

### The responses of politicians and officials

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#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the responses of politicians and officials are presented, based on the research findings. The researcher conducted interviews with all the randomly selected respondents from civil society, local officials and local politicians. They were all either local residents, officials, local politicians of the Umzumbe Local Municipality, the EziNqoleni Local Municipality, the Hibiscus Local Municipality and the Ugu District Municipality as the Water Service Authority.

The respondents in all these municipalities had their own perceptions regarding the potable water supply, which, according to some, is in a state of crisis, particularly in the rural wards. The politicians and officials responded to the perceptions that the people of the above areas had with regard to the inequitable supply of potable water.

The responses of the politicians and officials include documents and pictures that were obtained with the permission of the Ugu District Municipality. The documents and pictures substantiate the responses of the said officials and politicians.

The politicians and officials responded to the researcher by stating the following:

**4.2 The African National Congress Regional Secretary** (COA, 27/08/2011 interview 01 Lower South Coast Regional Offices) told the researcher that the ANC is a caring organization. “It is not true that as politicians we only come to communities when it is election time.” He said that the ANC, through the municipalities, had established ward committees, as mandated by the Municipal structures Act and Regulations 1998:51). In each and every ward in this region, the ANC branch is visible. This means, in his opinion, that these structures play an oversight role in communities on service delivery and on the performance of the elected ward councillors.

In his response, he asserted that the ANC in the region monitors the performance of municipalities – thereby ensuring that service delivery is the primary objective of all six local municipalities – as well as the district municipality. With regard to water supply, he explained that Ugu District Municipality is currently faced with a lack of well-trained and experienced process operators, especially in the wastewater section.

The ageing infrastructure needs to be upgraded and replaced. This would include the replacement of old meters. He agreed that the water systems are failing to meet the demand for water, and mentioned the example, of the Phungashe purification plant in Umzumbe Ward 11.

He further explained that the Ugu District Municipality had been receiving unqualified audit reports in regard to some matters. However, the cash-flow position was precarious in the municipality. The current liabilities of the municipality exceeded the current assets. The ANC and Ugu District Municipality were working on a Master plan to remedy this financial challenge because it derails service delivery.

“This means that, as the African National Congress in this region, we are aware that water is not evenly distributed to all the residents and that a water infrastructure upgrade is needed in the Ugu District Municipality.” He further stated that they were working together to ensure that eventually all the residents of this district would get potable water, because this was the mandate of the African National Congress.

**4.3 The Chairperson of the Water Portfolio Committee** at Ugu District Municipality, who is also the Speaker at the Hibiscus Coast Local Municipality (COA, 26/08/2011 interview 02 Hibiscus Cost Municipality offices), told the researcher that it was correct that some of the areas did not have access to potable water, especially in the rural areas.

“This does not mean, however, that Ugu District Municipality does not have any future plan to solve this water challenge; the plan does exist.” According to him, the district municipality budgeted R12 million for the short-term plan to address the water problems in the wards.

“The perception about politicians and officials being corrupt is not correct, because the Ugu District Municipality has internal auditors, and every transaction that takes place in the municipality is eventually evaluated by independent auditors.” Moreover, he added that corruption would remain the perception unless somebody was to come up with tangible evidence to substantiate or to negate these accusations.

**4.4 The Ugu District Mayor** (COA, 26/08/2011 interview 08) told the researcher that, as the new mayor of this municipality, she was “proposing that the private tankers be eradicated and the money be used on the upgrade of the water infrastructure.” She further stated that a number of rural communities did not have potable water. She would make it a priority that the District

Municipality budget prioritised a water-infrastructure upgrade, and supply water to communities that were currently without water.

## 4.5 Responses from officials

**4.5.1 The General Manager, Ugu District Municipality Water Section** (COA, 26/08/2011 interview 03 Ugu Offices) told the researcher that the “Ugu District Municipality has reduced the water and sanitation backlog to less than 30%. This means that 70% of the people in rural areas now have access to clean water from the public standing pipes, and they have basic sanitation in the form of VIP toilets.”

Table 1: Access to water services in the different settlement categories and their population [percentage] spread, *Source: Ugu District Municipality (2011) Sector-wide Infrastructure audit: final Report pp. 18-19.*

| Settlement Category          | Serviced       | Serviced     | Not Serviced | Total No Of People |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|
| RDP                          | Below RDP      |              |              |                    |
| <200m                        | 200m - 800m    |              |              |                    |
| Formal Urban                 | 172,114 (100%) | -            | -            | 172,114            |
| Informal Residential Upgrade | -              | 2,219 (64%)  | 1,257 (36%)  | 3,476              |
| Linked Rural Upgrade         | 68,691 (37%)   | 73,590 (39%) | 44,810 (24%) | 187,091            |
| Good Access Rural Upgrade    | 34,940 (23%)   | 45,553 (30%) | 73,391 (47%) | 153,884            |
| Limited Access Rural Upgrade | 26,993 (33%)   | 24,512 (30%) | 31,256 (37%) | 82,761             |
| Scattered                    | 20,482 (19%)   | 26,692 (24%) | 62,695 (57%) | 109,870            |
| Total                        | 323,222        | 172,566      | 213,410      | 709,197            |

Table 2: Access to water services in the different local municipalities (population) *Source: Ugu District Municipality (2011) Sector-wide Infrastructure audit: Final Report pp. 18-19.*

| Settlement Category         | Serviced      | Serviced     | Not Serviced | Total No Of People |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|
| RDP                         | <RDP          |              |              |                    |
| <200m                       | 200m - 800m   |              |              |                    |
| Ezinqoleni Municipality     | 13,006 (30%)  | 14,215 (32%) | 16,672 (38%) | 43,893             |
| Hibiscus Coast Municipality | 154,399 (62%) | 42,951 (17%) | 52,578 (21%) | 249,928            |
| Umdoni Municipality         | 54,578 (65%)  | 19,643 (23%) | 9,559 (12%)  | 83,780             |
| Umuziwabantu Municipality   | 38,960 (38%)  | 33,105 (33%) | 29,110 (29%) | 101,175            |
| Umzumbe Municipality        | 41,514 (27%)  | 38,917 (25%) | 73,959 (48%) | 154,389            |
| Vulamehlo Municipality      | 20,764 (27%)  | 23,740 (31%) | 31,527 (42%) | 76,032             |
| Total                       | 323,222       | 172,570      | 213,406      | 709,197            |
| Percentage                  | 45.58%        | 24.33%       | 30.09%       | 100.00%            |

The first table indicates access to water services per settlement category. This includes the percentage of people with access to water. The citizens that have access to water in their respective settlement amount to 70%. The citizens that do not have potable water access comprise 30%. The second table clarifies the access to potable water per local municipality. Both tables indicate that Ugu District Municipality has to work hard to accomplish 100% access to water for all its residents.

The general manager of the Ugu District Municipality also informed the researcher: “The Ugu District Municipality has adhered to the South African legislation and government policies including international guidelines, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs), to equitably provide water to all the residents of this municipality’s area of jurisdiction.”

He went on to say that the evidence could be seen in the Ugu District Municipal policies, and by-laws that have been adopted by the council of the Ugu District Municipality Integrated Development Plan Review (IDP) - (2<sup>nd</sup> Draft 2011/2012:58). He added:

“The targets set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to provide all residents of this district with potable water by 2014, will be impossible to meet.” This was because of the limited funding available to meet the target.

He further told the researcher “Ugu District Municipality did have programmes that educate people about water purification.” However, it was only Umzumbe Local Municipality that received this education programme. According to him, the project was not yet fully distributed to all the local municipalities of this district, with the main hindrance to developing this project again being caused by the lack of funding.

He further stated:

- The standing pipes dry up if there is any fault in the system, which has gone undetected. There was a need for a better reporting mechanism between the community and Ugu District Call Centre, which would assist the district municipality in solving its water problems much faster.
- He also told the researcher: “Ugu District Municipality is building a mega-dam at Kwaphungashe in Ward 11 in Umzumbe Municipality.” According to him, this was the future plan that this district municipality had for dealing with the water supply predicament in all the wards that resort under the Umzumbe Local Municipality. He saw this as a permanent solution to their potable water supply problems.
- The General Manager clarified that the Water Works in Bhobhoyi were in the process of being upgraded from 54 Mℓ/d to double that capacity. The current water demand for the entire zone was estimated at 56Mℓ/d and the future water demand at approximately 109Mℓ/d. The zone could also be augmented with approximately 10Mℓ/d from the Umthavuna Water Works.
- He informed the researcher that infrastructural development had already taken place because the Ugu District Municipality had already completed a huge Dam in Ward 21 in the Hibiscus Coast Municipality. *Illustration 10* indicates a completed water storage dam in Bhobhoyi Ward 21 Hibiscus Coast municipality.



*Illustration 10: Ugu Municipality is addressing the water challenge by building storage facilities, as shown in the picture.  
Photographer: T. Cele*

Local Municipality.

- The general manager went on to explain that other infrastructural upgrading was under way; and in his opinion, water crises would be solved in all the municipalities under the Ugu District Municipality within the next five years.
- The general manager also stated that water from springs and wells was also regarded as accessible water if it had been tested for safety and the facilities were currently protected. He also pointed out that access to basic water is not limited to piped water only. A plan was in place for improving access to springs and wells by connecting them to JOJO Tanks, in order to protect and keep the water pure.
- He described the water tankers as being merely a temporary relief programme. The programme was designed to give people a lifeline during emergencies. It was also within the confines of the available budget for the water tankers to continue supplying water to communities.

Communities where water is delivered by tankers tend to abuse the service. They do this by simply taking too much water, and using it for domestic purposes, other than cooking and drinking. This has resulted in some people failing to get water, because the water provided had been finished in the tanker before it reached them.

- According to the General Manager of Ugu District Municipality, enough skilled staff were employed to deliver the necessary services. Competent engineers with 15 and more years of experience headed the water section. The staff was also internally trained to improve in-house capacity.
- He explained that the budgets for water and sanitation maintain separate accounts. This means that Ugu District Municipality, as a Water Service Provider (WSP), applies for funding to the National government, or to institutions like the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA). Thereafter, a budget is formulated for water purposes. This account was known as the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG). It was a separate account that could not be used for any other projects. This means that these funds would always be available for water supply purposes.
- He clarified that the 200m distance between standing pipes was not achievable in rural areas because the landscape in these areas requires more investment for fewer standing pipes to be effective.

**4.5.2 The Institution and Social Development Officer (ISD)** (COA, 26/08/2011 interview 04 Marburg Ugu Municipality Offices) told the researcher that the perceptions that people had about Ugu District Municipality being in a financial crisis was true. He said: “There is no money to pay water tankers to deliver water to communities that are still without water connection.” The standing pipes dried up because they were only connected to small purification plants.

He further stated that these purification plants did not have sufficient capacity to pump water to the communalities, and that these plants were not designed to cater for large black communities, but for smaller white minority communities during the apartheid era. He felt that the planning department should have planned, firstly, for the upgrading of the existing infrastructure before adding new connections to rural communities.

**4.5.3 The Customer Relations Officer** (COA, 01/09/2011 interview 05 Oslo Beach Ugu Municipality Offices) told the researcher that there was a plan in place to address the rural water crisis, saying: “The ward councillors and ward committees will be briefed and be educated on water matters, channels of communications and on water schemes.”

On the issue of coloured water, she further responded to the researcher’s questions by stating that:

- It is possible that coloured water comes out of resident’s taps, as the result of a burst pipe, owing to the upgrading of pipes and after heavy rain. However, she was of the view that the coloured water was not contaminated because the water is thoroughly treated before it goes to households.
- Blue Drop Certificate: She informed the researcher that the Ugu District Municipality received the Blue Drop Certificate for quality potable water in 2010. *Figure 2* indicates the blue drop certificate received by Ugu District Municipality for quality water in 2010. This certificate, according to the customer Relations Officer, indicates that Ugu District Municipality produces clean drinkable water for its residents. This is the reason why the department of Water Affairs and Forestry awarded this certificate to the Ugu District Municipality.

# Blue Drop Certification evidence of non-contaminated water

For immediate release  
04 MAY 2010

In the spirit of the Section 68 of the Water Services Act (Act 108 of 1997) and in line with the Blue Drop Certification requirements, Ugu District Municipality wishes to publish both its Blue Drop scores and water quality compliance against SANS 241 as scored in the Blue Drop 2010 assessment. The following table summarises the performance of each system.

| Water System | Supply Area                                                                           | Blue Drop Score | Microbial Compliance | Chemical Compliance |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Bhobhoyi     | Hibberdene to Ramsgate (coastal) and Gamalakhe, Murchison to KwaMadiala (inland)      | 89.25%          | 99.79%               | 99.99%              |
| Umtamvuna    | Southbroom to Port Edward (coastal) and KwaNzimakwe, KwaXolo and Ezingolweni (inland) | 89.25%          | 99.99%               | 99.99%              |
| Harding      | Ghost Town to Mazakhele                                                               | 87.00%          | 99.99%               | 99.99%              |
| Weza         | KwaJali to Mlozane                                                                    | 77.00%          | 98.73%               | 99.99%              |
| Kwa-Fodo     | KwaFodo to Esitholweni                                                                | 60.50%          | 96.61%               | 99.99%              |
| Kwa-Mbotho   | KwaMbotho to KwaBhida                                                                 | 84.00%          | 99.99%               | 99.99%              |
| Kwa-Nyuswa 1 | KwaNyuswa to EkuZameni                                                                | 85.50%          | 99.99%               | 99.99%              |
| Kwa-Nyuswa 2 | KwaNyuswa to St Martin                                                                | 83.75%          | 99.99%               | 99.99%              |
| Kwa-Hlongwa  | KwaHlongwa                                                                            | 61.50%          | 92.68%               | 99.99%              |
| Mthwalume    | Mathulini, Qoloqolo and Mthwalume                                                     | 86.00%          | 99.10%               | 98.96%              |
| Umzinto      | Umzinto and Pennington to Scottburg                                                   | 87.50%          | 99.99%               | 99.99%              |
| Phungashe    | Phungashe and Ndwebu                                                                  | 87.00%          | 99.99%               | 99.99%              |
| Assisi       | Mehlomnyama and Oshabeni                                                              | 83.00%          | 99.99%               | 99.99%              |
| Vulamehlo    | Vulamehlo and Jolvet                                                                  | 71.50%          | 98.33%               | 99.99%              |
| KwaLembhe    | KwaLembe to Dududu                                                                    | 84.00%          | 99.99%               | 99.99%              |
| KwaNdelu     | KwaNdelu to Morrisons                                                                 | 56.00%          | 82.35%               | no data             |

Ugu's water systems were awarded a weighted score of 87.4% which means that it has very good Drinking Water Quality Management and effectively manages the quality of drinking water in its supply zones. Consumers can follow the current and historical water quality compliance for their respective areas and towns from the website [www.dwa.gov.za/mywater](http://www.dwa.gov.za/mywater) and are encouraged to make maximum use of it.

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**4.5.4 The Water loss Control Technician (WCT)** (COA, 26/08/2011 Interview 06 Marburg Ugu District Offices) told the researcher that the Water Conservation Demand Management Department was embarking on a pressure management strategy in the whole district, saying that the project started in 1998; and would end in 2013. He further stated that the purpose of the project was to reduce the pressure by at least one bar in the piping system, so that the lifespan of the piping system could be prolonged.

He added: “By 2015, Ugu District Municipality will be in a position to supply water to all residents, as a result of this project.” This meant that the officials also acknowledged the fact that the people of this district were not yet equitably supplied with water.

He further responded by saying: “The perception that the purification plan in Ward 13 at Umzumbe, which is covered with rubble, and as a result of which their standing pipes dry out, is not true.” He stated that suction occurred in the suction point in the river, where after the water proceeded to the purification plant before it was pumped to the people. There were at least four small purification plants under the authority of the Umzumbe Municipality.

The purification plants, in fact, faced a number of challenges that could lead to standing pipes drying up. However, the plan was in place to solve the water crisis, not only for Umzumbe Municipality, but also for the whole district. Furthermore, officials acknowledged that water infrastructures constituted a problem that hindered the progress of the equitable process of supplying water to all the residents in this district, and particularly to the rural communities.

**4.5.5 The Social Consultant at Ugu District Municipality** (COA, 29/08/2011 interview 07 Port Shepstone Offices) told the researcher that Ugu District Municipality was busy upgrading its water infrastructure. “I am informed of these upgrading measures because I am a social consultant in these projects.” In Ward 21 at Murchison, which falls under the Hibiscus Coast Municipality, the construction of a new dam was under way. In Ward 12 Albertsville under the Hibiscus Municipality, a new dam was currently under construction. Illustration 11 depicts another dam that is under construction in Ward 12.

The Water Social Consultant's responses agree with those of the officials in the Ugu District Municipality, that the water infrastructure needed upgrading; and this was one of the causes that affected water supply, particularly in rural areas, and that this was the reason that a number of dams were being built.



*Illustration 11: Water facility being built. In Ward 12 Hibiscus Municipality (permission Ugu District Municipality, Photographer: T. Cele*

Ndovela (2011: 4) reported that the Ugu District Municipality water was a joke, because there were people in Ward 14 of Hibiscus Coast Municipality where the water supply had dried up for two weeks. He further reported that water cut-off occurred almost every month in the ward. According to him, people often reported water cut-offs. However, Ugu District Municipality Officials did not respond quickly enough to their enquiries.

Lindane Mzotho (Ugu District Municipality spokesperson) responded to the allegations, saying that interventions to minimise the water interruptions had been planned. One of the plans that the Ugu District Municipality had for dealing with water challenges was the negotiation process that was in progress with Durban Metro.

The aim of the negotiations was to have the eThekweni Municipality divert some of its water to Ugu District Municipality temporarily. This exercise would provide relief to the residents of this district affected by water interruptions, and residents who did not have any access to water. These negotiations were based on the standing arrangement that exists between the two municipalities. “These efforts prove that this municipality is doing everything to provide water and sanitation to all [the] residents of this district, and [that] it does care for its residents”.

It emerged from the responses from the officials and politicians that the Ugu District Municipality has indeed not yet been able to equitably supply potable water to all its residents. They also acknowledged that the water infrastructure was the major cause that prevented potable water supply, particularly in rural areas. This water crisis had affected the rural areas of this district more extensively. Moreover, both officials and politicians pointed out that plans were in place to address the potable water supply backlog, especially in remote areas.

#### **4.6 Typical responses from politicians and officials**

Politicians and officials responded as follows:

The water infrastructure requires dramatic improvement, in order to address the water crises in rural areas. Ugu Municipality must buy its own trucks, because private water tankers waste millions of rands. These funds could be used to improve the water infrastructure (Ugu District Municipality Mayor, African National Congress Secretary and ISD officer, COA, 26/08/2011).

The municipal by-laws prohibit municipality officials from communicating directly with communities; it is the politicians who call *iZimbizo* to communicate directly with people (ISD Officer, General Manager Water Section and Customer Relations Officer COA, 01/09/2011).

Ugu District Municipality has a water-harvesting education programme that has been piloted at Umzumbe Local Municipality. This programme has not yet been piloted to other local municipalities. People do not report burst pipes, particularly in rural areas, and this is one of the reasons that cause water to dry up in standing pipes (General Manager Water section, Chairperson of the Water Portfolio Committee, ISD officer and Water loss control Technician, COA, 26/08/2011).

Ugu District Municipality does care for the people. The fact that there are water tankers and water-education programmes in communities, clearly indicates this, and also that the municipality is working on implementing the Constitutional mandates to deliver services to all residents (Chairperson of Water Portfolio Committee, General Manager Water section, Ugu District Municipality Mayor and African National Congress Regional Secretary, 26/08/2011).

After completing all water storage facilities that Ugu District Municipality is currently building, the challenges would be adequately addressed. These challenges include: standing pipes drying up, communities being without potable water connections, and purification plants that are failing to pump water. The plan would particularly address the Umzumbe water crisis (Water loss Control Technician, General Manager Water section, and Water social Consultant, COA, 29/08/2011).

The plan is already in place in another local municipality, notably, the Hibiscus Coast Local Municipality, where a mega dam has already been completed. (See **Illustration 10**) This plan involves the building of dams and the upgrading of water infrastructure; and it would eliminate the need for small purification plants; and thus maintenance costs would ultimately be minimised (Water social consultant, African National Congress Regional Secretary, General Manager Water Section, Customer Relations Officer and Water Loss Control Technician, COA, 27/08/2011).

#### **4.7 Summary**

The politicians and officials responded to the perceptions of the residents, who did not have any potable water supply in their communities. Dams were currently being built; and other dams had already been completed. These dams would address the water shortage in all the communities. The water-education programme in place at Umzumbe would be extended to other municipalities. Water tankers do deliver water to affected communities; and this shows that the municipality does care for its residents. The study findings would suggest some recommendations to the Ugu district Municipality, as outlined in the following chapter.