openly, and councillors would personalise the issues), such discussions opened the platform to resolve issues.



### Content of Workshop

1. Transformation in South Africa focusing on local government. This module helped participants to understand:

- Why transformation was necessary
- Cooperative governance
- Developmental local government
- Approaches to service delivery

2. Community participation and legislative framework promoting community participation. This topic brought out some debates with focus on the specific issues such as:

- Election and representation of the ward committees
- Election sub-committees if too vast
- Councillors as chairperson and ward councillors at the same time compromising performance of ward committee
- Reporting back mechanisms
- Promotion of political agenda during the ward committee meetings

3. National Guideline / Guidelines for ward committees in KwaZulu-Natal including election procedures, duties and responsibilities of ward committees.

4. Code of Conduct of committees and councillors

5. Community participation through the Integrated Development Plan (IDP)

- Role of the communities and interest groups
- Key participatory areas
- Collective identification of needs
- Involvement of local communities in municipal projects
- Monitoring of IDP projects

6. Community participation in the budgeting process

- same approach as above (IDP)
- Identification of opportunities for communities to participate in matters of local governance

During the training process we added a bit about voter education, especially during the IDP and budgeting process. Participants were encouraged to spread the word out there about the importance of voting.

### Workshops Completed

38 workshops had been completed in 12 Local Municipalities completed between October 2004 and November 2005. The project succeeded in reaching 1302 people in these municipalities. In addition, 12 people received training at the Training of the Trainer workshop to become facilitators. 34 participants people took part in the evaluation workshop in November.

Municipality	Uthungulu District Municipality	Zululand District Municipality	Umgungundlovu District Municipality	eThekwini District Municipality	TOTAL
No of LM	5	3	3	1	12
No of Workshops	18	10	9	1	38
Total No. of Participants	633	360	261	48	1302

Other Activities	Train of the Trainer	Evaluation Workshop
No of Workshops	1	1
No. of Participants	12	34 (+6 in Planning for Workshop)

### Stakeholder representation

The representation varied per municipality. Some municipalities had all the sectors represented equally whilst in other municipalities there would be biasness towards specific sectors. It is especially in rural and conservative areas that one would find an unbalanced representation. Although there would be more elderly men and women present, men would still dominate the workshop.

Stakeholders	Percentage
Ward committees	60%
Ward councillors	2%
Traditional leaders	4%
Council officials	6%
Women	15%
Youth	16%
Physically challenged	3%
NGOs, CBOs etc.	4%



## Workshop evaluation

During the planning of this project, great emphasis was placed on the evaluation component to ensure that we received meaningful feedback that would feed constructively into our learning for any future action. 2 approaches were used to ensure this:

- Assessing the immediate impact
- 3 day evaluation-intervention by the DDP Ward Committee Team.

### Immediate Impact Assessment

In order to assess the immediate impact of the workshop, participants were asked to fill in an evaluation form or, for those who cannot read/write, to give verbal feedback. Also, facilitators and participants would sit together after each workshop and assess the day. By doing so, we are able to assess the performance of the facilitators and the immediate impact the workshop had on the participants on a daily basis. The following feedback was received through this assessment:

#### Positive

- Participants felt more empowered
- Increased understanding of the municipality and legislation that promotes community participation
- Increased understanding about good qualities of leadership and human rights
- Encouragement of active citizenship: Several participants intended to stand as candidates in the upcoming local government elections
- Promotion of a better working relationship between ward councillors and ward committee members.

- Traditional leaders attained felt better understanding of their role in promoting community participation
- By bringing different stakeholders together participants obtained a clearer understanding of each others roles as well as of potential conflict areas

#### Negative

- In some municipalities the workshop created tensions between ward councillors and committee members. As community members became more empowered they started challenging the municipality and were perceived as a threat by the ward councillors
- Participants felt that they needed more time at these workshops to engage more deeply with some of their concerns
- The workshops did not reach everyone concerned; in some areas not all the members attended these workshops

#### Challenges

A by-product of this assessment has been the surfacing of challenges that ward committees experience. Some of those issues have impacted on the training workshop. These can be divided into political, socio-economic and cultural issues.

It emerged that in the areas where the majority of ward committee members openly belong to a particular political camp, the ward committee meetings were often nothing more than political party gatherings. The feeling from the delegates was that this should be prevented as it affected the developmental role expected to be performed by ward committees:

- The political environment contributed negatively in the operation of the ward committees. Some ward committees were expected to push the political agenda.
- Service Delivery was easier in areas where ward committee members belonged to the same political party.
- Instances had been reported where people had to produce a political membership card in order to receive low cost houses.

#### Mid-Term Evaluation Workshop

As per our original project plan a mid term evaluation workshop was held from the 9-11 November 2005, to monitor and evaluate the progress of the project. DDP felt that this evaluation process had to contribute significantly to our understanding of the context in which we were working. It was to enable us to widen and to intensify our impact.

In order to have a representative sample, a sample frame of 3 participants per municipality was randomly selected from the database. The important aspect in our sampling required that we had to ensure that different stakeholders are represented: Councillors, Ward Committee Members and Municipal Officials. In some instances, those that were selected had other engagements and the opportunity was given to the municipalities to select appropriate participants who have been part of our intervention.



The evaluation team consisted of five DDP programme staff and four volunteers who assisted with the facilitation of the workshops. Our objectives centred around what DDP could do to ensure that the needs of the ward committees were met. The evaluation exercises focused on the:

- Assessment of the impact of the project
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency

In the evaluation of the above it was important that we look objectively and critically by designing questions focusing on the various aspects that we felt were important for the ward committee project.

The following were identified as the critical aspects for our evaluation process:

- Project objectives as articulated in the project proposal
- Socio-political context of KwaZulu-Natal especially with emphasis on the 3 districts (Zululand, uThungulu and uMgungundlovu)
- Training materials used in the workshops
- Field facilitation teams
- Approach and methodology adopted by the training team
- Administration and Logistical processes

To elicit this information, the evaluation process used innovative and creative techniques that would encourage active participation at all levels. Our aim was to listen and record and allow the participants to lead the process. The questions and instructions were in simple isiZulu and English to enable our participants to understand clearly the processes.

The following techniques were used:

1. Leading Images (Divided in Municipalities)
2. Group Discussions (divided in Sectors)
3. Buzz Groups
4. Individual Questions
5. One on One Interview

### The Leading Image

Participants were grouped according to their municipalities to draw a leading image. The images informed the structure of the municipality at the present moment and their vision for the future. This methodology was used to put into context the current reality in the different municipalities in terms of public participation, service delivery and development. Having done the current reality, participants were also required to present a future reality that they would like to see in terms the same aspects and give explanations. Participants were then asked to give explanation of their drawings to other participants through gallery walks.



### Group Discussions

This approach requested participants to form groups according to their position and not municipality. As our project objectives were impact driven, it was important that they would be tested in terms of achievability in the training. The following below are the question asked with some of the replies:

- I. Did the programme or intervention help increase your knowledge and understanding of how the municipality works?
  - Municipalities are guided by IDP which is formulated by the needs of the community. It has broadened our understanding in the Budget process. Improved communications with ward councillors.
  
- II. Did the programme or intervention help promote cooperation between the Municipalities and communities?
  - DDP training improves the understanding of the Municipal acts through ward committee and in turn better cooperation between Municipality and Community, e.g. Municipal Systems and Structures Act.
  
- III. Did the programme or intervention help promote good governance which include among other things transparency, openness, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability?
  - It has been able to promote good governance and accountability however a lot still need to be done in as far as transparency, efficiency, openness, effectiveness is concern.
  
- IV. Did the programme or intervention help improve personal competence such as communication and leadership skills?
  - DDP Training has improved our leadership abilities as ward committees and made us realize the important role we should play between the community and Municipality.

### Buzz Groups

The participants were asked to work in pairs and share their understanding of public participation. Whilst the participants were discussing, the DDP facilitation team noted the following responses:

6. Attending community meetings
7. Participating in the planning and the implementation of different community projects
8. Constant communication and programme report back
9. Participating in the IDP, budget process and review

### Individual Questions

The participants were requested to respond to three questions as individuals and the response was expected to reflect the following:

- Skills acquired by participants on receiving the training
- Knowledge received
- Attitude change towards one another

The common responses were:

- Knowledge on solving problems, conducting meetings
- Knowledge and understanding of how the municipality works and the roles of different stakeholders
- Understanding of community participation
- Skills to manage time and communication skills
- Skills to be a liaison between the community and the council
- Attitude change towards the municipality and the ward councillor
- Understanding the process involved in the IDP changed attitude towards the municipality

Participants were then given different colour papers to respond to 3 questions and to be as honest as they possible can.

I. Changes the ward committee workshop brought about in my municipality:

- Municipal officials have begun to realize the importance of ward committees
- Community is participating effectively in the municipality activities, i.e. open meetings, public meetings etc.
- Municipality adopted the policy to serve as a community participatory type
- Wards that did not have ward committee members called the elections and the existing ward committee members started to hold meetings in their particular wards
- Attitude of ward councillors has changed towards ward committee

II. Limitations of the programme:

- Because some municipalities had too many wards and because of the vastness of wards, some stakeholders did not receive the training
- The duration of the training is too short and even though the training is done in isiZulu the material is written in English
- Ward committees were empowered but left out the ward councillors. Empowered members became a threat to the chairpersons. Because of that DDP is seen as taking sides
- The intervention came very late almost at the end of the term of office for both ward councillors and committees
- Lack of monitoring from the side of DDP

III. The way forward:

- The workshops should include everyone including the community at large as well as the traditional leadership
- DDP should try and get more funds to continue with the trainings
- Duration of the workshops should be extended and the certificates should be accredited, so that the participants should get credit and are therefore encouraged to study further
- Workshops should be done immediately after the elections
- DDP should include the business management skills in these training workshops (business plans and project proposals)
- DDP should get the officials trained to ensure continuity as DDP depends highly on grants for financial support

- Ensure the involvement of municipal officials including the Municipal Manager

### One on One Interview

Below are the responses that came out of the one on one interview.

*“As a ward committee member DDP workshops have broaden my understanding about the legislative framework of local government. Now I can communicate well with different stakeholders from my municipality without any fear. Previously, in my ward there were lot of problems including that our ward council was really not accountable to the structure and also to the community. It was after the DDP workshop where the council realized the as members of the structure we mean business. From then we’ve been part and parcel of some of the municipality meeting. Thanks to DDP!”*

*“DDP intervention has assisted me to understand the role of ward committees and the role of other stakeholders. Through DDP workshop I have been entrusted by the community members to stand for the incoming local government elections as a ward council. Now I can engage in discussions about the IDP, budgeting process, role of the community, to name just a few. I hope DDP will assist to bring back the status of ward committees since we’ve been rendered incompetent by the local people and by the media.”*