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Experiences of CBP in South Africa

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Background

Article two outlines the overall approach to community-based planning, as well as some of the experiences of using CBP in Mangaung Municipality in South Africa, one of the early partners in the project. This article takes this further, describing this experience in some detail, as well as the lessons that have been learnt as CBP has been rolled out to eight municipalities during 2003–4.

Participatory structures within municipalities: the role of Ward Committees

The South African Constitution of 1996 provides for the establishment of three distinct spheres of government (the national, provincial, and the municipal level), each with dedicated as well as shared competencies. Table 1 shows the different levels of government and their roles.

Legal basis of participation

The Municipal Structure Act 117 of 1998 defines categories of municipalities and the institutional structures below municipalities. In this system, ward committees are the only legally recognised structure below municipalities and act as the formal communication link between the community

Ward Committee member Conference Majola presenting the HIV/AIDS component of Ward Two Mangaung's plan back to the community



Photo: Ian Goldman

and council. Local government's role (according to the White Paper on local government) is to ensure that all citizens have access to basic services, to promote democracy and human rights and economic and sectoral development. The White Paper urges municipalities to:

- establish a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative participatory government;
- encourage, and create conditions for, the community to participate in the affairs of the municipality; and,
- build the capacity of the community, especially women and other disadvantaged groups, to enable them to participate in the affairs of the municipality so as to foster community participation.

Table 1: The structures of government that provide services to communities

Level	Approx population	Structure	Role
Province	1.5–9 million	Provincial Government	Major responsibility for service delivery e.g. agriculture, health, education.
Metro (city)	3 million	Metro (six in South Africa)	Integrated local and district functions. Also play significant role in service delivery.
District	500,000 to 1 million	District Municipality	New level of local government and role emerging. Plays a support and strategic role for local municipalities, as well as managing some services.
Local Municipality	50–800,000	Local Municipality	Responsible for local government planning, infrastructure services, services not catered for by high levels.
Ward	5–15,000	Ward committee	Only legally recognised level below local government. Very limited role at present but used as level for community-based planning.

CBP in the context of the planning system in South Africa

Two national planning processes, the nationwide Medium Term Expenditure Framework facilitated by Treasury and the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) specify community participation requirements as part of the formulation of municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). IDPs were introduced as part of the post-Apartheid process of creating a more responsive public administration and to assist with the integration of development at local government level. The realisations of the participatory aspects of the IDP formulation process are contingent on the following:

- **Representation:** through broadening the range of stakeholders that need to be involved in the IDP process (e.g. the local press, NGOs, women, community leaders);
- **Responsiveness:** through promoting flexible planning practices that respond to community priorities and operate in partnership with communities; and,
- **Accountability:** IDPs are proposed as a means for public assessment and prioritisation of needs within communities.

CBP supports the participatory objectives of the IDP by grounding local governance through effective linkages with communities. The strategic thrust of municipal level decision-making in the IDPs is maintained while empowering communities to take on development responsibility and making the local government more accountable.

The initial application of CBP in Mangaung

Article two in this edition describes the four-country CBP project. The initial partners in the CBP project in South Africa were Mangaung Local Municipality, the section on Decentralised Development Planning in the national Depart-

ment of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), and CARE with Khanya as the project managers. Mangaung Local Municipality comprises urban and rural areas inhabited by some 800,000 inhabitants spread across 43 wards. Mangaung committed its own resources to support the project, in part through the R50,000 (US\$5,000 – the exchange rate was R10 to one US\$) allocated per ward in support of ward plan implementation as well as resourcing a training process for facilitators.

The planning methodology

The four- to five-day planning methodology used in Mangaung aligns closely with the generic methodology described in article two. A learning-by-doing process was used to train facilitators; soon after morning classes, afternoon practicals were conducted, followed by reflection sessions held in the evenings. This was strengthened by a cascading learning-by-doing process where the first ward plan was led by a Khanya person; this was followed by trainees taking charge of the facilitator's roles in the next two wards while Khanya supervised the process. Finally trainees facilitated ward planning without assistance from Khanya.

The methodology was modified based on the experience in the initial wards. In affluent and commercial farming areas time was shortened and social groups were fewer as meetings could only be held in the evenings after work. In predominantly black areas there was participation fatigue and more time was needed to explain the merits of CBP in the context of the IDP. The key elements of the initial approach are shown below in Table 2.

Initial results

An independent evaluation was conducted of the impact

Table 2: Elements of the initial CBP approach in Mangaung (with comments on the modified approach)

Elements	Approach
Training of lead trainers	Through learning-by-doing. <i>In the modified approach lead trainers from eight municipalities were trained in the classroom and in the field. Course included PRA tools.</i>
Training of Facilitators	Through cascade learning by doing plus two-day PRA training. <i>Training of facilitators was done by lead trainers mentored by Khanya. Ward committee members were included as facilitators.</i>
Community participation and ownership	Social groups are used for livelihood analysis to obtain a wider spectrum of the preferred outcomes.
Political buy-in	Ward committee members take part in the ward planning as facilitators or as working group leaders. They also ensure the ward plan reaches the municipalities.
Stakeholder involvement	Service providers in the ward (such as police, or home-based care CBOs) are involved in the situation analysis and working groups and take on responsibilities in implementing some elements of ward plans.
Finance	Untied funds of US\$7,000 were provided for implementing ward plans by municipality. The community itself undertakes many projects, without outside funding.
Link to local government planning process	Projects identified in the ward plans that require large sums of money were submitted to the municipality for inclusion in the IDP projects and programmes. Ward priorities used to develop overall LG priorities, as well as to inform development programmes.
Follow-up and community management	Ward councillors and ward committee took on the responsibility of supervising implementation of ward plan. Almost all wards implemented their ward plans with 98% of funds used appropriately according to audit. This was done with rudimentary monitoring of implementation by municipality.

of CBP six months after planning started. Of the wards, 42 completed their plan and 41 of the 42 wards spent their R50,000 allocation. In 18 of the 20 wards surveyed, there were regular ward committee meetings afterwards, suggesting that ward planning enhances ward committee activity levels. Ward 19 (Mangaung East) failed to take off completely as the ward committee failed to understand the process.

Ward level

There were no ward plans prior to CBP. Local action occurred in almost all wards to implement their plans, although there were some problems with some of the projects funded. In Ward 20 (a predominantly white population) there was initial hostility to participatory planning from the councillor who was used to working with selected persons from NGOs. However in the end an implementable ward plan was produced.

Municipal IDPs

The ward planning changed the course of Mangaung's IDP. Economic development was overwhelmingly the top development priority rather than the traditional municipal focus on infrastructure. Other priorities emerged such as HIV and security, where the municipality has to play an enabling

rather than provider role. CBP also contributed to shaping development programmes and projects, in particular for year two of the IDP.

Improved services

Where service providers participated in the ward planning process this appears to have enhanced service provision. In north Mangaung the municipality is now cutting grass more frequently and broken signboards have been replaced. In Ward Two, the crime rate has dropped due to the increase in police patrols.

Community empowerment, ownership, and action

Community empowerment and ownership of the ward development agenda and process were raised as significant outcomes of the CBP process by ward councillors, contributing to 'proud community members and ward committees'.

Impact on local government

There was a significant shift in emphasis from infrastructure to Local Economic Development initiatives in the municipal IDP in response to CBP results. The 30 trained municipal facilitators found the methodology empowering, enhancing

Ward Committee member Sam presents the housing component in Ward Two's plan, Mangaung



Photo: Ian Goldman

Farmers from Ward Two in BelaBela (Warmbaths) at a Local Municipality meeting as part of the national training of trainers



Photo: Ian Goldman

the spirit of participation and enabling sector department realignment.

The financial cost of ongoing CBP facilitation is relatively low, but the initial facilitator training costs are significant. A ten-day training for 50 facilitators will cost about R490,000 (about US\$70,000: the exchange rate is at R7 to the US Dollar). Ward allocations of R50,000 (US\$7,000) to support wards taking forward their plans was critical. This catalytic allocation levered substantial community voluntary action. Initiating CBP in the early stages of the IDP review ensures that its outcomes can be carried out very early in the IDP review process so that the plans and projects can be included in the IDP budget.

Upscaling CBP in South Africa

A national workshop held in October 2002 reviewed Mangaung's CBP experience and agreed to establish a national steering committee to scale up this experience. The Steering Committee Members include the South Africa Local Government Association, the National Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), the Free State Department of Local Government and Housing, the Municipalities of Mangaung, Ethekewini, Greater Tzaneen, Thabo Mofutsanyane, IDT, GTZ, with Khanya as CBP Project Manager providing the secretariat, and later the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA). Based on the lessons learnt from the Mangaung experience, the steering committee recommended widening and deepening the participatory process and strengthening linkages to the IDP. The elements of scaling up include:

- establishing a national coalition and partnership of national government, donors, municipalities, and service providers;

- developing methodological guidelines;
- piloting as a learning process;
- rolling out of a cascade training process including a two week training of facilitators supported by a service provider; and,
- securing resources to support rollout, including significant contributions from municipalities themselves.

The DPLG (through Netherlands Aid), DBSA, DFID, and GTZ are supporting the process, while significant inputs are also being contributed by participating municipalities, amounting to a total ZAR 6 million (around US\$0.9 million).

During this process Khanya partnered with a service provider with expertise in IDPs called Development Works. The initial CBP methodology was modified slightly, notably to include a reconciliation process in the middle where the results from the situation analysis are brought together to inform learnings against priorities. An additional dimension was introduced through the development of a manual to strengthen linkages between the process and outputs of CBP and IDP and ensure that information arising from one process can be used in the other, so as to:

- systematically consider IDP information for alignment between the ward plans and the IDP; and,
- use strategic information emerging from the ward plans to inform the strategic and operational contents of the IDP.

To support the application of this approach additional guidelines had to be developed and three manuals have now been produced:

- a CBP facilitators manual;
- a training manual for a two-week training course for CBP facilitators; and,
- guidelines for IDP Managers to manage the CBP process

Table 3: The approach taken during national rollout

Elements	Modified approach
Training of lead trainers	Participating municipalities sent four lead trainers for a ten-day training course. The course combined classroom with practical PRA training and the implementation of a ward planning process.
Training of facilitators	Trained trainers run a training course for facilitators drawn from the ward committees in their respective municipalities supported by a service provider. Facilitators were also trained through doing ward planning.
Community participation and ownership	One ward committee member is being trained to strengthen ward ownership.
Political buy-in	Ward committee members take part in the ward planning as facilitators or as working group leaders. They also ensure the ward plan reaches the municipalities.
Stakeholder involvement	Service providers in the ward (such as police, or home-based care CBOs) are involved in the situation analysis and working groups and take on responsibilities in implementing some elements of ward plans.
Finance	The cost of the pilot is borne by external funds. However costs for training and planning (as well as implementation support costs) are provided by the municipality.
Link to local government planning process	This has been much increased and training conducted on how to take this forward. This stage will happen during the period February to May 2004.
Follow-up and community management	Ward councillors and ward committees will take on the responsibility of supervising the implementation of the ward plan. More emphasis has been placed on M&E of implementation by the wards, whether by the ward committee, by citizens of the ward committee, or by the Municipality (i.e. three different types of M&E).

and the use of CBP information in the IDP review process. Some revisions to the approach are shown in Table 3.

Lessons learnt

Some of the key lessons learnt during this process have been:

- Emphasising the strengths-based approach to build on local conditions and avoiding planning for the impossible (typically with massive investment requested in infrastructure) and supporting the community action-orientated plans. Working objectives are screened as part of the reconciliation exercise to identify the strengths in the community that have a bearing on achieving that objective and to avoid ‘shopping list’ planning.
- Ensuring linkages for integrating the ward plans with local government plans. Ward plans are drawn upon to inform the priorities, objectives, strategies, and projects of the IDP. However, CBP priorities and objectives are outcomes-focused and strengths-based. This means that where the practice of IDP is problem-based, the two are not always easily reconcilable.
- Improving monitoring mechanisms so that ward/area committees, community members, and local government

can monitor the plans effectively. In Mangaung, after the disbursement of process funds, their use, although monitored, was the sole responsibility of the ward committee. Transparency, and simple and effective monitoring mechanisms meant that 99% of the funds were accounted for.

- Developing mechanisms to support community-based implementation and management, and not seeing planning as an end but a beginning. This entails institutionalising the planning and implementation process through legitimate structures such as the ward committees.
- Ensuring political buy-in and support role of ward councillors, the mayor, municipal officials, and the municipal manager. This needs to include institutionalising the administrative support requirements for rolling out CBP and ‘mainstreaming’ it as part of the municipal planning and implementation process.
- Managing the role of customary/traditional authorities where there is competition between them and the statutory authorities. Where they are operational, customary or traditional authorities should be involved at the preplanning stage to ensure their ownership of the plan especially where the ward councillor and committee are ineffective. In practice, challenges may arise where

Groups from Ward 4 BelaBela meeting using a local house and doing a SWOT analysis



Photo: Ian Goldman

customary or traditional authorities' areas of jurisdiction overlap within the boundaries of a ward, in particular where more than one customary or traditional authority exists within the same ward.

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Some comments by facilitators and councillors on the CBP process in Mangaung Municipality

Facilitators found the experience of CBP very powerful. Some of the comments made were:

"I was annoyed when my Head of Department nominated me. But now I am glad that I could play a role in this process. My eyes were opened and I can now make better contributions in my department".

"Initially, I was extremely sceptical. However, I think the process is an absolute necessity. We in government do not always know what the needs of communities are. This process helped me to understand these needs and priorities better. For the first time in my life we actually asked people their opinion".

"It is the best thing that happened to Bloemfontein. I cannot see how we could have worked as councillors for such a long time without direct interaction with the community. Those who did not know about you will now know".

Ways forward in the future

This phase of upscaling finishes in August 2004, with a review of the experience of the pilots and proposals for how this could be upscaled nationally. This will include reviewing the methodology and guidelines, as well as making proposals for national support. This approach would aim to provide a methodology, which municipalities can use to give effect to their participation mandate. This will be based on an assessment of the rollout process, in terms of the levels of energy released, whether community action happens, and whether improved IDPs and services result from the process.