

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The findings, summary and recommendations relating to the aims and objectives of the study, are presented in this chapter. The main purpose of the study was to find out the perceptions of residents in terms of water supply and sanitation in their area. The focus of this chapter is to give an overview of how the aim and objectives of this study have been realised. The study also focuses on the response of the municipality personnel on the issue of water supply and sanitation in Boiketlong informal settlement. Learners, as part of the broader community of Boiketlong, were interviewed, and their perceptions illuminated some of the experiences of the residents of informal settlements in general. Findings from these experiences are also captured in this chapter.

5.2 Summary

A summary of each chapter is provided in the sections that follow.

5.2.1 Orientation and problem statement

In Chapter 1, the focus of the discussion was on the fact that the local government has a constitutional obligation to provide basic services to all residents in the area under its jurisdiction. The research focused on the mushrooming of informal settlements, due to rapid urbanisation and population growth. The uncontrolled increase in population has resulted in unending challenges to municipalities in the country, in terms of service delivery, water supply and sanitation – the focus services for the study.

The background of the study was discussed in Chapter 1, wherein it was indicated that the current state of affairs, in terms of water supply and sanitation, has resulted in loss of trust on the part of residents toward the local government. The unfulfilled promises and unattended grievances are evidenced by the spate of ever-increasing public protests in most of the informal settlements.

5.2.2 Legal framework

Chapter 2 focused on the legislation around the local government's role, in terms of service delivery. The discussion of the chapter is on local government governance with regard to water supply and sanitation. The water legislation, the relevant Acts, and the White Paper on the roles and functions of local government, were outlined and discussed. Elimelech and Montgomery (2007:18) remark that the establishment of legal frameworks in local government will ensure that all people will enjoy full access to water supply and sanitation. The following pieces of legislation, and policy frameworks, were discussed:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996;
- White Paper on Local Government, 1998;
- Local Government Municipal Demarcations Act, 27 of 1998;
- Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998;
- Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000,
- National Water Act, 36 of 1998,
- Water Services Act, 108 of 1997; and
- White Paper on Basic Household Sanitation (DWAF, 2001).

The legislation and other important policies discussed serve as a guide for the three spheres of government, to ensure that residents are provided with basic services such as water and sanitation, as their constitutional right. The water supply and sanitation are still a challenge at Boiketlong informal settlement, although one can also note the efforts of ELM to install 26 taps at the informal settlement. Before the installation of taps at Phase 2 of Boiketlong, Metsi-a-Lekoa water utility provided the residents of Phase 2 with water from a water truck. The slab toilets were rejected, after only the first four were delivered to the area.

The local government must review by-laws which address issues of water supply and sanitation, and must ensure that they are reasonable to all residents within its jurisdiction. Proper implementation of legislation and by-laws will enable the three spheres of government to ensure that all citizens in this country enjoy their constitutional rights in terms of service delivery.

5.2.3 Strategies and procedures for water supply and sanitation

Chapter 3 focused on strategies and procedures which the Boiketlong residents employed, in terms of water supply and sanitation in their area. The sentence deleted. Rejection of the prepaid meter taps and the slab toilets created a serious challenge for the local government in fulfilling its constitutional obligation in terms of water supply and sanitation. The study analyses the strategies employed by residents to access water, and the availability of sanitation facilities in the area.

The challenges of the municipality, in terms of providing quality water and sanitation services, and the perceptions of the residents with regard to water supply and sanitation in their area, are addressed in Chapter 4. The strategies which residents felt could address their challenges and plight, in terms of water supply and sanitation, were part of the discussion in Chapter 4.

5.2.4 Residents' perceptions on water supply, sanitation and improvement of service delivery

Chapter 4 dealt with the perceptions of residents with regard to water supply and sanitation in their area. The findings were drawn from the perspective of residents in general, schoolchildren, a focus group of parents, and the water vendor. Their views in terms of the relationship with the ward councillor and the municipality authorities, were discussed. Their views on how water supply and sanitation could be improved upon, were also presented.

5.3 Findings

The findings of the researcher, from the study, are outlined as follows:

It was revealed that 68% of people responsible for fetching water, were female respondents, and further, that a higher percentage of people fetching water for households comprised 23% girls between the ages of 11 and 20, while male residents fetching water comprised 15%. It was apparent that these were schoolchildren, who fetched water for their families. Thirty-one percent (31%) of respondents were unmarried, while only 23% were married. The situation reflects the fact some residents came to the area to be closer to their employment areas. In terms of household size, the findings were that 42% of respondents ranged between 4 and 7 occupants per household. The highest number of occupants in a

household amounted to 11 occupants or more (8%). In most cases, these were extended families staying together, or foreign nationals sharing accommodation.

Most of the residents of Boiketlong informal settlement were from the rural areas. The study revealed that 73% of the research population were from the rural areas. Erasmus and Nkai (2009:28) assert that many people are still moving to urban areas, due to the perceived superior levels of income and employment and other opportunities. Significant movement into areas with declining or non-existent economies are taking place, particularly in small towns and peri-urban areas (Erasmus & Nkai, 2009:28). It is no surprise that some residents who were tenants in formal townships, moved to the informal settlement for various reasons. According to the findings of the study, 72% of the research population confirmed the indigent status of the residents of the study area.

The findings, in terms of water supply, revealed that residents were content with water supply, particularly in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the study area. Their contentment emanated from the fact that water was never cut off in their area; however, frustration was reflected in terms of distances travelled to collect water. Some women and girls still carried buckets on their heads. The issue of queueing at the communal water tap points during peak hours, was still a challenge. The interesting thing about water supply is that men and boys did collect water, although they used wheelbarrows, grocery trolleys and self-made water trolleys. Water vendors sold water to desperate people from Phase 3, as well as to some people with physical challenges in Phase 2.

The findings on sanitation were extremely poor, in that 100% of the community members indicated that they still used pit latrines, while some residents did not have sanitation facilities at all. Good practice involved residents having knowledge of controlling the stench through the use of coal ash or Jeyes Fluid. Some residents shared pit latrines. Those who could not construct their own pit latrines, paid between R100 and R150 to those who had skills to construct them. It was also found that some residents brewed traditional beer, and requested the services of individuals who did have such skills, to help them with the construction of pit latrines, and they enjoyed home-brewed beer afterwards as some form of reward.

The other findings were based on the relationship between the community and their community leaders and the municipality authorities. The main concern in this regard was the empty promises and the unattended complaints, on the part of the political leadership in

the area. The community had lost its trust in the community leadership and ELM, and the result was a violent protest which cost the ward councillor her shack and two cars. The situation was not normal, in that the councillor no longer moved freely in the area. The general feeling of residents was that they were being compromised, as none of what they had been promised, had materialised to date, and they received scanty information about water supply and sanitation improvements for their area.

Lastly, the residents need a functional ward committee, comprising residents, irrespective of their political affiliations. They believe in community leadership that will listen to them, have proper discussions with them and report on any challenge or achievement made, with without hiding anything. The general view of the community is that there is no transparency from either the councillor's side, or from ELM. They believe that their need for housing, water supply and sanitation could have long been resolved, had there been a functional ward committee in Boiketlong.

5.4 Recommendations

The recommendations, based on the above listed findings, are as follows:

5.4.1 The need for partnership between stakeholders

The local municipality should create partnerships with other stakeholders, to address service delivery challenges in the area. The issue of water supply and sanitation should be a stakeholder-driven process by the three spheres of government, the NGO, CBOs and private business. The partnership will help the Municipality or other organisations to provide appropriate skills, mentorship and ongoing support. Largadien and Cousins (2004:9) argue that capacity building and support aim at building local roles that are responsible for operation and maintenance functions. The water supply and sanitation projects in the area will benefit the local community in that they will be part of the project.

5.4.2 Health and water management education

It is imperative for the local municipality to develop programmes which will educate residents of informal settlements in proper hygienic behaviour and the proper use of water. The ELM, in partnership with the departments of Health and Education, should promote health and water management to learners and the community at large. There has been substantial progress made on water, although little has been done to address the sanitation problem of every household and to promote health and hygiene awareness (WSP, 2002:7). The issue of water management should be aimed at sensitising the community about using

water sparingly, and repairing or reporting leakages. The other important point regarding water is that civil society needs to be educated about the fact that South Africa is a water-scarce country.

5.4.3 Ward committees revival

The existence of ward committees should be enforced in informal settlements. In terms of section 59 of the Municipal Systems Act, the ward committee has duties and powers delegated to it by the municipality. It is the duty of the ward committee to create communication channels, as well as co-operative partnerships, between the community and the council. A functional and effective ward committee should ensure that the following take place:

- Advise and make recommendations to the ward councillor on policy matters that affect the ward;
- Assist the ward councillor in identifying conditions, challenges and needs of residents;
- Spread information, in the ward, concerning municipal affairs such as budget, integrated development planning, and service delivery options;
- Receive queries and complaints from residents concerning service delivery, communicate these to the relevant structure, and provide feedback to the community on responses received; and
- Ensure constructive and harmonious interaction between the municipality and the community, through ward residents meetings and other community development forums (DPLG, 2005:7).

It is hoped that the close monitoring by, and support from, municipalities, regarding the functionality of ward committees, will curb the high level of service delivery protests in most municipalities in South Africa.

5.4.4 Community partnership

The municipality is expected to work with the people they serve, so that they can understand their needs and aspirations. This exercise will assist in identifying community capacities and skills, in order to involve them in development projects in their area. Further to this, the partnership will promote CBO's participation in community development projects, which will create employment opportunities within the informal settlement. The partnership will help the municipality or other organisations to provide appropriate skills, mentorship and

ongoing support. Largadien and Cousins (2004:9) argue that this capacity building and support aims at building on local roles that are responsible for operation and maintenance functions. The water supply and sanitation projects in the area will benefit the local community, in that they will be part of any development initiatives in their area of residence.

5.4.5 Capacitating the employees

The local municipalities should capacitate their employees to deal with issues of informal settlements, in an efficient and effective manner. Repairs to existing infrastructure, collection of refuse, and provision of health care and education to residents on an ongoing basis, are critical to informal settlement livelihood. This process should be in line with "Batho Pele" principles, which ensure that the municipal staff members are well equipped to serve the community in an effective and efficient manner. ELM employees should also be developed in terms of establishing good human relations with residents, such that the residents also form part of the decision making on all matters concerning development of their existing infrastructure.

5.4.6 Community participation

Community participation allows the residents to be part of development plans and decisions taken about matters related to their residential area. According to Williams (2006:1), community participation is the direct involvement of ordinary people in the affairs of planning, governance and overall development programmes at local or grassroots level. Residents of Boiketlong informal settlement complained that involvement, in their area, in respect of community projects, favours individuals according to their political affiliation. They mentioned that only ANC members were allowed to participate in community projects in the area. Williams (2006:3) further remarked that the process of community participation was a problematic engagement of power relations, and it remained the duty of local government to ensure that whatever conflicts hindered fair community participation, were dealt with in the spirit of development for all.

The established community-based organisations (CBOs) should promote community participation, and ensure that residents receive information related to community matters that are aimed at improving water supply and sanitation, as well as development projects within their area. It is hoped that community participation will generate trust between residents and the local authority (ELM). Community participation and transparency, in terms

of developmental projects affecting the residents, would reduce the chances of unnecessary service delivery protests in informal settlements.

5.4.7 The installation of movable chemical toilets

Zone 20 Extension 2 is an informal settlement within ELM, and the sanitation facilities used in this area are chemical portable toilets provided by Moreki Distributors. According to Lubile (MOA, P. Lubile 30.04.2014), these chemical toilets have been contracted by the Department of Human Settlement to offer sanitation services in the informal settlement. The chemical portable toilet structure they use is made of plastic, and it has a 220 litre bucket capacity. The chemical used is an anti-bacterial chemical solution which disintegrates human waste to becoming more liquid (MOA, P. Lubile 30.04.2014). The chemical kills the odour of the excreta.

In terms of collection of human waste, the respondent indicated that the collection of waste depended on the number of households using the portable toilet. Under normal circumstances, the collection happened once a week where a toilet was being used by two households, and they used local residents as their cleaning crew (MOA, P. Lubile 30.04.2014). The respondent further indicated that these types of toilets were less expensive, compared to other types of chemical portable toilets such as the flushing portable toilets and the mobile VIP toilets (MOA, P. Lubile 30.04.2014).



**Illustration 1: The front view of a chemical portable toilet at Zone 20 Extension 2.
(Photograph: CT Musa).**

The manner in which the toilets are emptied, the low cost of the toilets, the chemical which kills the odour and disintegrates the excreta, and the opportunity for jobs for some members of the community, is an advantage to using this type of sanitation facility for informal settlements. Another advantage to the chemical portable toilets is that it is easy to move them from one place to another. The sanitation challenge in the informal settlement within ELM can be solved by using either the new chemical portable toilets, or the toilets which were used by the community of the newly built RDP houses.



Illustration 2: The back view of a chemical portable toilet at Zone 20 Extension 2. (Photograph: CT Musa).



Illustration 3: The researcher showing the height of the chemical portable toilet. (Photograph: PL Radebe).



Illustration 4: The interior of the chemical portable toilet used at the informal settlement. (Photograph: CT Musa).

Illustration 3 indicates a conventional VIP toilet used in Zone 20 Extension 2. The VIP toilets used in Zone 20 Extension 2 accommodate adult residents of all heights. These are the type of sanitation facilities which are more suitable, and much cheaper, for replacing pit latrines at Boiketlong informal settlement.

According to Mayathula, (MOA, V. Mayathula 23.05.2014), some of the residents of Zone 20 Extension 2 use their own toilet paper when they go to the toilet. Mayathula further indicated that the residents are also responsible for cleaning their own toilets, although some households seem not to care much about their sanitation facility. Due to the high unemployment level in the area, many people use newspaper as sanitary paper (MOA, V. Mayathula 23.05.2014). According to Faku (MOA, S. Faku 23.05.2014), the toilet which appears in illustration 4 in the text is used by four households. They do sometimes clean the toilet, but the problem is that some users do not care. It is highly important for the supplier of sanitation to emphasise the hygienic side of sanitation.