

**ASSESSMENT OF THE CAPACITY OF MASIBAMBANE DONOR FUNDED
NON - GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) TO PROVIDE WATER
SERVICES IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the mini-dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master in Development on the “Assessment of the capacity of Masibambane donor funded non - governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide water services in the Limpopo Province” has not been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in the design and in execution, and that all materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken in the Limpopo province, South Africa. Its aim was to assess the capacity of the NGOs that benefitted from Masibambane which is a donor funded programme and to examine the contributions that they are making towards addressing the water and sanitation challenges. This programme made funding available to capacitate the NGOs with the hope that they will assist the sector. Five NGOs which are operating in various districts in the province were included in the study. This was a qualitative study. Purposive sampling was used to select participants from NGOs, municipalities, Department of Water Affairs and communities. Primary data were collected through interviews, focused groups and observations in the field while secondary data were obtained from NGO and Water Affairs documents.

The findings of this study revealed that The Mvula Trust and Tsogang Water and Sanitation NGOs have the capacity to implement both water and sanitation infrastructure projects at a village level. Operation Hunger's expertise regarding water infrastructure projects is on digging boreholes and installing hand pipes even though it diversified to include water conservation. Akanani Rural Development Association has the expertise of building sanitation facilities while Thlavhama Training Initiative is still learning. It was also discovered that NGOs are good at mobilizing communities and also have the capacity to impart skills to the communities. Participants from NGOs confirmed that learning occurred through Masibambane programme even though some felt that the needs of the NGOs were not adequately addressed.

ACRONYMS

BoTT	Built, Operate, Train and Transfer programme
CSO	Non-governmental organization
CBO	Community based organization
CWSS	Community water supply and sanitation
CMIP	Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme
DWA	Department of Water Affairs
GONGO	Government initiated non-governmental organization
GRO	Grass-root organization
IDP	Integrated development plan
LINGO	Limpopo non-governmental organization
MINGO	Modern indigenous non-governmental organization
NGO	Non governmental organization
NNGO	Northern non-governmental organization
NONGOs	Northern non-governmental organization
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SNGO	Southern non-governmental organization
WSA	Water services authorities
WSP	Water services provider

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the background of the study: how funding was made available in the water sector to capacitate non-governmental organizations; the status of water and sanitation services within South Africa; the non-governmental organizations included in this study; the definitions of the major concepts that are important for this type of study; the aim and the significance of the study. The study was undertaken in the Limpopo province and the focus was on the assessment of the capacity of Masibambane donor funded non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with specific reference to water services provision.

The right to civil society participation is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, Section 152e). The Strategic Framework for Water Services (2003, 24) which is in line with the above-mentioned Constitution emphasizes the following: the importance of engaging civil society organizations (CSOs) in policy development, research and management of programmes and projects at community level; a need to capacitate CSOs and to encourage them to monitor sector performance.

The Department of Water Affairs (2005, p. 6) states that the NGOs played a crucial role in the delivery of water services prior 2001. Presently the NGOs seem not to be active and their presence at national level seems to decline despite efforts by the donors to support them through capacity building initiatives. The Mvula Trust seems to be the only NGO that has a significant national presence. The document cited above further points out that the drought experienced in 1990 in South African brought different stakeholders together. A drought forum was established and it was constituted by government, politicians and NGOs. The said forum initiated various projects which were funded by

European Union and Department for International Development (DFID) to address the challenges of the previously neglected rural communities. During this period some NGOs played the role of the implementing agents and some were part of the consortia responsible for Built, Operate, Train and Transfer programme (BoTT) which was introduced by the sector at a later stage. The transfer of water services function to local government after 1994 elections and the subsequent introduction of Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (CMIP) affected the NGOs as their roles were not clarified in this new programme (2005, pp. 7-9).

The Masibambane report (Department of Water Affairs 2006, pp. 16-17) states that the Masibambane programme is a sector wide approach initiated in 2001 and led by the Department of Water Affairs (DWA) in collaboration with its sector partners. This programme is funded by the European Union and the Irish government. The Department of Water Affairs (2005, pp. 12-13) states that the programme consolidated various financial resources, approaches and experiences gained by various donors and role players. The programme initially focused on three provinces namely Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal and the emphasis was on support to the water sector and local government to ensure proper functioning within the current policy and legislative framework. Other provinces were included at a later stage. DWA is the recipient of the donor funds through Treasury.

The objectives of the programme mentioned above are to ensure sector collaboration, coordination of strategies, joint implementation of programmes and projects as well as coordination of resources with the aim of achieving the sector goals (Department of Water Affairs 2006, pp. 16-17). The programme is divided into three areas namely:

- Sector orientation including development of policies and strategies.
- Service delivery including implementation of a sustainable water services and

- Institutional support including strengthening the capacity and skills of all spheres of government and other role-players within the water sector (Department of Water Affairs 2005, p. 13).

The Department of Water Affairs (2007, pp. 36-37) states that one of the conditions made by the European Union (donors) was that 25% of the money contributed to South Africa should be set aside specifically for civil society organizations hence a dedicated project for capacity building of NGOs within the water sector. The aim of this Masibambane CSO capacity building project is to empower the CSOs to enable them to perform water related services and to make the municipalities aware of the CSOs' capacity in this regard (Department of Water Affairs 2004, p. 6).

Interviews held the employees and board members of NGOs provided information with regard to the background of each NGO. The organizations that benefited from the Masibambane programme were not established the same way and the motive for establishing them also differed. The first two organizations indicated below focused on water and sanitation services from the onset while the other three focused on various activities and only diversified later to include water and sanitation related services. The NGOs that have been included in this study are as follows:

- i. The Mvula Trust: It operates nationally but the Polokwane office renders services to Limpopo communities. The organization was established in 1993 with the aim of complementing the work of the democratic government of South Africa with regard to provision of water and sanitation services. The focus of this organization has been provision of water and sanitation services from the onset even though livelihood and HIV/AIDS projects are also included. This organization is supported by international donors and private companies (Molefe, G 2010, pers. comm., 1July).

- ii.** Tsogang Water and Sanitation: It is based in Greater Tzaneen municipality and serves communities in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces. M King, (2010, pers. comm., 21 July), the manager of the above-mentioned organization, stated that this organization was established in 1995 with the aim of helping rural people with water and sanitation and to help them to access funding. Its first office was established in Johannesburg (Gauteng province) and in 1999 the office relocated to Tzaneen in Limpopo province.
- iii.** Operation Hunger: It operates nationally but the office based in Sekhukhune municipality serves the communities in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces. F Themba (2010, pers. comm., 17 June) who is the manager of Operation Hunger in the Limpopo province, stated that this organization was established in 1980 by Ms. Ina Perlman. Operation hunger like many other NGOs around the world, started with relief and welfare work providing needy families with food parcels around Gauteng province. The scope of work was later increased to accommodate other provinces like Limpopo where this NGO established an office in 1985 at Sekhukhune municipality district. The manager cited above stated that developmental projects were gradually introduced and these included food gardens for curbing malnutrition, provision of water and sanitation services, promotion of health and hygiene and buying and selling of hand works done by communities after having realized their marketing challenges.
- iv.** Thlavhama Training Initiative: It is based in Polokwane municipality and renders services to the residents of the Limpopo province. This organization was established in 1994 by Limpopo non-governmental organizations and its initial purpose was to train NGOs and community based organizations operating in the Limpopo province. It registered as a training institution in 1997. It offers training to 70 organizations affiliated to it on various organizational management skills. It expanded its services to include sanitation related projects taking advantage of the funding opportunity that

was made available by Irish government which funded water and sanitation related projects (Mahlo, E 2010, pers. comm., 17 July).

- v. Akanani Rural Development Association: This organization unlike the others mentioned above, focused on diverse issues from the onset. V Muvhali (2010, pers. comm., 18 June) stated that it was established in 1980 by Rob Collins who was from Switzerland. Furthermore the above-mentioned manager of Akanani NGO stated that it was initially called Intermediate Technology and Small Industries Development Unit (ITSIDU). Its initial focus was on support to cooperatives dealing with various issues and building of rural sanitation facilities. It later expanded its services to include a wide variety of projects.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996, Section 27), everyone has the right to clean and safe drinking water and dignified sanitation services. This is a real challenge for the water sector considering the status of the water services in the country and availability of resources. The sector is thus expected to address water and sanitation backlog while at the same time it should strive to improve the level of services.

The water sector believed that it could ensure access to basic water by the year 2008 as reflected in the Strategic Framework for Water Services (2003, p.13). Unfortunately this seems to have been an unrealistic target as it was not achieved. Tissingsgton (2009, pp. 9-10) argues that elimination of backlog seems impossible in the near future even though there is a dedicated programme to address the problem. The reason cited by this author is that there are still many people mostly in rural areas who depend on river water for survival. This type of situation was observed in Sekhukhune district during the 2008 and 2009 cholera outbreak. Nzimakwe (2009, p. 63) who shares the same sentiments, states that nine million people in South Africa have no access to potable water within 200m of their households and that the figure for sanitation is higher than this.

The South African NGOs which were anti government prior 2004 experienced a number of challenges which necessitated a change of focus. Some of those challenges included a change in roles, shifts in funding patterns, limited support offered by National Development Agency whose mandate is to fund development initiatives and insufficient capacity of NGOs to render services as most skilled NGO workers left these organizations and joined government departments and the private sector (Department of Water Affairs 2004, p. 10).

Firstly, it is necessary for the NGOs to be well capacitated in terms of skills and personnel for them to make a valuable contribution in the delivery of water services and to be taken seriously by municipalities and government departments. Secondly, competition for tenders within municipalities seems to be tough. The drying out of international donor funds somehow makes the NGOs to depend on government and private sector for survival. As a result there is a need for the NGOs to demonstrate their ability to plan and manage projects and programmes for them to be considered as organizations that can add value in the water sector. Unfortunately the evaluation report of phase one of the Masibambane programme which was implemented from 2001 to 2004 seems not to be impressive. This report indicates that the involvement of the NGOs in the sector is not satisfying due to the following reasons:

- Limited number of NGOs involved in policy formulation, monitoring and service delivery in the water sector.
- Limited capacity of NGOs engaged in the water sector.
- Lack of knowledge among government departments and municipalities of the services rendered by NGOs.
- Poor perception by government departments and municipalities of the services rendered by NGOs and
- Cumbersome municipality procurement processes (Department of Water Affairs 2004, p. iii)

This study tried to find out the contributions that are being made by the Limpopo NGOs in addressing the water sector challenges considering their exposure to the Masibambane capacity building initiatives. The main focus was on investigating the NGOs capabilities and whether the projects that they are implementing are geared towards ensuring safe, affordable water and sanitation services to the communities.

1.3. MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Firstly, a need to initiate a study of this nature emanated from the realization that there are NGOs operating in the Limpopo province which are regarded as stakeholders within the Water sector. Molefe, G (2010, pers. comm., 5 January), who is the manager of The Mvula Trust in the Limpopo province, stated that the Limpopo water sector has no clear records of the profiles of these NGOs. It is really necessary for the water sector to have an insight into the actual activities of these NGOs operating in the Limpopo province and to investigate whether they have the capacity to assist the water sector to address the challenges faced by the province. The manager cited above further stated that some of the staff members of these NGOs participated in the various training programmes organized through Masibambane programme.

Secondly, the outcome of the Masibambane report compiled in 2004 also served as a motivation as this study wanted to find out if ever there are some improvements since 2004.

1.4. AIMS OF THE STUDY

To assess the capacity of water sector NGOs and the contributions that they are making towards addressing water services challenges.

1.5. OBJECTIVES

- To establish the type of projects implemented by NGOs and how they are managed.

- To establish the relevance of their projects to water services.
- To assess the skills possessed by personnel employed by NGOs. And
- To assess the relevance of the training offered through the Masibambane programme to water related skills and the application of knowledge gained.

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What types of projects are implemented by NGOs?
- Are the projects implemented by NGOs addressing water services issues?
- What types of skills are possessed by personnel employed by NGOs?
- Was the training offered through the Masibambane programme relevant to water services function?
- How do trainees apply knowledge gained through various capacity building initiatives?

1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Firstly, the study provided knowledge regarding the activities of the NGOs within the province as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Secondly, the findings also revealed the NGOs' capacity in terms of water related skills and expertise to enable the sector to access their services when there is a need. Thirdly, it revealed the capacity problems experienced by NGOs and how they themselves wish the issues to be addressed. Knowledge regarding the above-mentioned issues may also assist in avoiding duplication of services and competition between municipalities and NGOs. Lastly, the findings will also be helpful to the Department of Water Affairs and donors so as to know whether the training that was offered through the Masibambane programme was really helpful or not.

1.8. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

i. Non - governmental organization

It is necessary to clarify the concept non-governmental organization (NGO) in order to avoid ambiguity and to be clear about the unit of analysis of this study.

The literature on NGOs provides different ideas of the concept. The concept NGO is sometimes used interchangeably with the word civil society organization (CSO), community based organization (CBO) and grass-root organization (GRO). Kilby (2006a, p.1) defines NGOs as self-governing independent bodies which are voluntary in nature and have a public benefit purpose and members who share a common interest. Siddiqui (1990, p.4) defines a civil society organization as voluntary, self-generating, largely self-supporting, non-profit making organization that is autonomous from the state and bound by a set of shared rules. The NGOs in this study are viewed in the context of these two definitions. These two definitions indicate the autonomy of the NGOs and that the motive is not to make profit but to ensure that services are geared towards the communities. GROs which includes CBOs are excluded from this study as they are membership organizations that serve their members and are accountable to them as defined by Siddigui (1990, p.111).

ii. The water sector

The Strategic Framework for Water Services (2003, p.3) states that the water sector is organized in three different tiers:

- The national government;
- Municipalities which are referred to as water services authorities (WSA); and
- The private sector, research institutions, NGOs and water boards.

iii. Water services

The Water Services Act (Act no 108, 1997) states that water services refer to water supply and sanitation services. This Act states that water supply services mean the abstraction, conveyance, treatment and distribution of potable water. Sanitation services in this document are referred to as the collection, removal, disposal or purification of human excreta, domestic waste water, sewage and effluent resulting from the use of water for commercial purposes.

iv. Masibambane programme

Masibambane, which is a Zulu name meaning *let's work together*, is the name of a water sector support programme led by the Department of Water Affairs and is funded by the European Union and the Irish government (Department of Water Affairs, 2007, p. 13).

v. Water services authority (WSA)

The Water Services Act (Act no 108, 1997) states that water services authority means any municipality, including a district or rural council which is responsible for ensuring access to water services within its area of jurisdiction.

vi. Water services provider (WSP)

Water services provider refers to any legal entity (CBO, NGO, organ of state, private company, municipal entity or another municipality) that can be contracted by the municipality which has the WSA status, to provide water services (DWAF 2007). However, the Strategic Framework for Water Services (2003) suggests that protection of consumer interest should be ensured when WSAs decide on the WSP option.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the views of different researchers regarding the issue of NGOs and how they operate. Firstly, it provides the definition of the concept NGO from different perspectives and the context in which it will be used in this study. Secondly, it gives a brief background of how NGOs came into being in the Southern hemisphere, how these NGOs were funded, the relationship between NGOs and the state and common challenges experienced by NGOs as viewed by different researchers. Thirdly, the chapter presents a summary of the findings of the NGO case studies. Lastly, this chapter tried to show linkage between this particular study and the literature reviewed.

2.2. CLASSIFICATIONS OF NGOs

It has been discovered that some authors prefer to classify NGOs in terms of roles or social activities. Those categories include: economic, for example, productive and commercial associations; cultural, e.g. religious and ethnic associations; informational and educational; interest based, e.g. trade unions and professional associations; developmental, e.g. organizations striving to improve the quality of life of the community; issue-oriented, e.g. organizations for women's rights; and civic, e.g. anticorruption movements (Siddiqui 1990, p. 5; Coetzee and Graaff 1996, p. 290).

Obiyan (2005, p. 304) warns that there is a problem with classification of NGOs as it cannot be simply assumed that each NGO will fit well into any of the categories due to various activities performed by NGOs. The point that this author tries to put forward is that it is possible that the NGOs might not confine themselves to the categories in which they are presumed to fall in. Nevertheless the focus of this research is on developmental NGOs as the study's concern is

on the capacity of these NGOs in their attempt to provide water services to the communities with the aim of improving the quality of life. The purpose of the developmental NGOs is to eradicate poverty which is perceived as a result of exploitation of people and nature, unequal access to resources and exclusion of people from decisions that affect them (de Santisteban 2005, p. 200).

2.3. EMERGENCE OF NGOs IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

It is necessary to know and understand what motivated the emergence of NGOs in the Global South and for what purpose. There are various reasons that led to the emergence of NGOs in the Global South. Turok (cited in Coetzee & Graaff 1996, p. 486) states that NGOs' initial focus was to provide post-war humanitarian relief and development work and that most of these organizations were operating closely with the churches. This view is supported by Dicklitch (1998, p. 207) who gave an example of the relief and missionary activities performed by NGOs in Uganda prior 1980. These NGOs according to this author were not seen as important actors in both political and economic areas of the country.

According to Dicklitch (cited in Sooryamoort 2003, p.206), the growth of NGOs in Sub-Saharan Africa can be understood in the context of the changing political economy of Africa. The NGOs according to this author mushroomed as a result of international trends and the African states' lack of responsiveness to the needs of the citizens. As a result the NGOs are regarded as gap fillers or partners in service delivery.

In South Africa, prior to 1980, the apartheid government was only supportive to NGOs that were serving the white community and those that supported the racial order. NGOs that were against the past regime were harassed and banned and as a result did not benefit anything from the government during that time. The change of political environment in the early 1980s led to the emergence of NGOs

even though they operated with a lot of restrictions including accessing funding for their organizations (Coetzee & Graaf 1996, pp. 294-295).

Habib & Taylor (1999, p. 74) state that South African NGOs that served the marginalized black population during the apartheid era were funded directly by international organizations such as European Union and U.S. Foundations which encouraged the establishment of anti-apartheid NGOs. The authors cited above further point out that these NGOs were compelled by circumstances to camouflage their funding sources as their relationship with the state was not good. By 1990 it was estimated that there were 5 000 NGOs that were involved in developmental work. The first South African democratic elections made NGOs to be seen as partners and as a result NGOs are involved in policy development issues, provision of welfare and development services and also recognized as watchdog of the new state (Habib & Taylor 1999, pp. 74-76).

2.4. HOW SOUTHERN NGOs ARE FUNDED

Funding is essential for every organization to survive and for it to be able to achieve its objectives. Hoksbergen (2005, pp.17-20) states that it is a popular practice for Northern NGOs (NNGOs) to partner with the Southern NGOs (SNGOs) and that the latter benefit from this partnership as they receive financial resources and skills from their partners. The author cited above argues that the NNGOs dominate the relationship and also dictate what to be done with funds allocated to recipients. Furthermore this author states that the SNGOs sometimes fail to adhere to the objectives of their own organizations as they have to satisfy the needs of those who are financing them.

Lewis (1998, pp.501-512) who studied the Bangladesh aquaculture project funded by Swedish organizations agrees with what has been stated above. According to Lewis, this type of relationship demands more from the SNGOs who seem to be at the mercy of the donors.

The Department of Water Affairs is the recipient of donations from international donors, namely, the European Commission, the Flemish government, Swiss Agency and the Irish government who support the Masibambane programme whose aim is to capacitate and support the water sector in South Africa. The issue of conditional grants stated above is also applicable to the Masibambane donor funded programme. One of the conditions stated by these international donors in their financing agreement is the inclusion of capacity building of civil society organizations in the said programme. Irish government even went to the extent of financing the development of the civil society organization strategy (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry 2007, p. 13).

According to Coetzee & Graaff (1996, p. 295), South African NGOs that used to get funds directly from anti-apartheid organizations might struggle to survive as donor funds are nowadays being channeled to government. Dicklitch (cited in Sooryamoort 2003, p.2 07) who conducted a study of NGOs in Uganda, and who shares the same sentiments, believes that the NGOs will cease to function as soon as donors withdraw. The author cited above maintains that these organizations are not well coordinated and thus compete with each other for resources. NGOs are thus advised to establish cooperative ventures rather than compete for scares resources (Coetzee & Graaff 1996, p. 295). These types of ventures may encourage coordination of services which might in turn maximize the impact of NGO services.

Atkinson (cited in Coetzee & Graaff 1996, p. 296) asserts that a situation may arise where NGOs will develop dependency relations with specific government departments and thus sacrificing their autonomy. Coetzee & Graaff (1996, p. 296) note that in Western Europe there is a tendency nowadays by government to significantly move away from service provision and allowing specialized functions to be provided by NGOs. As a result according to these authors, the capacity of NGOs, their flexibility, creativity and innovations are utilized to the full. It would be interesting to know whether the NGOs in SA specifically in the

Limpopo province, if given such an opportunity, would be able to perform similar functions stated above. This of course would depend on whether they possess relevant skills to perform the work especially in the water sector which is the interest of this study.

2.5. CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE CONTEXT OF NGOS

Literature on NGOs emphasizes the importance of capacity building. It is strongly argued that institutional capacity building is essential for African NGOs in order to enhance the organizations' governance structures and mechanisms, management practices, effectiveness in resource mobilization, human resources coordination and standard of service delivery (Pardington & Coyne 2007, p. 22; Saddiqui 1990, p.124).

Lewis (1998, p. 503) states that NNGOs assume that SNGOs require nurturing and support and thus the NNGOs fulfill that role of providing organizational support, training and financial assistance. Pardington & Coyne (2007, p. 22) claim that the amount that is allocated for institutional capacity building is too little and hence not encouraging sustainability and independence of NGOs. Again these authors cited above state that the SNGOs seem not to have a say with regard to capacity building initiatives earmarked for them whereas they are the ones who know their needs as well as the dynamics of their communities.

James (cited in Lewis 1998, p. 503) says that capacity building refers to external intervention aimed at improving the organization's effectiveness and sustainability in relation to its mission and situation. To him capacity building includes technical assistance concerned with operational issues and organizational development. What is understood here is that capacity building does not only refer to transfer of skills and resources but also aims at ensuring organizational autonomy and self-reliance.

Low & Darenpoort (2002, pp.367-369) argue that a range of definitions of the concept “*capacity building*” found in literature makes the assessment of organizations difficult. These authors undertook a study among Pacific NGOs to ascertain how NGOs and donors perceive the relationship between capacity building and financial and organizational sustainability. They discovered that NGOs, donor agencies and governments believe that there is a need to strengthen the ability of NGOs to enable them to fulfill multiple roles. These authors also assert that the term “*capacity building*” refers to both administrative and institutional capacity. Kaplan (cited in Low and Darenpoort 2002, p. 369) states that a capacitated NGO must have the following attributes:

- a conceptual framework which reflect the organization’s view of the world;
- an organizational attitude, which incorporates the confidence to act in, and on, the world in a way the organization believes can have an impact;
- clear organizational vision and strategy and sense of purpose;
- organizational structure and procedures supporting the vision and strategy;
- relevant individual skills, abilities, and competencies; and
- sufficient and appropriate material resources.

Kelly & Lewis (2009, pp. 374-382), who undertook a study to examine the NGOs’ ability to reduce needs, state that the survival of the organization does not necessarily imply that it is capable of improving social conditions. The authors discovered that there is no set of measures that can be adapted to organizations even within the same sector. According to these authors, the cause of this problem is the focus placed on individual NGO mission statements which, of course, differ. Again they discovered the difficulty in using the mission statements to evaluate organizational effectiveness as some NGO mission statements are not translated in such a way that measuring performance is made easier. These authors cited above feel that it appears as if those mission statements are marketing tools.

2.6. THE STATUS OF WATER SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Not all the people in South Africa have access to water and sanitation facilities and the problem has been caused by the past apartheid regime. The Department of Water Affairs (2003, p. 21) states that when the democratic government of South Africa came into being in 1994, it inherited a huge backlog in service delivery, especially in rural communities. It further pointed out that in 1994 it was estimated that 14 million (35% of the population) people were without safe water and 21 million (53% of the population) people were without basic sanitation. This was a real challenge to the newly elected government. The South African government, as a response to the said challenges, started a countrywide transformation process, which included the Community Water Supply and Sanitation (CWSS) Programme aimed at providing basic water and sanitation service to all South Africans (Department of Water Affairs 2003, p. 21).

Masibambane programme seemed to have made a valuable contribution by augmenting government funding as more funds were really needed to address the above-mentioned challenges. Progress seems to have been made since 1994 even though there are still people who have no access to potable water. Mabudafhasi, the Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs (2010) maintains that South Africa managed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals of halving the water and sanitation backlog by 2005 before the target years that is 2008 and 2015 respectively.

According to the report on the State of Local Government in South Africa (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2009, pp. 59-69), there are 1 069 152 households without basic level of water and 3 002 152 households without basic level of sanitation. This figure includes households using chemical toilets, pit latrine without ventilation, bucket latrine and households having no sanitation facility. The picture painted above is not impressive more so that there is continuous mushrooming of informal settlements that are not even planned for. One wonders as whether total eradication of these

backlogs will be a reality by the year 2014 as planned by the South African government (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2009, pp. 59-69).

Besides the backlog challenges, Sonjica B, the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, (2010, p.2) is also concerned about the challenges of aging infrastructure, water quality and water conservation. She further pointed out that an amount of R 4.417 billion has been allocated this financial year (2010 / 2011) by National Treasury to address water services needs. This amount will make a difference even though it might not eradicate the backlog completely.

Wall (2008, pp. 95-108), who is also concerned with operation and maintenance of infrastructure in South Africa, suggests that WSA should consider franchising option which might yield better results. In this model, ownership of the water services will remain with the WSAs while the franchisee will be responsible for operation and maintenance. The author cited above proposes that the NGOs and SMMEs should be encouraged to compete for operation and maintenance services. This type of arrangement is allowed in terms of the Water Services Act which states that WSAs can enter into a contract with other organizations that will provide services on its behalf (Water Services Act (No. 108 of 1997)). This type of model, if ever it is functional, might encourage NGOs to perform better.

Municipalities are expected to develop water services development plans, prepare 3 year capital plans and operational plans which are the requirements in terms of legislation, undertake feasibility studies, prepare technical reports and manage projects (WIN-SA 2007, p.10). This is a huge task that requires skilled people and a lot of money.

Firstly, what is important to know is whether the sector including NGOs has the necessary capacity to deal with the above-mentioned challenges. Secondly, one wonders whether the municipalities have the capacity to utilize the budget that

has been specifically allocated for water services. Local government has the primary constitutional obligation to deliver basic services while the role of the national and provincial government is to support municipalities to fulfill these obligations (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2009, p. 44).

The document cited above gives a picture of what is actually happening within the municipalities in South Africa regarding service delivery in general, their strength, weaknesses and challenges. It acknowledges the good work that is being done by municipalities. However, it identifies a lot of challenges and some of them are huge service delivery backlog, poor compliance with the legislative and regulatory frameworks for municipalities, corruption and fraud, poor financial management, weak civil society formations and lack of scarce skills.

2.7. CASE STUDIES OF NGOs WHICH PROVIDED WATER SERVICES

There are NGOs which are successfully implementing water projects in Africa. Kassa (n.d.) who studied WaterAid NGO which was jointly implementing the Hittosa Water Supply and Sanitation Project in the Arsi zone in Ethiopia, states that this NGO played a significant role.

Beauséjour (2009, pp. 355-369) undertook a study in Vietnam and analyzed the capacity of the community that benefited from a Lai Xa peri-urban sanitation project (a waste management community project) managed by YWAM NGO. This author states that in Vietnam sanitation is not a priority as compared to water despite being regarded as a priority by international agencies. The focus of this Vietnam study was to identify the skills and expertise necessary for the management of a sustainable sanitation service and thus observed local capabilities and the outcome of the community-managed system. All stakeholders (experts and community groups) were analyzed in terms of institutional (frameworks), management (planning, building and maintenance), technical (materials, tools and machinery), financial (means of funding), social

(community capacity to get organized and cooperate) and cultural (preferences in terms of hygiene and sanitation) aspects. The findings of this study as stated by the author cited above firstly revealed that the NGO's financial status restricts its operation to the local level where it can only conduct pilot experiments. Secondly, it revealed that the NGO played an important role in capacitating the community with regard to management of the sanitation technology and in mobilizing the community to take part in the project aimed at addressing their needs. This case study illustrates that the NGOs have the capacity to transfer skills and also to ensure involvement of communities in their affairs.

Literature indicates that not all projects implemented by NGOs are sustainable. The study conducted by Huby & Stevenson (2003, p.196) in Tanzania revealed that community water projects experienced a challenge of maintenance after the withdrawal of funding agencies. In this scenario skills transfer was not done and hence the community experienced problems with regard to maintenance. These authors recommended after-care services as a way of helping communities to learn to be on their own.

2.8. NGOs AND THE STATE

The relationship between NGOs and government is not the same in all countries. NNGOs seem to have a good relationship with their governments as the latter provide funding to these organizations (Saddigqi 1990, pp.119). Sooryamoort (2003, pp. 206-207) states that African countries are not generally creating a conducive environment for NGOs to function well. This author further points out that the NGO-government relationship is characterized by suspicion and mistrust.

Coetzee & Graaff (1996, p.118) state that African NGOs mobilized themselves to form federations through which they liaise and negotiate with government agencies, share resources and ideas, and coordinate their activities. This author cited above gave examples of Namibia NGO Forum (NANGOF) and South African Non-governmental organization (SANGOCO).

2. 9. CHALLENGES OF NGOs

Fakir (2000, p. 5-6) states that uncertainty regarding funding for SNGOs threatens their survival and also makes them vulnerable to the donors' agendas which might clash with the objectives of their own organizations. The study undertaken by Low & Davenport (2002, pp. 367-379) illustrated clearly the frustrations experienced by Vanuata NGO and the beneficiaries of their services as a result of the termination of the NGO-donor contract. Fakir (2000, pp.5-6) therefore proposes that NGOs should engage in more service oriented work that will assist them to address the deficits or cash flow problems they are experiencing. This author acknowledges that this might put NGOs in an awkward position as they are expected to monitor the very government that they will be working for.

Siddiqui (1997, pp, 34-35) argues that key issues and challenges that need to be addressed by civil society organizations within South Africa are adequate material and human resources, clear focus of activity and maintaining an unbiased stance. All these issues are important as resources in terms of money, machinery, equipments, vehicles and skilled manpower are essential for the delivery of services including water.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the type of study conducted, how it was conducted and the study area. It also clarifies the target population of this study, the sampling methods used and how data was collected.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Mouton (1996, p.107) defines research design as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem. For this study qualitative design was found to be appropriate because of the following reasons: Firstly, this is an exploratory study and participants were expected to share their opinions, perceptions and feelings. It was necessary to have a better understanding and insight into the NGOs' capabilities, skills possessed by different NGO employees, the type of projects NGOs are engaged in, the relevance of their projects in the water sector, the type of training employees have been exposed to through Masibambane programme and how they apply the knowledge gained. Secondly, the study was conducted in the participants' natural setting and this made understanding of the dynamics of the setting easier. Again, exposure to the sites assisted in clarifying issues and getting more evidence through observing the end-products of the NGO interventions and thus making analysis easier. Quantitative data was also gathered and it is reflected in chapter four.

Neuman (1997, p. 29) states that a researcher may opt for a case study to intensively investigate a limited set of cases focusing on several factors. Cases can be individuals, groups, neighborhoods, programs, organizations, regions and states (Patton 2002, p. 447). In this study a case is Masibambane programme donor funded NGOs. The population of this study is small and as a result a case

study is regarded as a suitable qualitative design. In this study five NGOs constitute a case.

3.3. AREA OF STUDY

The study was undertaken in the Limpopo province as the NGOs are scattered around the province. The five NGOs that were studied are found in all district municipalities. The study area also included villages within these district municipalities where NGOs implemented water and sanitation projects.

The water business includes water services as well as protection, management & development of water resources. The scope of this study will be limited to water services and as a result the assessment of NGOs will only be with regard to provision of water & sanitation services to Limpopo communities.

3.4. POPULATION

Powers et al (cited in de Vos 2002, p.198) define population as a set of entities in which all the measurements of interest to the researcher are present. These entities may be people or things. The population of this study is composed of employees, managers and board members of the five NGOs in the Limpopo province who benefited from Masibambane donor funded programme, officials who manage the water or technical departments within the municipalities where NGOs implemented projects, community members who served in the water and sanitation committees of eight projects visited and DWA officials who are involved in the water services function.

3.5. SAMPLING

Seaberg (cited in de Vos 2002, p.199) defines a sample as a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons. Purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method, was used to select 50 participants from the five NGOs included in the study, government (departmental and municipality) officials dealing with water services as well as community members who were involved in

the water and sanitation projects. Table 3.1 below shows the total number of respondents per category.

Table 3.1: Number of study participants per category.

Category	Number
NGOs (employees and board members)	20
Water committee members	20
Municipality employees	4
Departmental employees	6
Total	50

Source: Field work (2010).

3.6. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

De Vos (2002, p.291) states that no data collection method is superior to the other and that the purpose of the research usually guides the researcher to choose the most effective method. The data collection methods that were used in this study were interviews, focus groups and observation. The primary source of data was the NGO staff and board members, managers dealing with water issues within government institutions as well as water committee members of the eight projects that were visited.

Interviews were appropriate as this is an exploratory study. Interviews provided the right platform for engaging the respondents with regard to their perceptions, feelings and experiences. Again, interviews as an interactive process made clarification of questions and issues during the data collection stage easy. The flexibility of interviews made it possible to pursue specific issues that were raised by the respondents. Interviews with the respondents were held at their places of work and at their homes in order to avoid transport costs from their side and to cause minimal disturbances in their daily work schedule.

Focus group meetings were appropriate for this study as they provided the village water committees with the platform to share their views and to reach consensus regarding the background of their projects, their involvement in the project, the role played by the NGOs, their perceptions regarding NGOs and operation and maintenance issues. The advantage of using focus group is that group dynamics usually bring forth aspects of the topics that might not have been anticipated (Babbie, E R 2001, p. 294). What made focus group meetings easy to arrange is that each project serves one village and as a result committee members were within reach.

An interview schedule was developed in order to guide the interviews but the sequence and wording of questions were adapted per interview in order to allow the flow of information. The participants' responses shaped subsequent questions. The purpose of this interview schedule was to ensure that key issues relating to the objectives of the study were covered.

Observation as another method for data collection was used in this study as it was necessary to observe the activities of the NGOs, the physical objects that came about as a result of the NGOs' interventions and to check whether the projects are functional or not. Field visits made it possible to observe the issues mentioned above in their natural setting.

Secondary source of data obtained from the DWA included Masibambane programme documents, the project plans and reports. These documents were of assistance as they provided information relating to the inception of the Masibambane programme and its objectives, how NGOs became part of the programme, the achievements and challenges experienced. The NGOs' annual reports, profiles and brochures made it possible to know and understand the organizations' vision and mission statements as well as activities of the NGOs.

3.7. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The starting point for this study was the Department of Water Affairs regional office which provided valuable information regarding Masibambane programme and a list of NGOs that benefited from this programme. From there contact was made with individual NGOs to request permission to include their organizations in the study. These NGOs in turn provided information regarding the projects they have implemented, particulars of water committee members, employees and board members. Contact with NGOs enabled the process of selecting municipality officials who formed part of the study.

3.8. DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data generated from this study is in a form of words and pictures. The following themes emerged from the data that have been collected during the interviews: How the NGOs were established, their initial focus, type of projects implemented by NGOs, the relationship between NGOs and the state, the type of training sessions arranged for NGOs and their relevance to water services function.

3.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher tried to be transparent by clarifying the purpose of the study to all the participants. Participants were made aware that their participation is voluntary.

Respect was ensured throughout the study, for example, by making appointments with participants, following proper protocols at NGO offices and at community levels, requesting permission for conducting interviews, for visiting projects and for taking photos.

3.10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This type of study is costly as it involves a lot of traveling as the NGOs are scattered and their projects are all over the province.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the different views of the participants, observations made, data collected from secondary sources and the impression created by the findings regarding the capacity of Masibambane funded non-governmental organizations. Patton (2002, p.440) states that an interview guide, if carefully conceived constitutes an analytical framework for analysis. Topics from the interview schedule used in this study also assisted in grouping responses from different participants. Findings presented in this chapter emanate from combined individual case (NGO) and cross-case analysis.

4.2. GENERAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE LIMPOPO NGOS

There is a need to establish a link between the vision and mission statements of the NGOs that were studied and the services that they are rendering in order to understand their point of departure. The vision and mission statements of the organizations as reflected in the documents obtained from the organizations that were studied differed and some are very broad. Those vision and mission statements per NGO are as follows:

- The Mvula Trust: The vision of this organization as reflected in its organization's annual report (The Mvula Trust 2008/2009) is as follows: 'A South African in which all enjoy safe and affordable water and sanitation that contributes to good health and productive livelihoods'.

Its mission is to improve the health and livelihood of poor communities and the facilitation of the delivery of water and sanitation services. This organization's vision and mission are clear and directly related to water services and shows a link between water and the improvement of life. Two

objectives indicated in the document cited above are directly related to water services.

- Tsogang Water and Sanitation: The organization's profile (Tsogang Water and Sanitation 2008) states that this NGO's vision is as follows: 'Integrated sustainable development through projects and processes'. Its mission statement as reflected in the same document cited above is broad and is as follows: 'To support the development of the struggling rural & peri-urban people through the provision of a sound technical advice in infrastructure & housing delivery, the promotion of ongoing financial accountability, strengthening community organizations, operations & maintenance, and health & hygiene awareness'(Tsogang Water and Sanitation 2008) . From what has been stated above it is clear that this organization is not confined to one service but to a wide variety of services. The issue of water provision is not clearly spelled out even though it was learned through interviews and observations that water related projects are some of their major projects.
- Operation Hunger: Operation Hunger (2010, 4) states its mission statement as follows: 'To create partnerships between vulnerable households and caring people to combat malnutrition which, when suffered by children, undermines the nation's health, education and economic potential'. The issue of water provision is not spelled out in the above mentioned statement. However, this organization implement water projects which in some communities are utilized for food gardens (Themba F 2010, pers, comm., 15 June).
- Tlhavhama Training Initiative: The vision of this organization is to see self reliant people who have the ability to interpret and exercise their rights. This mission emphasizes focus on building the capacity of both individuals and organizations as well as making impact on poverty eradication (Tlhavhama training initiative brochure). The issue of water services

seems not to emerge from both the vision and the mission statements. E Mahlo (2010, pers, comm., 17 June) states that this organization was established for training purposes and only increased its scope of work in later years.

- Akanani Rural Development Association: The vision of this organization is to have empowered women, youth and children who are able to sustain themselves through various development initiatives. Its mission is to empower deprived and disadvantaged rural communities in the Limpopo province. (Akanani Rural Development Association brochure).

The vision and mission statements could not be the only issues that could be utilized to measure the capacity in terms of the performance of NGOs as they encompassed a lot of issues and water was not singled out as the core function. The issue stated above is in line with what has been discovered by Kelly & Lewis (2009, pp. 374-382) who pointed out that some of the NGO mission statements are phrased in such a way that measurement of performance is not easy.

The findings revealed that the focus of NGOs that were studied is diverse. These findings are in line with what has been stated by Obeyan (2005, p. 304) who warned against rigid classification of NGOs. It would be inappropriate to regard all the NGOs included in this study as strictly water sector NGOs as their services overlap into other sectors like health, agriculture and recreation. As a result these NGOs require a wide variety of skills in different fields in order to achieve what they aspire to achieve.

Most of the work done by The Mvula Trust and Tsogang Water and Sanitation is water related even though The Mvula Trust is presently focusing mainly on sanitation services. Tihavhama Training Initiative, which is a training organization, started implementing sanitation related projects from 2008. Operation Hunger, whose present focus is on building rain water tanks and egg

laying project, used to implement water projects, food gardens and feeding schemes in the past. Akanani Rural Development Association even though it provides sanitation related services, also renders recreational activities like building of stadiums, establishing youth cultural groups and arranging festivals. The same organization also works closely with the Department of Health on HIV / AIDS related activities. Again it manages other organizations that it has established, for example, Worship House Choir and youth clubs. The services rendered by the NGOs that were studied are indicated in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Services rendered by NGOs that were studied.

Akanani	Tsogang	The Mvula Trust	Operation Hunger	Thlavhama
Provision of Sanitation services	Water provision	Water provision	Water provision	Training NGOs and CBOs
Health and Hygiene promotion	Provision of Sanitation services	Provision of Sanitation services	Provision of Sanitation services	Provision of sanitation services
Feeding scheme	Health and Hygiene promotion	Health and Hygiene promotion	Health and Hygiene promotion	Health and Hygiene promotion
HIV / AIDS	HIV / AIDS	HIV / AIDS	Feeding scheme	Supporting CBOs with loans
Supporting CBOs with loans	Training NGOS and CBOs dealing with water issues	Training CBOs managing water projects	Food gardens	
Building of clinic, churches and crèches	Building of schools		Egg laying	
Building of stadiums				
Support to community structures				
Running youth programme				
Adult education				

Source: Field work (2010).

4.3. TYPES OF WATER PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY NGOs

All NGOs managers and board members interviewed explained that NGOs are involved in small scale community projects and this was confirmed during the field visits as one scheme serves only one village. The water projects make a difference in the lives of people as the recipients of the services were without any source of water as explained by community members. The challenge is that the impact is felt by a small group at a village level. Table 4.2 indicates the projects that were visited during the study period.

Table 4.2: List of projects that were visited.

Name of project	NGO
1. Ga- Rapitsi water project	The Mvula Trust
2. Sengatane water project	The Mvula Trust
3. Phikela sanitation project	Akanani Rural Development Association
4. Maupa water & sanitation project	Tsogang Water and Sanitation
5. Belleview water & sanitation project	Tsogang Water and Sanitation
6. Ga Molepane rain water harvesting project	Operation Hunger
7. Mashawana rain water harvesting project	Operation Hunger
8. Finaal sanitation project	Thlavhama Training Initiative

The NGOs indicated that the following contribute to the success of their projects: usage of appropriate technology; the ability to mobilize communities to participate in projects, establish good working relationships with communities, empower and encourage community ownership; responsiveness; flexibility and commitment. The types of water projects implemented by NGO are mentioned and discussed below.

4.3.1. Protection of spring and reticulation networks

This is an infrastructure project involving gravitating water from the spring to the households. The scope of work of such a project as stated by M King, (2010, pers. Comm., 21 June), the manager of Tsogang Water and Sanitation, includes a spring capture system, a main gravity flow line, building reservoirs, reticulation networks from the reservoir to the households and erection of stand pipes. The manager cited above further pointed out that rural communities benefiting from these projects stay next to mountains and are in most cases disadvantaged in terms of access to basic services. These types of projects contribute positively towards addressing water needs. The villages mentioned in table 4.3 below benefit from the projects that were implemented by the above-mentioned NGO between 2004 and 2006 and these projects are still functional.

Table 4.3: Sekhukhune villages which benefit from spring water source.

Name of village	Distance from the source to the village	Number of household benefiting
Mankgele	2km	50
Lefahla	2.5km	50
Mokgothu	4km	700

Source: Field work (2010).

4.3.2. Usage of boreholes as sources of water

M King, (2010, pers. Comm., 21 June) says the scope of these types of projects includes digging and equipping of boreholes, building of reservoirs, providing distribution networks and erection of standpipes. There are a number of projects that have been implemented by NGOs even though Akanani Rural Development Association was only involved in the refurbishment of boreholes. Table 4.4 indicated the number of project implemented by NGOs in various districts.

Table 4.4: Number of borehole-related projects implemented by NGOs.

NGO	Number of projects
The Mvula	41
Tsogang Water and Sanitation	4
Operation Hunger	100
Akanani Rural Development Association	5

Source: Field work (2010).

Four projects implemented by Tsogang Water and Sanitation and the Mvula Trust were visited. Employees of these NGOs pointed out that the communities that are served by these boreholes were without any source of water and used to depend on hawkers, neighbors who had boreholes, windmills that were far from households, the neighboring villages, wells and streams. One of the villages, namely, Belleview used to fetch water from the nearby police satellite office which is across the tarred road. This constant crossing of the busy tarred road to Giyani was a real risk for the children who were supposed to fetch water (Belleview water committee 2010, pers. comm., 1 July).

The following were observed during the visits to various projects: hand pumps, reservoirs and standpipes in various communities and the trenches that were dug by the community at Maupa village.

The findings indicated that the water projects addressed genuine needs of communities. The communities that were visited during the study approached the NGOs for assistance after having identified their needs as explained by the managers of the NGOs and water committee members. Sengatane community took a big risk of engaging the services of consultants who assisted in drafting the proposal prior approaching NGOs (Masoga, A 2010, pers. Comm., June). This shows desperation on the part of this community.



Figure 4.1: Stand pipe built by Tsogang Water and Sanitation NGO at Belleview village



Figure 4.2: Reservoir built by Tsogang Water and Sanitation NGO at Belleview village.

Table 4.5: Number of households which benefited from borehole-related projects.

NGO	Name of village	Name of district municipality	Number of households
Tsogang Water and Sanitation	Beleview	Mopani	300
Tsogang Water and Sanitation	Maupa	Mopani	500
The Mvula Trust	Ga Rapitsi	Capricorn	600
The Mvula Trust	Sengatane	Capricorn	1060

Source: Field work (2010).

The spirit of volunteerism was encouraged in all the projects even though this could not be sustained due to unemployment and poverty. Both M King, (2010, pers. Comm., 21 June) and A Modiba (2010, pers, comm., 22 June) state that the NGOs were compelled by the circumstances to set budget aside for payment of labourers. The salaries offered by the NGOs ranged from R5.00 to R80.00 per day.

The findings revealed that training was offered to committee members and labourers on skills necessary for managing projects including operation and maintenance. Employees of the NGOs explained that communities were encouraged to make contributions for diesel and repairs. The contributions varied per village and they ranged from R2.00 to R10.00 per month. It was also pointed out by the Belleview water committees (2010, pers. comm., 1 July) that Tsogang Water and Sanitation used to provide after-care services. This issue of after-care services was recommended by Huby & Stevenson (2003, p.196) who discovered that some of the NGO projects experience a problem of maintenance after the withdrawal of funding agencies especially in the case where the skills were not imparted to communities.

The boreholes drilled by the NGOs seem to have brought a sense of relief to some communities even though there are still others who are without potable water. Some community members are now making an income by fetching water from the water points, transport it with horse carts and sell it to the other households that are struggling to access the water points due to the landscape of the area (Themba F 2010, pers, comm., 15 June). This set-up was observed at Ga Molepane where Operation Hunger drilled boreholes for communities and Figure 4.3 serves as evidence.



Figure 4.3: A horse cart used by vendors at Ga Molepane village.

Some people in the above-mentioned village still prefer to wash their clothes in the stream even though water is made available to them (see Figure 4.4.).

The water projects visited in this study demonstrate that the NGOs manage to reach people who are without services, have the ability to mobilize the community and to impart skills. Again the projects that they are implementing seem to be simple as community members are able to operate and maintain them. These characteristics tally well with those that have been mentioned by Coetzee & Graaff (1996, p.113).

However, NGOs differ in terms of the types of projects they focus on, skills and competencies.



Figure 4.4: Ga Molepane residents washing clothes in the stream (Sekhukhune municipality).

4.3.3. Water conservation

Operation Hunger and The Mvula Trust are the only organizations in the Limpopo province which deal with water conservation in the form of rain water harvesting. They build tanks that store water for both domestic usage and food gardens. These tanks are built by local people who are trained by NGOs. According to F Themba (2010, pers, comm., 15 June) Operation Hunger built 292 tanks in Vhembe and Sekhukhune district municipalities while the Mvula Trust, which is supposed to build 572 tanks, has already completed 248 in Mopani district municipality (Molefe, G 2010, pers. comm., 17 June).

Table 4.6: Number of tanks built by Operation hunger in Sekhukhune and Vhembe municipalities.

Name of municipality	Name of village	Number of tanks
Sekhukhune	Jane Furse	20
Sekhukhune	Ga Molepane	150
Sekhukhune	Ga Riba	98
Vhembe	Mashawana	24
TOTAL		292

Source: Field work (2010).

Some of the tanks are not functional partly because of lack of rain and partly because some of them are built in empty stands as observed during the field visit at Ga Molepane. Operation Hunger seems not to be experienced with this type of activity as the workmanship in some areas is not satisfying as indicated in Figure 4.5 below.



Figure 4.5: A tank built by Operation Hunger at Mashawana village (Vhembe district municipality).

4.4. SANITATION RELATED PROJECTS

All the NGOs studied are involved in sanitation related activities even though Operation Hunger is presently not implementing any project. M Netshivhangane (2010, pers. com., 26 July) asserts that these types of projects include building of ventilated pit latrines at schools, clinics and at the households in rural areas and promotion of health and hygiene. The findings revealed that local labour was utilized in all the projects and that the NGOs support local businesses who supply building materials. The information gathered from those who were interviewed indicates that the sanitation infrastructure projects create employment and also offer job opportunities to rural communities. These findings are in line with the vision and mission statements of the NGOs even though the implementation period of a sanitation infrastructure project is very short.

According to F Maluleke (2010, pers, comm., 18 June), who is a member of Phikela sanitation committee, provision of sanitation facilities in their area has been a relief to families who used to relieve themselves in the bush. However, this community member cited above maintains that there are still two hundred families in their village who could not be catered for due to financial constraints.

Sanitation committee members of the projects that were visited state that community involvement was ensured from the onset and that they participated in the following:

- Planning and implementation of the projects.
- Selection of beneficiaries.
- Selection of labourers
- Monitoring implementation of the project
- Ensuring that labourers and contractors are paid and
- Logistical arrangements of the meetings and Health and Hygiene promotion.

The work performed by these NGOs is impressive and the facilities observed during the field visit were kept clean. The challenge is that there are some residents who continue to use their old dilapidated toilets despite being provided with the new ventilated improved pit latrines. One of the beneficiaries, whose new toilet was locked, explained that the new toilet is reserved for visitors. From this explanation it seems as if some residents did not grasp the importance of an improved ventilated pit latrine.



Figure 4.6: Old pit latrine still being used by the household at Phikela village.

Table 4.7 presents the number of household sanitation facilities provided by NGOs. These findings reveal that the NGOs are contributing positively towards sanitation backlog reduction even though it is just a drop in an ocean. The rationale for Thlavhama Training Initiative to split 20 sanitation facilities among 3

villages as indicated in table 4.7 is not clear as there are households in these villages which are still without sanitation facilities.

Table 4.7: Number of household sanitation facilities built by NGOs.

Name of organization	Name of district municipality	Name of village	Number of households
The Mvula Trust	Sekhukhune	Mafefe	300
	Capricorn	Blouberg villages	1405
Akanani Rural Development Association	Mopani	Phikela village	153 toilets
Thlavhama Training Initiative	Mopani	Finaal	7
		Buxa	10
		Tikilaene	3

Source: Field work (2010).

4.5. CAPACITY TO SERVE AS WATER SERVICES PROVIDERS

C Mashaba (2010, pers, comm., 10 August) states that the main function of the water services provider is operation and maintenance of water and sanitation infrastructure schemes of different sizes. The issue of the WSA and WSP arrangement mentioned in the Water Services Act (No. 108 of 1997) was discussed with the participants. According to this Act, WSAs, after having assessed their internal capacity to deliver water services, might opt to render the operation and maintenance services utilizing its internal resources or outsource the water service provider function. The document cited above states that various capacitated organizations including other municipalities, private organizations and NGOs can offer their services in this regard and enter into a service level agreement with the WSAs. This is something like a franchise model mentioned by Wall (2008, pp.95-108). This study investigated the possibility of NGOs to perform the water services provider function if given the opportunity. Tsogang

Water and Sanitation and The Mvula Trust argue that they have the capacity to operate as WSPs. The latter organization cited the following reasons: that

- i. The Mvula Trust is a big organization operating nationally and that it has the capacity to handle such a task.
- ii. It performs the WSP function at Alfred Nzo municipality and Mzimkhulu North (Northern Cape).
- iii. It is having contracts with DWA at regional level as an implementing agent managing various projects.

Both the municipality and DWA officials who were interviewed argue that the Limpopo NGOs are not yet ready to function at that level and the reasons cited are as follows:

- The Limpopo NGOs are mainly involved in the implementation of projects and not operation and maintenance.
- NGOs operate at a small-scale and thus might not be able to cope with medium to large- scale projects which are managed by municipalities.
- Lack of skilled personnel and
- Lack of financial stability.

This set-up of authority / provider contracts is not new in the water sector within Africa. Ghana also has the same type of arrangement where contracts for implementation of water and sanitation services are awarded on a competitive bidding basis (WaterAid 1999).

It is not convincing that the NGOs within the Limpopo province can perform the WSP task considering what has been mentioned by the government officials who know and understand the magnitude of the work.

4.6. CAPACITY TO MOBILIZE COMMUNITIES

Swanepoel & de Beer (2006, pp. 30-31) state that mobilization should be geared towards giving people the power and the right to make decisions. All the NGOs in this study try to adhere to the principles of community development. Findings revealed that NGOs provide an avenue for effective participation in decision making. NGOs regard the recipients of the services as people who are capable of making their own decisions and to accept responsibility for their decisions. This has been demonstrated by the active participation of communities in the development projects from the onset and adherence to the Mvula Trust NGO's policy of 8% community contribution towards capital costs of the scheme (Modiba, A 2010, pers, comm., 22 June). The mandate of water and sanitation committees established by communities includes the following: managing the project, recruitment of labour, deciding on water reticulation networks and sites for erecting standpipes, selecting beneficiaries of sanitation facilities and ensuring that communities contribute the agreed upon money for operation and maintenance (King, M 2010, pers, comm., 21 June). This is seen as a good initiative that encourages ownership and self-reliance. This is in line with what has been indicated by WaterAid (1999) which maintains that NGOs have a great deal of experience in using participatory approaches which are aimed at ensuring ownership of development projects.

4.7. CAPACITY TO IMPART KNOWLEDGE TO OTHERS

A Modiba (2010, pers, comm., 22 June) states that NGOs offer training to communities on how to dig and measure the length and width of trenches, build reservoirs and sanitation facilities, connect pipes and borehole parts and on record keeping. This training according to the employee of The Mvula Trust cited above enables communities to implement, operate and maintain their projects. This training is relevant and very helpful as operation and maintenance is usually a challenge in many projects. I Mothapo (2010, pers, comm., 6 August) who is one of the managers in Capricorn district municipality, pointed out that some of the community members who were trained by NGOs on operation and

maintenance have been absorbed by the municipalities who took over the projects that were initiated by NGOs as they were doing a good job.

4.8. MACHINERY AND OTHER WORKING TOOLS POSSESSED BY NGOS

Managers of NGOs pointed out that they outsource machinery if ever there is a need. Only Tsogang and Akanani indicated that they have some of the tools. All NGOs belonging to Limpopo Non-Governmental (LINGO) consortium funded directly by Irish government have light delivery vehicles which were bought through Irish funds (King, M 2010, pers. comm., 21 June). This was confirmed by managers of the NGOs. The Mvula Trust is the only organization among the NGOs studied which is not a member of this consortium (Molefe, G 2010, pers. comm., 17 June).

4.9. WATER RELATED QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS POSSESSED BY EMPLOYEES OF NGOS

Many participants acknowledge that there is a capacity challenge in terms of skills. They mentioned that engineers, technicians as well as unskilled labourers are crucial in the water services business. Only one organization namely the Mvula Trust has three technicians and a hydrologist and their qualifications are relevant to the water services business. It had an engineer in the past but unfortunately it could not retain him as the NGO could not afford a market related salary (Molefe, G 2010, pers. comm., 17 June). The employees that are responsible for the technical work in the other four organizations have no relevant formal education. Instead they indicated that they receive on-site training from their own organizations and even from other institutions.

Lack of skilled personnel in some of the NGOs compels them to outsource service providers for various tasks. Only two organizations namely Operation Hunger and Tsogang Water and Sanitation are presently hands on even though the latter organization out-sources special services like geohydrology and drilling

services as such services need to be performed by registered professionals (King, M 2010, pers. comm., 21 June).

The skills gap identified by various NGO employees and managers is as follows:

- Testing of water quality
- Understanding community dynamics
- Water conservation and water demand management
- Operation and maintenance
- Financial management
- Theory on appropriate technology
- Installation of windmills and
- Knowledge management.

Lack of skills might disadvantage NGOs when marketing their services to the municipalities.

4.10. MASIBAMBANE TRAINING AND ITS RELEVANCE TO WATER SERVICES

The study found out that the following courses were arranged for NGOs through Masibambane programme: fund raising, governance, financial management, environmental management, monitoring and evaluation, building of toilets, advocacy, lobbying, tendering, facilitation, resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation, leadership and health and hygiene. The above mentioned information was obtained from both secondary source of data and the participants. There are mixed feelings among employees of the NGOs regarding the relevance and benefits of these courses. The majority value the training and support offered through the programme and state that it equipped them with knowledge on how to manage projects and their organizations.

Few employees, even though they acknowledge that learning occurred, feel that the Masibambane programme does not address the needs of the NGOs. Their

main concern is that funds are not made available for them to implement community projects which they regard as their core function. Again, the issue of channeling funds to government and not directly to NGOs seems to be a worrying factor. The discussion they had with the donor regarding this issue made their dreams a reality as in 2008 donors channeled funds directly to NGOs through Tsogang Water and Sanitation organization for implementation of projects. This initiative led to the formation of Limpopo Non-Governmental Organization (LINGO) (King, M (2010, pers. comm., 21 June).

Some of the training sessions that were arranged through LINGO are similar to those offered through Masibambane programme even though the following were added: project management, accounting, marketing, gender mainstreaming, ground water protection, water source development and hand pipe designs.

Literature clearly indicates that capacity building refers to both organizational and technical assistance on operational issues (Lewis, D 1998, p. 503). Findings indicate that courses offered through Masibambane programme were mostly geared towards developing the skills for managing organizations and for ensuring sustainability of the organizations. Training on technical issues was not given much attention even though Tsogang Water and Sanitation tried to balance both organizational capacity building and technical training.

Table 4.8: Number of trainees

Name of programme	Number of NGO employees
Masibambane	42
LINGO	18
Total	60

Source: Field work (2010).

4.11. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NGOs AND GOVERNMENT

All the respondents from the NGOs perceive the relationship between government departments and the NGOs as good while the relationship between municipalities and NGOs is perceived as not satisfying. NGOs regard themselves as partners to municipalities and not as competitors. NGOs feel as if the municipalities are not keen to work with them. They all raised the issue of the procurement process of municipalities which according to them is not user-friendly. Some of the NGOs lost interest in the tenders advertised by municipalities as they feel that they are wasting a lot of resources without getting the deals. Some of the municipality officials seem not to understand why NGOs are contesting for tenders as according to them the NGOs are not supposed to make profit.

Municipality employees raised the following concerns with regard to NGOs:

- Non-alignment of NGOs' services to the municipality integrated development plans (IDPs) which are guiding tools used by all municipalities for planning purposes. Municipality officials maintain that NGOs' selection criterion for projects is not clear and that this causes confusion within communities. Municipalities would like to be consulted by NGOs prior implementation to discuss prioritized areas and hotspots (Ramathoka, N 2010, pers. comm., 29 June).
- The model used by NGOs creates problems of unequal services to communities. The point here is in relation to contributions for diesel made by the beneficiaries of NGO projects. Municipalities are not comfortable with the hand over of the projects to the communities after completion. They prefer the schemes to be handed over to the municipalities who have to ensure equal services to all communities. The NGOs who are against the idea argue that municipalities create dependency.
- Lack of transparency with regard to funds received from donors and how they are utilized. This, according to municipality officials, hampers the

initiative to coordinate resources. NGOs maintain that they are accountable to their boards and donors.

What is important is that the municipality officials acknowledge the good work that is being done by the NGOs despite the issues that have been raised in this section. They maintain that the NGOs are the water sector stakeholders who augment the services rendered by government.

4.12. CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY NGOs

4.12.1. FUNDS

This is regarded as a serious challenge by all managers, board members and employees of NGOs. Their concern is both for survival of their NGOs and for community projects. This according to them is partly caused by the NGOs' reliance on donor funding and partly due to their inability to generate income to sustain their organizations. Their contract with the Irish government which funds members of LINGO comes to an end in 2012 and as a result they are not certain about their future. They shared their frustrations of not succeeding to secure funds internally within South Africa. There are authors who strongly believe that NGOs will not survive without donors.

4.12.2. COMPETITION AMONG NGOs

From what was gathered NGOs compete for funds and job opportunities. As a result they work in silos and do not streamline their activities. E Mahlo (2010, pers. comm., 17 June) proposes a good model in which NGOs can identify a needy community and agree to channel all their funds towards it so as to make an impact. This according to him will curb the piece meal services that are being rendered presently. This proposal if implemented will ensure coordination of services as suggested by Dicklitch (cited in Sooryamoort 2003, p. 207).

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter indicates what has been achieved through this study and the recommendations that came about as a result of this study.

5.2. SUMMARY

5.2.1 Projects implemented by NGOs and how they are managed.

The projects implemented by NGOs in this study make classification of these NGOs in terms of sectors difficult as these NGOs' activities are diverse and overlap in various sectors like water, health, education and recreation. However, there are common elements in these NGOs, for example, they are involved in water and sanitation related activities, depend on donors for survival and are engaged in community development. Another issue that was discovered is that their vision and mission statements are not strictly pursued by the NGOs themselves and some are complicated and not easy to comprehend.

Other positive issues that emerged from the study are the empowerment of communities through training, employment and job opportunities.

5.2.2. The relevance of NGO projects to water services.

Not all the projects are relevant to water and sanitation services but water and sanitation related projects implemented by the NGOs in this study address core water services issues. Their operations are limited to small geographical areas and thus they do not generate large-scale change. However they positively make a contribution towards reducing water and sanitation backlog.

Some of the projects like health and hygiene, gender mainstreaming and HIV / AIDS have a link to both water and sanitation services. Promotion of health and

hygiene in communities which are without water is a real challenge. Gender mainstreaming is a cross cutting issue in all the projects as issues affecting both men and women should be considered and addressed when planning and implementing community projects.

5.2.3. The skills possessed by personnel employed by NGOs.

The capacity in terms of skilled personnel is a real challenge as most of the NGO employees have no relevant skills that are necessary and relevant for water services function. Again, some NGOs operate with a small number of employees. As a result NGOs are compelled by circumstances to outsource services.

5.2.4. The relevance of Masibambane training to water related skills.

The Masibambane NGO capacity programme seem not to be well designed to address the water related skills. Most of the courses offered are relevant for organizational development. Training should have tried to strike a balance between the organizational development and technical skills development in such a way as to cater for the needs of both management and ordinary staff members. This does not imply that this capacity building initiative was a waste of money as the courses that were offered are also necessary for organizational survival.

5.3. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the level of capacity of the NGOs that were studied differs. Again, Masibambane programme even though it empowered the employees of the NGOs on both organizational and operational issues, did not adequately address the needs of the NGOs.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1. There is a need by the water sector to do a thorough capacity need assessment among all water sector NGOs in order to capacitate these

- NGOs to the level where they can confidently render services on behalf of municipalities.
- 5.4.2. Masibambane CSO capacity building programme needs to be redesigned to accommodate the training needs of the NGOs.
 - 5.4.3. It is recommended that the emerging NGOs be supported by either sector partners or fellow NGOs on organizational issues as some of the issues mentioned in their vision and mission statements are not followed and in some instances not even clear. As a result rephrasing of some of the NGOs' vision and mission statements might be helpful for marketing purposes.
 - 5.4.4. NGOs need to be encouraged to be focused in order for their activities to make an impact.
 - 5.4.5. The issue of the joint venture model proposed by one of the participants need to be encouraged and followed up as this seems to be a good idea which might yield better results. This idea needs to be raised with the donors for buy-in.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NGO MANAGERS AND BOARD MEMBERS INTERVIEW

ASSESSMENT OF THE CAPACITY OF MASIBAMBANE DONOR FUNDED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) TO PROVIDE WATER SERVICES IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

1. BACKGROUND OF THE ORGANIZATION

- 1.1. Give the brief background of your organization.
- 1.2. What is the vision and mission of your organization?
- 1.3. Explain the issues included in the strategic plan of your organization.
- 1.4. How does your organization ensure the attainment of the goals stated in your strategic plan?

2. FINANCIAL MECHANISMS

- 2.1. Explain how the organization is financed and your organization sustains itself.

3. THE CAPACITY OF THE ORGANIZATION TO PROVIDE WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES

- 3.1. Explain the contribution made by your organization towards water and sanitation backlog eradication in Limpopo province.
- 3.2. Explain the type of water infrastructure projects that are implemented by your organization and the number of projects implemented in Limpopo province.
- 3.3. What type of sanitation infrastructure projects are implemented by your organization and the number of projects implemented in Limpopo province.

- 3.4. Which relevant equipments for provision of water and sanitation services does your organization possess?
- 3.5. What is your perception regarding your organization's capacity to function as a water services provider (WSP)?
- 3.6. Are there any attempts made to contest for water services tenders advertised by the WSAs? If yes, for which services and what was the outcome?
- 3.7. What types of projects besides water and sanitation infrastructure projects are implemented by your organization?
- 3.8. Is your organization outsourcing services? If yes, elaborate on the type of services that are outsourced and the reasons for outsourcing.
- 3.9. What are the challenges experienced by your organization in implementing the water and sanitation infrastructure projects within the Limpopo province?
- 3.10. What could be the solution to the identified challenges?

4. THE PERCEPTION OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES

- 4.1. What is your overall impression of the Masibambane NGO capacity building programme?
- 4.2. How relevant was the Masibambane NGO capacity building programme to your organization and to the water and sanitation services?
- 4.3. How is the knowledge gained through these capacity building initiatives utilized?
- 4.4. Provide information regarding the other training sessions / workshops / courses attended by staff members besides those arranged under Masibambane programme? Explain their relevance to the both your organization and the water business.
- 4.5. What are your recommendations regarding future capacity building initiatives?

5. CAPACITY IN TERMS OF SKILLS

- 5.1. Explain the skills possessed by different staff members & their educational background.
- 5.2. In your opinion are the skills identified above relevant in the water business?
- 5.3. What are the skills gaps identified by your organization? What are the plans to address the challenge?

6. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STATE

- 6.1. What is your perception regarding the relationship between your organization and the state (at all levels)?

ANNEXURE B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES OF NGOs

ASSESSMENT OF THE CAPACITY OF MASIBAMBANE DONOR FUNDED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) TO PROVIDE WATER SERVICES IN LIMPOPO.

1. FORMAL EDUCATION

- 1.1. Explain your educational background
- 1.2. What is your involvement in the planning and implementation of water and sanitation projects?

2. CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES

- 2.1. Which sessions / workshops / courses organized through the Masibambane programme have you attended?
- 2.2. What is your impression of the Masibambane NGO capacity building programme?
- 2.3. Do you consider the Masibambane programme capacity building initiatives to be relevant to water services? If so, in what way?
- 2.4. Explain how the knowledge and skills gained through Masibambane programme are utilized in your organization.
- 2.5. Indicate the other capacity building workshops and courses attended besides those arranged through Masibambane programme and the relevance to your organization as well as to the water business.
- 2.6. What are your training needs that you would like your organization to attend to?

ANNEXURE C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MUNICIPALITY WORKERS

ASSESSMENT OF THE CAPACITY OF MASIBAMBANE DONOR FUNDED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) TO PROVIDE WATER SERVICES IN LIMPOPO.

1. THE CAPACITY OF NGOs TO DELIVER WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES

- 1.1. What is the contribution made by water sector NGOs within your municipality?
- 1.2. What is your impression of the water projects implemented by the NGOs?
- 1.3. What is your impression of the sanitation projects implemented by the NGOs?
- 1.4. What types of tenders are awarded to NGOs? If no tenders are awarded, what is the reason?
- 1.5. How can the NGOs support WSAs with regard to provision of water services?

ANNEXURE D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS

ASSESSMENT OF THE CAPACITY OF MASIBAMBANE DONOR FUNDED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) TO PROVIDE WATER SERVICES IN LIMPOPO.

1. Explain the objectives of the Masibambane NGO capacity building project.
2. Which aspects were addressed in the training of NGOs?
3. How many employees of NGOs attended the training sessions?
4. What is your perception of the contributions made by NGOs with regard to water services?
5. What is your impression of the capacity of the NGOs to render water services functions?

ANNEXURE E: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

ASSESSMENT OF THE CAPACITY OF MASIBAMBANE DONOR FUNDED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) TO PROVIDE WATER SERVICES IN LIMPOPO

KNOWLEDGE AND THE IMPRESSION OF THE PROJECT

1. Explain the involvement of the community in the project.
2. Explain the role of the PSC in the project.
3. Explain the scope of the project and whether the work was completed.
4. How was the project planned and implemented?
5. Explain the attitudes of the community towards the project.
6. What are your comments regarding the operation and maintenance of the project?
7. What is your opinion regarding the capacity of the NGO that implemented the project?

ANNEXURE E: LIST OF STUDY RESPONDENTS (50)

NGO MANAGERS

1. Goodenough Molefe
2. Frans Themba
3. Mary King
4. Erick Mahlo
5. Vicky Muvhali

NGO EMPLOYEES

1. Alex Modiba
2. Tebogo Mahladi
3. Prince Nkoana
4. Ories Malatji
5. Kenny Phasha
6. David Maluleke
7. Ritchard Manamela
8. Hurisani Thathaisa
9. Catherine Baloyi
10. Jeffrey Mlaudzi
11. Leornad Davis

NGO BOARD MEMBERS

1. Phil Masha
2. Ivan Fallayn
3. Charles Mosehle
4. Ditshego Magoro

WATER AND SANITATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. Josephine Maluleke
2. Thomas Maluleke
3. Efia Phago

4. Caroline Mehale
5. Ezekiel Khalo
6. Amos Masoga
7. M. Mashatole
8. Alpheus Selopsyane
9. Margaret Mohale
10. Mapula Mathabathe
11. Immah Ngobeni
12. Nancy Ramalatso
13. Mimmie Leshabane
14. Dora Mako
15. Patricia Matlou
16. Regina Tapanyekga
17. Lizzy Matshepane
18. Beauty Maponya
19. M. Motene
20. V. Moropane

MUNICIPALITY OFFICIALS

1. Ngoako Ramathoka
2. Ike Mothapo
3. Jackson Nkadimeng
4. Mr. Makola

DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS

1. Cecilia Mashaba
2. Ryni Shai
3. Mpeteku Masegela
4. Patrick Matala
5. Maria Netshivhangani
6. Helen Moremong