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Indigent policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

During 2000 and 2001 the Centre for Development Support conducted research into the practice of non-payment of municipal services in order to build capacity of local government political office bearers and career officials. The purpose of this research was not only to explore payment practices, but also to investigate the economic consequences of non-payment. Possible solutions to non-payment were also sought. A questionnaire was taken down with households in thirty-two sampled local authorities in South Africa and in-depth interviews were held with financial managers at the different municipalities.

The main finding of this study was that in many instances poverty is the main cause of non-payment of services. Inequality and poverty are more pronounced amongst non-paying households than amongst households that are paying their municipal account in full each month. This is the case regardless of whether poverty is measured in terms of expenditure or income and regardless of what poverty line or poverty measure is used. To address this situation, municipalities will have to make considerable efforts to design and implement effective indigent policies. Indigent policies will also play a crucial role in affording the poorest of the poor access to basic services, in the process partly alleviating the problem of non-payment of services. Monitoring is also necessary for ensuring that the manner in which indigent policies is managed by municipalities does not endanger fiscal sustainability and meets the objective of the grant. This is crucial if the indigent policy is to be used as a tool with which poverty-related problems of non-payment of services can effectively be addressed. It is felt that more work is required to develop the necessary structures and systems for effectively managing indigent policies at the municipal sphere of government.

From the deliberations and outcomes of nine provincial research workshops during March 2001, it is evident that the implementation and management of the existing indigent¹ policy support program is a local governance issue of major concern. Hence, the need for further research on this issue as a continuation of the Payment of Services Project. This document sets out a research proposal by the Centre for Development

¹ Very poor people (the poorest of the poor)

Support (CDS) to study the management of indigent policies at the local sphere of government.

The study was conducted in four selected municipalities across four provinces of South Africa. The intention is to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of indigent policies by municipalities.

1.1 Background and rationale for the research

Poverty alleviation and the rendering of basic services to inhabitants of towns and cities who cannot afford to pay for essential services are rated highly on the priority list of government as well as advocacy and interest groups. This is reflected in several policy documents such as the **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996** (Act 103 of 1996), the **Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP)** and the new **enabling legislation for municipalities**. This need was also expressed at national and regional conferences of relevant organizations. South African municipalities are in terms of the Constitution entitled to "... an equitable share of revenue raised nationally..." to enable them to provide basic services and perform their functions². Although the Constitution does not define basic services, for most municipalities this includes potable water supply, road access to dwellings, sewage and refuse removal and storm water drainage. To properly manage the "equitable share" every municipality must adopt an indigent support policy setting out at least:

- Procedures for identifying indigent households;
- Procedures for verifying the information received;
- A definition of indigence;
- The qualifying conditions for participation in the scheme;
- A process for applying for the subsidy;
- Administering the subsidy;
- Monitoring the efficiency of implementation;
- Detecting and dealing with free-riders/fraudulence;
- community education with regard to indigent policy;
- Minimum levels of service provision; and
- The services that qualify for subsidisation.

² Currently there is an S-grant which is phased in and earmarked for service delivery to the poor.

1.1 Research Aim

The overarching research aim of this study is to do a **comparative analysis and evaluation of the formulation and implementation of the indigent policy support programs at the local sphere of government.**

1.2 Research Objectives

The research objectives are therefore:

- To do a descriptive and comparative analysis of current indigent policies in four selected newly amalgamated municipalities.
- To identify and analyze the major obstacles and impediments in the formulation and implementation of indigent policies in these selected local governments.
- To assess the outcomes and effects of current indigent policies in these selected local governments.
- To identify guidelines that may be followed and applied by local government managers and decision-makers to eliminate and/or overcome the identified obstacles.

1.3 Target groups for the study

Local authorities (especially officials that work with local government finances and indigent policies) and selected indigent households are the target groups of this study.

1.4 Research methodology

In this research exercise, the Centre for Development Support at the University of the Free State conducted four case studies to fulfil the ultimate aim of doing a comparative analysis and evaluation of the formulation and implementation of the indigent policy support programs at the local sphere of government.

The four selected municipalities include a metropole (eTekweni Unicity) (Durban), one city/large town (Nelson Mandela Metropole) (Port Elizabeth), one secondary town (Mangaung Local Municipality) Bloemfontein) and one small town (Witzenberg Local Municipality) (Ceres). These sites were selected according to their size and whether they had an indigent policy in place or not. If they had, they needed to have been implementing it for some time.

The research strategy followed a multi-pronged qualitative approach. Focus group sessions and in-depth interviews were held in the four case study sites with respectively community members and key local government officials responsible for managing indigent policies respectively. For the Ceres data collection, a Masters student in Public Management from the University of Cape Town was recruited. In Port Elizabeth two Masters students from the Port Elizabeth Technikon studying Public Administration were used and in Bloemfontein a Public Management student as well as a Sociology student were recruited. Finally in Durban a Masters student in Development Studies was recruited. A researcher at the Centre for Development Support trained the fieldworkers. Training included:

- A background to the project ;
- A background to indigent policies;
- Training in conducting focus group sessions;
- Transcribing focus group sessions; and
- Training in conducting in-depth interviews.

1.4.1 Focus group sessions

Focus group sessions were conducted both with respondents from households that were registered as indigents as well as with respondents from households that although eligible, are not registered with the council as indigent. The focus group sessions were attempts to gather information pertaining to the experiences of the indigent policy program by beneficiaries. In addition it was also essential to find out from **potential** beneficiaries what opinions they hold with regard to the indigent policy of their municipalities.

Fieldworkers recruited from institutions of higher education close to the study sites facilitated the focus group sessions in the indigenous languages of the areas. There were between 8-15 participants at each focus group. Within each study site, the focus group sessions reflected a geographic spread of the study community. In Ceres, two focus group sessions were held, in Bloemfontein six, in Port Elizabeth six and in Durban three. Durban provided a unique situation in that there is no indigent register so three focus groups were held to ascertain public perception around the so-called universal approach to subsidising services. Participants were recruited in two ways. In the case of those respondents registered as indigent, lists were obtained from the

council and people were approached at their homes and invited to attend the focus group. With regards to the non-recipient group, ward councillors were used to facilitate the process. Households were selected if they could answer no to the following two questions:

- Does your household earn a monthly combined income of above RXX (criteria amount for council)?
- Are you registered with the council as indigent?

The fieldworkers and the Centre for Development Support researcher jointly conducted the in-depth interviews.

1.4.2 Follow-up workshops with stakeholders

As a final data collection strategy, report-back workshops were held at each study site. Councilors (only in the case of eTekweni) municipal officials and community members attended these workshops. On the completion of the data collection process, researchers at the Department of Public Management compiled a strategy that could serve as guidelines to assist local government officials in the implementation of the indigent policy. This draft strategy was circulated for critical reading among academics and then finalised. The research findings were presented to each of the four case study sites at a workshop. Council members, career officials, community members, traditional leaders and community leaders were all invited to these workshops. This was an attempt to ensure that the research does not remain only in the academic domain, but that it contributes towards the ultimate aim of the study to enhance the quality of indigent policy formulation and implementation in municipalities.

2. CURRENT REALITY

The South African National Government has allocated equitable shares to municipalities across the country to assist them in fulfilling their constitutional duty of providing equitable municipal service provision to all the inhabitants of towns and cities. The way that this funding is spent is not prescribed. The so-called S and I grants are unconditional grants. Municipalities have either elected to follow a blanket/universal approach (everyone in a certain geographic location enjoys the

benefit of the subsidy) or a targeted approach (getting the right subsidy to the right people). The benefits of the targeted approach lie in the ability to curb leakage. Leakage refers to the process by which the subsidy gets to the wrong people or is wasted. Targeting subsidies, however, is a relatively cumbersome administrative process and subsequently expensive both in terms of financial and human resources.

Against this backdrop, the four study sites have adopted the following approaches:

Table 1: Indigent policy support

Site	Approach
eThekweni Unicity (Durban)	Universal/Blanket
Nelson Mandela Metropole (Port Elizabeth)	Targeted (with indigent register)
Mangaung Local Municipality (Bloemfontein)	Combination of universal and targeted
Witzenberg Local Municipality (Ceres)	Targeted (with indigent register)

In the case of the eThekweni Unicity, all inhabitants get the first 6Kl of water used per month, free of charge. From early in 2002, 50KwH of electricity will also be provided to each household. Any consumption over these free allocations needs to be paid for. The municipality keeps no indigent register.

The Nelson Mandela Metropole operates on the basis of an indigent register and only those people that are registered with the council as indigent receive the subsidy. There are two levels of subsidy allocation. Households that earn a monthly combined income of less than one state pension qualify for 6Kl of free water a month as well as a 100% subsidy on general rates, general service charges, sewerage and refuse charges. In the second category, households that earn a combined monthly income of more than one state pension but less than R800 per month receive the same water benefits but only receive a 50% subsidy on the other services. Electricity does not form part of the subsidy. Indigent residents need to apply directly to the council in person to access the subsidy. The council verifies these applications and if approved, the household is registered with the council as indigent indefinitely with an understanding that, should the household's financial status change, they inform the council. All households are visited at least once a year to verify the indigent status of beneficiaries in an attempt to reduce free riders abusing the system.

The Mangaung Local Municipality is currently using a combined system. In 1996, as an extension of the Masakhane Campaign, an indigent register was opened and

households were targeted according to their poverty status. This was initially done to try and address low payment levels for municipal services. These indigent households were provided with 5Kl of free water per month and free sanitation services. In October 2000 the situation changed with the council providing all residents with 6Kl of free water per month. Indigent households thus receive 6Kl of free water together with free sanitation. The council is also currently considering the possibility of introducing indigent burials to assist the poorest of the poor.

The Witzenberg Local Municipality operates in the same way as The Nelson Mandela Metropole. Applications need to be made directly to the council, applications are verified and the household is registered as indigent. The difference in Ceres lies with the beneficiary period. Households need to reapply every three months for the subsidy. 20KwH of electricity are also included in the bundle of subsidised services. The difference in approaches is understandable seeing that the number of residents in the Witzenberg Local Municipality is considerable smaller and therefore easier to manage than in the case of Nelson Mandela Metropole.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

*For the purposes of this report, the findings of this research project are based on data collected during the meetings referred to above. First are the viewpoints of the various participants expressed during the **focus group meetings** and second the views of participants in the different **workshops**.*

3.1 Findings during focus group meetings

Although a substantial number of similarities among participants in focus group meetings were identified, it was regarded appropriate to deal with the findings in each municipality separately. This discussion provides a general overview of the state of affairs with regard to the indigent policies in the different areas. The typical problems that the different stakeholders are experiencing in this regard are dealt with in paragraph 3.2, where the workshop findings are discussed in detail.

3.1.1 eTekweni Unicity

The eTekweni Unicity has no formal indigent policy in operation at this stage, although provision is made for providing free basic services (6Kl of water to all

residents). Focus group participants at Kwadabeka Sub 5, Ntuzuma Unit 5 and Folweni townships were engaged in discussions around the provision of free water and electricity and their perceptions regarding the process.

It is firstly important to note that all the participants indicated that they had very little knowledge about the provision of free water and electricity. The participants all heard about this assistance through the media (particularly the radio) and were not at all certain about the implementation of the “policy”. However, all the participants were in agreement that there was a need for the provision of free basic services since people indicated difficulties in paying for service accounts. One of the primary reasons cited for this was the high rate of unemployment in the area.

At this stage there is also a problem concerning the billing system, since residents in these particular areas have not paid for water previously and as far as electricity is concerned are making use of the prepaid system. There is therefore uncertainty about the extent to which free services are to be provided and how billing and payment will take place.

Respondents have furthermore indicated that they are more than willing to pay for services on the condition that the quality of services rendered is drastically improved. An example is the availability of water supply to individual households. At present many households share communal standpipes and participants indicated that they would like for this to be changed. The following suggestions were made by the focus groups that were viewed as a means of improving the provision of these free basic services:

- Improved communication with communities
- More education in terms of the indigent policy needs to be given to communities through for example workshops.
- Proper socio-economic surveys should be carried out.
- Installation of individual connections to households is encouraged
- Mechanisms for implementation and monitoring should be in place.

The absence of an indigent policy could be regarded as a possible problem for the Durban Unicity. An indigent policy similar to that of Mangaung clearly outlines criteria upon which people can be assisted and if effectively communicated, also enables the community to utilize the assistance provided to them. It could thus be seen to be in the best interest of the community that a clear strategy be developed in order to assist these communities. A further discussion in this regard takes place in paragraph 4 of this report.

3.1.2 Nelson Mandela Metropole

The Nelson Mandela Metropole's indigent policy is based on the number of households that may qualify as beneficiaries and the availability of the Inter Governmental Transfer. This policy as adopted by the former Port Elizabeth Transitional Local Council, has been in existence since 1 July 1997 and comprises the following:

- Households where the combined gross monthly income of all occupants over the age of 18 years does not exceed the equivalent of one state welfare pension per month qualify for a 100% subsidy on the following:
 - ❖ General rates.
 - ❖ General service charges.
 - ❖ Sewerage.
 - ❖ 12 Kl. of water.
 - ❖ Refuse charges.

This subsidy only applies when the consumer agrees in writing that a flow-control washer may be installed to restrict the supply of water to the premises.

- Households where the combined gross monthly income of all occupants over the age of 18 years exceeds one state welfare pension but does not exceed R 800 per month in respect of non-pensioners or two state welfare pensions per month, qualify for a 50% subsidy on:
 - ❖ General rates;
 - ❖ General service charges;
 - ❖ Sewerage; and
 - ❖ Refuse charges.

In respect of water, where supply is metered, such households qualify for a 100% subsidy on 6 Kl of water with a concession of up to 12 Kl. If consumption exceeds 12 Kl per month, the household is charged for actual consumption exceeding 6 Kl at normal tariffs. Where supply is not metered, households are subsidised at 50% on fixed charges. In both these instances the subsidy only applies when the consumer agrees in writing that a flow-control washer restricts the supply of water to the premises.

- Electricity does not form part of the subsidy and approved tariffs apply. To ensure affordable consumption of electricity, households qualifying for indigent assistance are required to change over to pre-payment meters in respect of that commodity. Financial assistance is provided to households where conversions have to take place from a credit to a pre-paid meter, provided that the meters have not been tampered with.
- Arrears up to 30 June 1997 on the accounts of households classified as indigent was suspended until such time as clarity has been received on the policy of Central Government with regard to the writing off of debts. Interest will continue to accrue on arrear amounts from the date of suspension and consumers have to sign an Acknowledgement of Debt. Electricity components of bills of such households are included in the suspense account of households. Tampering with supplies disqualifies households from the suspension of electricity bills.
- Re-assessment of each case is done after three months.
- Households owing more than one property do not qualify as beneficiaries of the indigent policy.
- A list of indigent households is made available to the Information Trust Corporation.
- An appeal procedure is in existence for unsuccessful applicants.

3.1.2.1 Justification of indigent policy

It was agreed that such a policy is essential and that it is an effective way to address the needs of the poor. The policy is central to assisting those that cannot pay for service charges and to assist in identifying those that can. The implementation of the policy provides for an opportunity to also educate applicants as to the management of their finances so that they can pay for their services. The employees of the

municipality that attended the meeting were of opinion that the policy has also been instrumental in boosting the payment of municipal services.

3.1.2.2 The formulation process

The policy was initiated in 1996 as part of the Masakhane campaign. The indigent policy was approved after a workshop was conducted between councillors and career officials.

Since the adoption of the policy the number of applicants registered as beneficiaries policy has varied between 22 000 in 1997 and 4 394 in 2000. These numbers are reflected in the table below.

Table 2: Number of new registrations for indigent support in the Nelson Mandela Metropole

Year	No of registrations
1997	22 000
1998	9451
1999	3535
2000	4394

Currently the Department responsible for the implementation of the policy deals with approximately 300-400 applications per month. Since the amalgamation of the different municipalities has taken place, the existing policy needs to be amended in order to accommodate Colchester, Seaview, Uitenhage and Despatch. The existing policy is still only applicable to the former Port Elizabeth TLC area of jurisdiction. Approximately 33 000 people are currently registered as indigent in the Nelson Mandela Metropole.

The team that manages the policy consists of 24 people. Nine of them operate from Brister House in the city and one each from Motherwell, Zwide, New Brighton, and Cleary Park. Eight of the team members are fieldworkers, acting as verification officers and staffing other satellite offices. In addition, 3 staff members are responsible for data processing and the administration of accounts.

Table 3: Business hours of satellite offices in Nelson Mandela Metropole

SATELLITE OFFICE	NUMBER OF DAYS	TIMES
Brister House	5 days per week	08:00 - 16:30
New Brighton	5 days per week	08:00 -16:30
Cleary Park	5 days per week	08:00 -16:30
Motherwell	5 days per week	08:00 -16:30

Zwide	3 days per week	08:00 - 16:00
Korsten	Every Wednesday	08:00 - 16:00
Mthombolwazi	Every Thursday	08:00 - 16:00
Galvendale	Every Tuesday	08:00 - 16:00
Walmer	Every Tuesday	08:00 - 16:00

3.1.2.3 Training of officials

All of the staff members have undergone appropriate training. They have all been employed since the inception of the policy and the general feeling is that the training that was offered to them provided them with the necessary knowledge and skills to undertake their duties effectively. The need was expressed that the team should meet more regularly (i.e. every 3-6 months) to discuss their experiences and to collectively identify solutions to problems.

3.1.2.4 Culture of dependency

All of the respondents disagreed with the statement that policies such as the indigent policy create a culture of dependency. The only reservation expressed was with regard to the implementation of the policy. They believe that the policy is correct and its aim is correct but that the system lacks a foolproof mechanism to prevent abuse.

3.1.2.5 Communication measures

In 1997, at the outset of the implementation of the policy, a mass media campaign was launched. The policy was advertised in the media and at mass community meetings. Pamphlets were handed out and posters were put up in all municipal offices. Leaflets were sent out with all the municipal accounts. The process of inserting leaflets in with municipal accounts is repeated every now and again. The majority of respondents interviewed mentioned that the responsibility of advertising the policy rests on the shoulders of the councillors. The view was expressed that it was their responsibility to inform their constituencies of Council's policies through the appropriate existing municipal structures such as Ward Committees. The role of officials with regard to communication could not be over- emphasised.

During the application process, each clause of the declaration that is signed by the applicant is read out and initialed. This is done to ensure that the applicant understands and takes cognisance of all the conditions of the policy. The application form is filled in together with an indigent officer to ensure that the applicant understands each of these conditions. A verification officer verifies each application.

3.1.2.6 Duration of benefits

In terms of the current policy beneficiaries do not have to re-apply for registration as indigents. Shortly after the inception of the policy, beneficiaries had to re-apply one year after registration, but this arrangement resulted in too much administration. With the existing high level of unemployment in that area, most of the recipient's financial situations do not improve much.

3.1.2.7 Verification of application and beneficiaries

In the Nelson Mandela Metropole, electricity is supplied mainly through pre-paid meters and is not part of the subsidy. Some of the respondents were of the opinion that monitoring of water consumption as a measure to verify whether a household would qualify for registration as indigent could be effective. Others, however, felt that this was not a fair way to deal with the situation. Justification for this viewpoint lies in the fact that water pipes may be leaking and although this is reported it might take some time for the responsible technicians to respond to the request for repair. This may result in households exceeding their free water allowance due to such leakage and having to pay for the balance.

As elsewhere in the areas where this research was done, no person qualifies for the subsidy if such a person owns more than one house. This qualification is regarded as unfair, since in the African culture, people often own homes in the rural area where they were born as well as in an urban area.

In the beginning it was procedure to check with the Credit Bureau to verify applications but it proved to be too expensive. This way of verification, however, is a powerful mechanism to determine the financial position of applicants.

All of the respondents felt that poverty mapping would be an ineffective way of verification since a person may live in an affluent area, but still be poor. On the other hand, during the data collection process in Motherwell (for example) it was discovered that many of the houses where registered indigents were living were equipped with television aerials, cars were parked outside the houses and people from the area were dressed rather fashionably. Possibly indicating that people are not all that poor and perhaps abusing the system.

Respondents agreed that the utilisation of councillors in the verification process was not regarded to be a successful method of verification. It was argued that councillors as politicians, should not be involved in the management activities of career officials.

The implication of the implementation of the above verification measures is that 35-40% of applications are not approved and this is mainly due to dishonest applicants. So far, no applications had to be rejected due to limited funds. There is, however, still uncertainty about the fact whether equitable share funds should be used for the settling of arrears in the Suspense Account.

3.1.2.8 Obstacles in the implementation process

The most fundamental obstacle in the successful implementation of the policy lies in false information being submitted by applicants. Another significant problem exists with residents' understanding of the policy. An estimated 80% of inhabitants do not understand their municipal bills and when legal action is taken against them they do not understand why. Some of the beneficiaries still are of opinion that the policy applies to all the municipal services rendered to them.

This confusion is created by a lack of communication between the different departments such as those involved in the billing system, those responsible for the management of the indigent policy and technicians who disconnect water and electricity supplies in cases of non-payment. Residents also perceive the officials working in the decentralised offices as less competent as those working in the city. They, therefore, choose to take the inconvenient option of visiting the centralised office.

Additional problems identified by the respondents are the following:

- The fact that people keep on applying for registration in spite of the fact that they have already been informed that their previous applications were unsuccessful.
- Verification officers are sometimes not reimbursed for travel costs. In these instances they have to carry the costs of taxi-fees.
- The appointment of additional verification officers would also enhance the quality of the service.

- There is a need for additional decentralised offices to enhance accessibility.
- The fact that members of the community are not properly informed about the policy and the different processes for application.
- In certain instances the attitude of municipal officials when dealing with ill-informed and illiterate inhabitants is leaves much to be desired.

3.1.3 Mangaung Local Municipality

The aim of the indigent policy of the Mangaung Local Municipality is to assist residents classified as indigent, through the subsidization of their municipal accounts. For this purpose, the Mangaung Municipality defines an indigent person as **one that, due to a number of factors, is unable to make a monetary contribution towards basic services.** Various criteria are considered and applied in order for an individual and/or household to qualify for aid in terms of this policy.

For the purpose of this report, the possible problem areas with regard to the indigent policy process can be divided into the categories that will be discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

3.1.3.1 Identification of beneficiaries

In its policy, the Council proposes to identify indigent individuals/households by having these people apply in person for aid in terms of the indigent policy. The following categories of people qualify for the subsidy:

- Unemployed.
- Casual workers.
- Households that earn a monthly combined income of less than R1140.
- Disabled people.
- Parents of children that receive grants from Government.

Proof that such an individual/household indeed qualifies for aid must be submitted in the form of the following documents:

- The latest municipal account for the household.
- Proof of identity of the account holder.
- Documentary proof of income.

Applicants are furthermore requested to complete a sworn affidavit to support the information contained in the application.

Based on the focus group discussions that took place in Rocklands on the 25 of October 2001, it could be suggested that the “marketing” of the indigent policy, to ensure community awareness, could be improved before the above identification could be embarked upon. In one of the focus groups, consisting of 11 participants, none of the participants were aware of the indigent policy, and the potential advantage that it holds for them.

Those participants in the second focus group, who were aware of the policy, became aware of it through:

- Hearing from neighbours and friends.
- Hearing from their councillor.
- Inquiring after the water supply was cut off due to outstanding debt.

Suggestions from the focus groups on how more awareness on the policy could be created include:

- Notices on municipal accounts;
- Holding meetings where indigenous languages are used to inform the community;
- Employing people to disseminate information;
- Using the electronic media; and
- Dissemination of information by the respective ward councillors.

3.1.3.2 Design of the policy

The indigent policy arose out of the Masakhane campaign, with its main focus being on service provision, debt collection and customer care, while there is also a connection with the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele White Paper) and has a national focus. Ward councillors are used to spread the word about the policy. They had to inform their constituencies (through ward meetings) and an extensive media campaign was launched. Advertisements were aired

on the radio and placed in local newspapers. The success of this twelve-month period was, however, negligible. Although some people did make arrangements, they still could not afford to pay for their accounts, let alone their arrears. Many of the people were unemployed or pensioners and had no hope of bettering their financial position. As a result of this, the Council then decided to formulate and implement the indigent policy. Customer care centres were opened at the pay point sites, with particular focus being devoted to previously disadvantaged communities. Again, a media campaign was launched to inform the community (radio advertisements, talk shows, pamphlets distributed, posters, etc.).

The policy is designed to assist those individuals/households perceived to have difficulty in paying for services. Therefore people considered for assistance due to inability to pay, could, in terms of the policy, include:

- Unemployed people.
- Pensioners.
- Disabled people.
- Single parents in receipt of child support grants with no other form of income.
- People with temporary, casual, contract and seasonal employment who are unable to pay.
- People with full time employment, but with a very low income.

Over and above the categories of people mentioned above who may qualify for assistance the policy furthermore establishes criteria in monetary terms. Therefore it is stated in the policy that “if the total household income exceed two state pensions, the applicant will not be considered”.

People applying will furthermore be subjected to a weighted means test which will include factors both economic and non-economic such as total household income, number of people per dwelling unit, particulars of assets and possessions of material goods. If the verified gross monthly income of all members of the household does not exceed two state pensions, the sewerage service, refuse removal and a maximum of 5 kiloliters of water will be provided to the household free of charge. The account

holder will be notified that failure to pay for water consumption above 5 kiloliters will result in the restriction of the water supply. Electricity will, in terms of the policy, not be subsidized.

3.1.3.3 Implementation of the policy

Under normal circumstances the period of subsidization is valid until the end of the financial year, i.e. the end of June. The period of subsidization may, however, also be affected by circumstances such as when the financial position of the account holder change to such an extent that he/she does not qualify in terms of the provisions of the policy anymore. The onus rests upon the account holder to inform the council should his/her circumstances change to the extent that he/she no longer qualifies for assistance in terms of the policy. This is an arrangement that has the in-built potential for fraudulent behaviour by recipients.

Renewal for assistance in terms of the policy will not be automatic and the account holder has to apply each year. As an additional monitoring mechanism, municipal officials from time to time conduct on site inspections at premises of beneficiaries in order to ensure that details provided are indeed correct.

Any person who supplies false information is disqualified from further participation in the subsidy scheme. He/she will be liable for the immediate repayment of all subsidies received and criminal proceedings may be commenced with, as council may deem fit.

3.1.3.4 Justification for an indigent policy

There was no doubt that the existence of an indigent policy was necessary. As a result of the economic reality in South Africa such a policy is essentially. Unemployment is high and local economic development is still a relatively new concept and one that still has to have some impact on the economic hardships experienced by the poor. It is also a Constitutional obligation of municipalities to provide their clients with basic municipal services and if they cannot afford to pay for them, they should still receive these services.

The former TLC of Bloemfontein was the first municipality in the country to implement free water (in October 2000). The indigent policy was first introduced with

providing only people registered as indigent with 5Kl of free water and sanitation. Now that 6Kl of free water is being provided to all the residents of Mangaung, they tend to use less than 6Kl of water per month. This enables them to settle their arrears. Another benefit of being registered as indigent is that if their accounts have been handed over to lawyers, the legal proceedings may be terminated. One problem with this though, is that they have to pay the outstanding legal fees up to that point in time.

3.1.3.5 Culture of dependency

On the one hand there was a general consensus about the fact that, whenever any service is for free, it would create a certain degree of dependency. This is reflected by endeavours (from an official's perspective) by people that are not really indigent and would try and get access to the subsidy. On the other hand it was also argued that a hallmark of any civil society is the responsibility that the rich have to help the poor and that the issue of dependency should not even be part of the debates around indigency.

3.1.3.6 Duration of benefits

Once successful, indigents are registered for 12 months before they have to re-apply. The view was expressed that some people would find it very difficult, if not impossible to get work. Therefore, residents who are classified as such, should be listed as indigent indefinitely and not have to re-apply.

3.1.3.7 Verification of application and beneficiaries

Each application is checked by a fieldworker that has to visit the applicant at his/her house in order to verify the information provided on the application form. The fieldworkers work according to a monthly roster to ensure that the satellite offices remain open and staffed.

The consumption of water is regarded as one of the best indications of the situation pertaining to the financial position of members of a household. The only problem with this in that there are many leaking taps and toilets in the townships and people do not understand that it is not the responsibility of the council to fix these and that the onus rests on them to take care of that. This is something that residents need to be educated in during community meetings.

The process of liaison with the Credit Bureau as a verification measure may be regarded as successful. If someone's name is listed with the Credit Bureau, it means that there has been defaulting on debt and that the person has a bad credit rating. The Credit Bureau also has details of those that have applied for credit. Both angles can provide assistance to the verification process. The former when checking for indigency by assuming that those that are listed as indigent truly are so, and the latter by assuming that if someone has access to credit, they are not truly poor. It was also contended that this method of verification would not be effective in all instances. An example is the case where a person has been retrenched. Prior to being retrenched, a family may have lived a lifestyle that cannot be regarded as indigent, but after retrenchment, they may not be able to maintain account payments.

Liaison with other government institutions is a useful way of verification. Through monitoring pension databases, it is possible to verify applicants that are pensioners.

Poverty mapping is not regarded as an effective method of verification. The example was used that affluent people from other provinces (e.g. Gauteng) have moved into areas in townships like Botshabelo that have traditionally been afflicted by poverty. Although these areas have previously been characterised by poverty, they are living there and "driving around in their big BMWs and Mercs". Should the poverty mapping method be introduced, thereby negating the need for verification, these people would be enjoying the benefits that should only be allocated to the poor. Another example is the one of the councillors who are living in areas that are characterised by poverty, but this does not, in most cases, mean that they are poor.

Other methods of verification are to **use councillors** and to let applicants sign affidavits stating their financial position. In spite of all the above mentioned measures, it was reported that between 20-30% of the poor that qualify for registration as indigent does not apply as they do not understand the procedure.

3.1.3.8 Obstacles in terms of the implementation process

All of the respondents agreed that this indigent policy is still in a pilot stage and subsequently there are a number of problems and challenges experienced with its implementation. There is a lack of both human and financial resources. Although

there are eight customer care officials Mangaung, the number is insufficient to deal with all the applications and to do proper verification. There are also only two vehicles available for this service, which is definitely insufficient. Respondents mentioned that often the lack of staff leads to delays between the application and registration dates.

Before a household is declared indigent, the unpaid account is handed over to attorneys for legal action to be taken against the household. After the indigent application has been successful, the legal procedures are terminated, but the household has to settle the fees claimed by the lawyers.

Another problem in the different centres in Mangaung is that the evaluation of property of an applicant is used as a method of verification. If the applicant's property is valued higher than R95 000 the application is rejected. Often a family inherited their house from relatives who passed away and although this asset may be worth a substantial amount of money, in reality the household may still be indigent.

It was pointed out that often a lack of community commitment to service provision (in terms of understanding their obligations) is a hampering factor. People do not understand that the municipality is only responsible for leaking taps etc. that are outside of their properties. They are negligent in repairing leaks on their own properties, thereby wasting a lot of water. There seems little commitment to preserving water, which is a national responsibility.

All households have to reapply every twelve months and this poses a problem. It was contended that some households would not be able to lose their indigent status – pensioners, for example, are never going to be able to work and so will always be indigent. There should, therefore, be two categories of indigents. The first category should include the group referred to above and the second category should represent the unemployed that might be able to secure employment.

3.1.4 Witzenberg Local Municipality

An indigent policy for the former TLCs that currently constitutes the Witzenberg Local Municipality has been in effect since 1999. After the municipal demarcation

and the amalgamation that followed after that exercise, a new indigent policy for the Witzenberg Local Municipality was formulated. This policy was formulated by means of a three-day workshop attended by ward councillors, credit control officials and representatives from the community.

3.1.4.1 Identification criteria

To be registered as indigent, the following criteria apply:

- A person or household has to receive a monthly account from the Municipality.
- The combined gross income of all people living on the premises may not exceed the amount equal to the amount of two old aged pensions per month.
- No one living on the premises may own another house or fixed property.
- The prescribed form must be completed and the application approved. Approval is given on the basis of "the real financial need of the household".

3.1.4.2 Services subsidised

The following services are subsidised:

- 6 Kl of water.
- 20 kWh of electricity.
- 100% of property tax to a maximum municipal valuation of R 30 000.
- 100% subsidy on refuse removal.
- 50% of sewerage services.

3.1.4.3 Duration of subsidies

Subsidies are terminated:

- As soon as the financial position of the household improves to such an extent that it does not meet the criteria or after three months. Which ever of these situations takes place firstly and the onus rests upon the beneficiary to inform the Council about changes in his/her financial position. If the financial position remains unchanged, beneficiaries have to fill in a new application every three months; and
- When the applicant passes away.

3.1.4.4 Formulation

Initially four fieldworkers were appointed to assist with the implementation of the policy. Two people were appointed for Bella Vista, one for Nduli and one for Ceres. These fieldworkers worked the following hours: Initially they worked from 14h00 – 20h00 from Monday to Friday and on Saturdays from 08h00 – 13h00. Later, the working hours changed to three days per week from 14h00 – 20h00 and one day from 12h00-18h00. The working hours on Saturdays remained the same (08h00 – 13h00). The methodology was that fieldworkers had to undertake visits from house to house to inform the public about the existence of the policy. This situation changed when the fieldworkers were accommodated at the different community halls where the public could visit them. One of their main tasks was to assist community members to fill in application forms. The fieldworkers have since then been replaced by four credit control officers who operate in each one of the four operational entities of the municipality.

3.1.4.5 Justification for the policy

All respondents unanimously agreed that a need for the existence of an indigent policy is justified. The unemployment rate is high and the poor need assistance. The fact was also stressed that one of the most pressing needs is education since it is only through education that people could be empowered.

A good example of how beneficiaries are educated through the process to manage their finances responsibly is the introduction of the so-called auxiliary tariff. This tariff is aimed at assisting indigent beneficiaries who are in arrears with their municipal service account to settle such accounts whilst receiving their indigent subsidies. When registered indigents, for example, purchase a pre-paid electricity card, a percentage of this amount is utilised to settle their arrears. According to the respondents, this has indeed helped community members to address their financial situations in a responsible way.

3.1.4.6 Culture of dependence

The point of view that subsidisation of municipal services contributes towards a culture of dependence is well known in the Western Cape. Respondents, however, disagreed with the view that the subsidisation of certain services would lead to a culture of dependency. The argument was raised that not all the basic services are

covered by the policy. Services such as education and the purchasing of food and clothing are not subsidised, which means that people have to take care of these needs themselves. Thus the contention that the subsidisation of a limited number of (essential) services could not possibly encourage a culture of dependency.

Another view was that, although some people do misuse the opportunity to benefit by the policy. Such people do not really try hard enough to find any other sources of income and then use the indigent policy as the soft option to survive. The opinion was expressed that municipalities should regard it as one of their main functions to also play a role in assisting the poor identify and develop ways that they can help themselves. Community development projects could be of help in this regard, but the concern was that sometimes the poor do not always have access to opportunities for development.

3.1.4.7 Communication measures

Initially newsletters were sent out to each person that receives an account from the municipality. The perception, however, is that many of the taxpayers do not read these newsletters. The four fieldworkers also undertook door to door visits to inform the communities. Since the new indigent policy was approved recently, a major information campaign is being planned for the near future. An amount of R120 000 has been budgeted for this purpose. An external contractor has been hired to assist the Council in this regard.

3.1.4.8 Verification of applicants and beneficiaries

The measurement of consumption of services like water and electricity is not foolproof. The quantity of consumption for example depends on the number of people living in a household. The more people living on the premises, for example, the more the consumption will be. This is, therefore, not necessarily a good method to prove a household's indigence. One respondent argued that it was only the usage of appliances such as geysers, stoves and possibly heaters that would enable a person to differentiate between poor and more affluent people if the quantity of consumption would be used as verification mechanism. These appliances, it was contended, make a small difference in consumption and so this cannot be a fair way to measure indigence.

The utilisation of the Credit Bureau was not regarded as a useful verification method for indigence, since the information received from this institution only refers to people who qualified for credit. Information about people who have never been granted credit would not be available at the Credit Bureau.

Poverty mapping is a quick reference method but not a proper way of verifying indigence. A person that lives in a more affluent area might own his/her own house but could have been retrenched and subsequently become a poor person – even though he/she lives in such an area. At the utmost, poverty mapping could be regarded, as a good starting point of the verification process, but the general feeling was that it was not a foolproof method.

All respondents agreed that councilors should not be used in the verification process. There was a strong feeling that the political element of this process should be clearly separated from the management activities. The temptation to deviate from the original policy is more likely to happen at the political level than at the level of management. To follow strict procedures is sometimes an inhibiting factor for councilors in exercising their functions from a political perspective.

3.1.4.9 Obstacles in the implementation process

One of the major problems experienced in the implementation of the policy has been the qualifying income. Before the new policy came into affect on 8 August 2001, the qualifying monthly combined income was R800. Many of the residents in Nodule and Bella Vista felt that this amount was too low. Now that the amount is R1140 (twice the amount of a state old age pension), more people are eligible to apply.

Many residents are still not aware of the subsidy and this is regarded as a major problem of the policy. By experience applicants are not always willing to speak to strangers about their financial situations. Language barriers sometimes also hamper communication.

Table 4: Comparative analysis of focus group findings

NELSON MANDELA	MANGAUNG	WITZENBERG
<p>1. Justification for an indigent policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ An effective way to address the needs of the poor. ◆ Provides for an opportunity to educate applicants as to the management of their finances. ◆ Policy has also been instrumental in boosting the payment of municipal services. ◆ Indigents qualify for a 100% subsidy on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ General rates. ◆ General service charges. ◆ Sewerage. ◆ 12 Kl. of water. ◆ Refuse charges. ◆ This subsidy only applies when the consumer agrees in writing that a flow-control washer may be installed. ◆ Households where the combined gross monthly income of all occupants over the age of 18 years exceeds one state welfare pension but does not exceed R 800 per month in respect of non-pensioners or two state welfare pensions per month, qualify for a 50% subsidy on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ General rates; ◆ General service charges; ◆ Sewerage; and ◆ Refuse charges. ◆ In respect of water, where supply is metered, households qualify for a 100% subsidy on 6 Kl of water with a concession of up to 12 Kl. ◆ If consumption exceeds 12 Kl per month, the household is charged for actual consumption exceeding 6 Kl at normal tariffs. ◆ Where supply is not metered, households are subsidised at 50% on fixed charges. ◆ Flow-control washers are installed. ◆ Electricity does not form part of the subsidy and approved tariffs apply. 	<p>1. Justification for an indigent policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ No doubt that the existence of an indigent policy was necessary. ◆ Unemployment is the main reason high and local economic development is still a relatively new concept. ◆ Seen as a Constitutional obligation of municipalities to provide their clients with basic municipal services. ◆ The former TLC of Bloemfontein was the first municipality in the country to implement free water (in October 2000). ◆ Only people registered as indigent received 5Kl of free water and sanitation. ◆ Now 6Kl of free water is being provided to all the residents. ◆ Tendency to use less than 6Kl of water per month. ◆ Another benefit of being registered as indigent is that if their accounts have been handed over to lawyers, the legal proceedings may be terminated. ◆ One problem is that they have to pay the outstanding legal fees. 	<p>1. Justification for an indigent policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A need for the existence of an indigent policy is justified. ◆ The unemployment rate is high and the poor need assistance. ◆ One of the most pressing needs is education since it is only through education that people could be empowered. ◆ The so-called auxiliary tariff exists. This assists indigent beneficiaries who are in arrears with their municipal service account to settle such accounts whilst receiving their indigent subsidies. ◆ The following services are subsidized: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 6 Kl of water. ◆ 20 kWh of electricity. ◆ 100% of property tax to a maximum municipal valuation of R 30 000. ◆ 100% of refuse removal. ◆ 50% of sewerage services.
<p>2. Identification of beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Sworn affidavits to support qualification. ◆ Poor community awareness. ◆ Suggested better marketing of the indigent policy, to ensure community awareness. ◆ Suggestions to create more awareness include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Notices on municipal accounts; ◆ Holding meetings where indigenous languages are used to inform the community; ◆ Employing people to 	<p>2. Identification of beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To be registered as indigent, the following criteria apply: ◆ A person or household has to receive a monthly account from the Municipality. ◆ The combined gross income of all people living on the premises may not exceed the amount equal to the amount of two old aged pensions per month (R 1 120). ◆ No one living on the premises may own another house or fixed property. ◆ The prescribed form must be completed and the application approved. Approval is given on the 	<p>2. Identification of beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Initiated in 1996 as part of the Masakhane campaign. ◆ Workshop between councillors and career officials. ◆ Number of applicants registered varied between 22 000 in 1997 and 4 394 in 2000 ◆ The following people qualify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Unemployed people. ◆ Pensioners. ◆ Disabled people. ◆ Single parents in receipt of child support grants with no other form of income. ◆ People with temporary, casual,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ disseminate information; ◆ Using the electronic media; and ◆ Dissemination of information by the respective ward councilors. 	<p>basis of "the real financial need of the household.</p>	<p>contract and seasonal employment that are unable to pay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ People with full time employment, but with a very low income. ◆ Applicants are subjected to a weighted means test that includes economic and non-economic factors. ◆ If the verified gross monthly income of all members of the household does not exceed two state pensions, the sewerage service, refuse removal and a maximum of 5 kiloliters of water
<p>3. Verification of application and beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Electricity supplied mainly through pre-paid meters and is not part of the subsidy. ◆ Monitoring of water consumption as a measure to verify. ◆ Water pipes may be leaking and that makes system unfair. ◆ No person qualifies if he/she owns more than one house. ◆ This qualification is regarded as unfair. ◆ In the beginning it was procedure to check with the Credit Bureau to verify applications. ◆ Poverty mapping would be an ineffective way of verification. ◆ Houses where registered indigents were living were equipped with television aerials, cars were parked outside the houses and people from the area were dressed rather fashionably. ◆ Utilisation of councillors was not regarded to be a successful method of verification. ◆ 35-40% of applications is not approved and this is mainly due to dishonest applicants. ◆ No applications rejected due to limited funds. ◆ Uncertainty about the fact whether equitable share funds ◆ Should be used for the settling of arrears in the Suspense Account. 	<p>3. Verification of application and beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A fieldworker through personal visits to verify the correctness of information checks each application. ◆ The fieldworkers work according to a monthly roster to ensure that the satellite offices remain open and staffed. ◆ The consumption of water is regarded as one of the best indications of the situation pertaining to the financial position. ◆ Leaking taps and toilets in the townships create problems. ◆ Residents need to be educated about their responsibilities. ◆ Liaison with the Credit Bureau as a verification measure is successful. ◆ Liaison with other government institutions is a useful way of verification. ◆ Poverty mapping is not regarded as an effective method of verification. ◆ Other methods of verification are to use councillors and to let applicants sign affidavits stating their financial position. ◆ Between 20-30% of the poor that qualify for registration as indigent does not apply, as they do not understand the procedure. 	<p>3. Verification of applicants and beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The measurement of consumption of services like water and electricity is not a good method to prove a household's indigence. ◆ The utilisation of the Credit Bureau was not regarded as a useful verification method for indigence. ◆ Poverty mapping is a quick reference method but not a proper way of verifying indigence. ◆ Councillors are not used in the verification process.
<p>4. Duration of benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Beneficiaries do not re-apply for registration. ◆ Most of the recipient's financial situations do not improve much. 	<p>4. Duration of benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Indigents are registered for 12 months before they have to re-apply. ◆ The view was expressed that residents classified as such should be listed as indigent indefinitely. 	<p>1.4.3 4. Duration of benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Subsidisation valid until the end of the financial year. ◆ The period of subsidisation is affected when the financial position of the account holder improves. ◆ The onus rests upon the account holder to inform the council should his/her circumstances improve. ◆ Renewal will not be automatic and the account holder has to apply each year. ◆ Municipal officials conduct on site inspections in order to ensure that

		<p>details provided are correct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provision of false information disqualifies applicants and may lead to criminal proceedings. ◆ are provided free of charge. ◆ Electricity is not subsidised.
<p>5. Communication measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Mass media campaign was launched. ◆ Advertised in the media and at mass community meetings. ◆ Pamphlets were handed out and posters were put up in all municipal offices. ◆ Leaflets were sent out with all the municipal accounts. ◆ Processes are repeated every now and again. ◆ Councilors responsibility to inform their constituencies. ◆ Ensure that applicants understand the systems ◆ Verification officers verify each application. 	<p>5. Communication measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Arose out of the Masakhane campaign, with its main focus being on service provision, debt collection and customer care. ◆ Connection with the Batho Pele White Paper. ◆ Ward councillors are used to spread the word about the policy. ◆ Advertisements were aired on the radio and placed in local newspapers. ◆ Customer care centres were opened at the pay point sites. 	<p>5. Communication measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Initially four fieldworkers were appointed. ◆ Working hours were changed to suit the needs of customers ◆ Fieldworkers visit residents from house to house to inform them about the existence of the policy. ◆ This situation changed when the fieldworkers were accommodated at the different community halls where the public could visit them. ◆ One of their main tasks was to assist community members to fill in application forms. ◆ The fieldworkers have been replaced by four credit control officers who operate in each one of the four operational entities of the municipality.
<p>6. Culture of dependency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Disagreement that the indigent policy create a culture of dependency. ◆ System lacks a foolproof mechanism to prevent abuse. 	<p>6. Culture of dependency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ View of officials that whenever any service is for free, it would create a certain degree of dependency. ◆ This is reflected by endeavours by people that are not really indigent who would try and get access to the subsidy. ◆ Another view is that a hallmark of any civil society is the responsibility that the rich have to help the poor. 	<p>6. Culture of dependency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The point of view that subsidisation of municipal services contributes towards a culture of dependence is well known in the Western Cape. ◆ Respondents, however, disagreed with the view that the subsidisation of certain services would lead to a culture of dependency. ◆ The argument was raised that not all the basic services are covered by the policy. ◆ Services such as education and the purchasing of food and clothing are not subsidised. ◆ Another view was that, although some people do misuse the opportunity to benefit by the policy. ◆ The municipality should regard it as one of their main functions to also play a role in assisting the poor identify and develop ways that they can help themselves. ◆ Community development projects could help in this regard.
<p>7. Obstacles in terms of the implementation process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Indigent policy is still in a pilot stage and subsequently there are a number of problems. ◆ There is a lack of both human and financial resources. Although there are eight customer care officials Mangaung. ◆ Before a household is declared indigent, the unpaid account is handed over to attorneys for legal action. ◆ After the indigent application has 	<p>7. Obstacles in the implementation process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ One of the major problems is the qualifying income. ◆ Before the new policy came into affect on 8 August 2001, the qualifying monthly combined income was R800. ◆ The current qualifying amount is R1140 (twice the amount of a state old age pension). More people are eligible to apply. ◆ Many residents are still not aware of the subsidy. 	

<p>been successful, the legal procedures are terminated, but the household has to settle the fees claimed by the lawyers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The evaluation of property of an applicant is used as a method of verification. ◆ The lack of community commitment to service provision (in terms of understanding their obligations) is a hampering factor. ◆ People do not understand that the municipality is only responsible for leaking taps etc. that are outside of their properties. ◆ They are negligent in repairing leaks on their own properties. ◆ All households have to reapply every twelve months and this poses a problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Applicants are not always willing to speak to strangers about their financial situations. ◆ Language barriers sometimes also hamper communication. 	
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3.2 Findings during stakeholder workshops

In addition to the data collection by means of the focus group meetings, workshops were conducted in all four of the municipalities concerned. The methodology followed during these workshops entailed the following:

- First the participants were asked, by means of plenary brain storming sessions, to identify all the problems with regard to the formulation and implementation of the indigent policies in their areas.
- From this list the groups had to select the five most crucial problem areas.
- This was followed by the identification of at least three solutions for each one of the five problem areas.
- The next step was to identify the possible obstacles in the way of the successful implementation of such solutions.
- Finally the groups were asked to identify six characteristics of a typical poor person.

3.2.1 List of identified problems with regard to indigent policy

During the first session, which was a plenary one, participants were requested to identify and list all the problems that they are experiencing with regard to the indigent policies in the different municipalities. The list of problems that follows represents all four of the areas where the research was undertaken. Because of the generic similarities of the identified problem areas, it was decided not to distinguish between the findings at the different municipalities. The list that follows, therefore, represents a collection of the opinions expressed by all the plenary groups. The problem areas

that were selected as the most crucial ones for the successful formulation and implementation of the indigent policies appear in bold:

- The issue of unemployment.
- Legal actions that are taken against indigent people.
- Disconnection of essential services because of non-payment.
- The way in which councillors are functioning leaves much to be desired.
- Incorrect information provided to communities by career officials and political office bearers.
- Rates related concerns.
- Refusal by the municipality to accept partly payments of accounts.
- Lack of basic services and/or the poor quality of services.
- Customer care is not good because of unfriendly and sometimes incompetent employees.
- Municipal offices are too distant from where indigent people are living, which makes accessibility very difficult.
- Inadequate office hours.
- Exclusion from indigent benefits because of the fact that the qualifying monthly income is unreasonably low.
- Insufficient employment opportunities, including "piece – jobs" lead to food shortages. People cannot pay for services while members of households don't have money to buy food.
- Slow decisions/implementation of policy.
- Electricity supply gets cut off in spite of prior arrangements with officials for payments of arrears.
- Insufficient self-identification by officials who read meters.
- Some applications turned down because of the value of a property even though nobody in the households is employed.
- Distance between townships and lawyer firms where payments have to be done when legal actions have been taken against defaulters.
- The format of municipal accounts is complex and cannot be interpreted correctly by tax payers.
- Amount of municipal account is increasing every month in spite of the fact that water supply has been cut off.

- Absence of a customer care approach in dealing with the public and service delivery.
- Disagreement with blanket approach of subsidies (Durban).
- The registration process is not user friendly and therefore unfair. It does, for instance, not distinguish between bona fide applicants and those who want to benefit in a mala fide way.
- The appointment of municipal employees from outside the area of jurisdiction in stead of locals.
- No follow-up actions by officials in cases of disconnections .
- Illiteracy among community members as well as the language/s of communication.
- Successful applicants are required to pay re-connection fees for terminated services.
- The problems surrounding the determination of the gross income of a household. It happens that the applicant is a pensioner, and the child of such a person earns more than the qualifying amount and the child only contributes an insignificant amount towards the household.

3.2.2 Priority areas and solutions

The different areas identified as priorities (not in sequence of importance) are listed below with an indication of the solutions for each problem area as developed by the different groups.

PRIORITY PROBLEM	SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS
AREAS	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue of unemployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banks should reconsider policies with regard to the funding of small businesses. This will encourage entrepreneurial thinking in the community. • Municipalities should create part-time jobs and a strategy for job creation should be developed. All stakeholders, particularly members of the community, should participate in this endeavour. Examples of such opportunities are the cleaning of streets and graveyards as well as job opportunities for the youth during school holidays. • People should be provided with work. • Municipal employees and councillors should assist communities to identify and/or initiate sustainable projects and assist them in realising such projects. • Municipal tenders should be given to the communities. • The private sector, particularly large companies should be encouraged to invest knowledge and resources in poor communities in order to enhance development. • The qualifying age for old aged pensions should be lowered to 50 years of age. • Widows should automatically qualify for pension. • More old age homes should be provided. • Local people should enjoy preferential treatment with regard to employment at municipalities. The appointment of external people should be limited to the absolute essential. • A radical change in the attitude and behaviour of ordinary members of the community may be instrumental in the promotion of, for instance, tourism. • No favouritism (with regard to local applicants) should be applied when applications for appointment are considered. Municipalities should also respond to applications for work and not allow applicants to be uninformed because of not letting them know whether their applications have been successful or not. • Councillors and municipal employees must at all times be honest with all community members about the availability of funds of projects. It is important that people from all
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal actions that are taken against indigent people. • Disconnection of essential services because of non - payment • The role of councillors 	<p>language groups be treated equally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt collectors from poor communities should be appointed to prevent legal actions being taken in cases where households are experiencing financial crises. • Disking of water should be suspended. • All outstanding accounts of indigent people should be put in suspension account. • Municipality must take responsibility for the installation of taps and sewage’s systems. • Water provision should not be cut, since it is regarded as an essential service. Water also plays a crucial role in certain traditional activities such as funerals. • Mobile pay points should be established. • Community leaders (other than councillors) should attend council/Exco meetings. • Guidelines must be developed for the minimum requirements for the communication between councilors and the community. The current system of communication between elected representatives and their constituencies is not effective. • Councillors must conduct report back meetings to the community once per month where issues with regard to all policies could be discussed. • Councillors should take a neutral stand in dealing with community needs such as indigent policies. Currently the system is over politicised. • Councillors must reconsider their roles as representatives of the community. Workable community structures should be established. • Councillors must associate themselves with indigent people and not distance themselves from that level of the community. • Councillors should be more sensitive and sympathetic
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorrect information provided to communities by career officials and political office bearers. (Communication & education) 	<p>with regard to the creation of employment opportunities for indigent people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors must ensure that processes for participation by the community are in place. Currently the community feels excluded from the policy formulation and implementation processes. • Mass meetings should be held where councillors could account for their governing functions • Community leaders (other than councillors) must receive training in the field of poverty alleviation in order to enable them to advice their supporters in an informed fashion. • Educate the community in the requirements for the rendering of effective and efficient. • These leaders must then educate the community. Municipalities must facilitate this educational process. • Educate the community in areas such as reasons for the imposition of rates and taxes and why the payment of such rates and taxes is essential. • Educate indigent people in the working of indigent subsidies. • All officials that deal with indigent procedures must wear nametags in order to make themselves identifiable to applicants for and beneficiaries in the indigent policies. Another possibility is that they are provided with uniform clothing. • Names of officials should be displayed on the doors of their offices. • All officials working with the indigent policies should wear identification cards. • Officials must leave notices in cases where members of households were not at home when they were visited. • When meter readings are done, notices indicating the consumption should be left at the premises, preferably it should be handed to an adult member of the household.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rates related concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralised municipal offices should be established. • The appointment of people based on their political affiliations should be stopped. • The community should be consulted with regard to working hours of personnel manning decentralised offices in the townships. • In cases where a municipality is not in the position to provide finances for a sufficient number of officials that have to administer indigent policies, a reasonable amount of the Equitable Share Grant should be utilised for that purpose. • Employees that implement the indigent policies should preferably be social workers. Such people are able to attend to a wider range of social needs of members of indigent households. • It is essential that employees working with indigent project are able to communicate with clients in the language of their (clients) choice. • Road shows for the marketing of the indigent policy should be held regularly (at least three times per annum). • Extended office hours should be investigated. • Services to households living in shacks in informal settlements should be rendered free of charge • Rates should be reduced. • The creation of employment opportunities would enable more people to cope with increasing rates and taxes. • The specialists employed by municipalities should identify workable mechanisms for the identification and verification of indigent households. • Pensioners should be exempted from the payment of rates and taxes. • Indigent households should receive 100% subsidies for the connection of electricity. • Properties of indigent households should not be sold in
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	<p>execution in cases of non-payment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meter readers must be trained properly to avoid mistakes in meter readings. • The pre-paid system of electricity supply to indigent households should be stopped. • The level of living costs should be considered in the determination of amounts of subsidies. • The financial position of members of households should be the only criteria for qualification as indigent. The value of properties should not be applied a qualifying criteria. • Indigent households should be exempted from the payment of rents. • The monthly expenses of potential/registered indigent households should be introduced as qualification criteria for indigent benefits. • Properties owned by indigent households should not be used as qualifying criteria. How do you evaluate property for the purposes of indigency if that property is given to people free of charge? • The period of validity of indigent benefits should be extended to at least four months before it is expected from beneficiaries to re-apply.
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3.2.3 Obstacles

The following obstacles in the way of the successful implementation of the above solutions were identified:

- Budget constraints.
- Unemployment. The lack of opportunities such as employment and methods to improve the quality of life of indigent households.
- Inadequate/ confusing legislation.
- Lack of correct information about indigent policies.
- Inflation rate (economy).

- The lack of opportunities for the education and training of communities.
 - Policy (nepotism).
 - Ineffective utilisation of resources.
 - Honesty of the different stakeholders.
 - Corruption.
 - Crime.
 - Lack of investment.
 - Poor exchange rate.
 - Non-payment for services
 - No capacity building for the establishment and functioning of community structures or leaders.
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- The inability to identify appropriate qualification criteria for indigency and the lack of commitment to implement indigent policies effectively and efficiently

3.2.4 Characteristics of a poor person

The criteria for qualification were through-out the study identified by all respondents as a crucial element in the successful management of indigent policies. It also became apparent that stakeholders hold quite divergent opinions with regard to that facet of indigent policies. Subsequently it was decided to request the participants from the Durban Unicity, the Nelson Mandela Metropole and Mangaung workshops to identify the characteristics of a poor person. This was done in order to provide some perspectives from the background of people who regard themselves as indigent, on the criteria for the identification of indigent households. The following table provides a summary of the analysis of these characteristics:

Table 5: Identified characteristics of poor people

CHARACTERISTIC	RELATED ISSUES
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • Low incomes • Irresponsibility in terms of the management of finances • Inability to pay for services • Debt • No money • Failure to pay school fees and rates
Personal life necessities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need of basic food • Water and sanitation • Quality of clothes • Begging for food • School attendance by children • Condition of clothes (dirty clothes) • Malnutrition
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowded houses • General appearance of house and quality of furniture • People (family members) living in the streets • No electricity connection or any form of lights • Nothing other than firewood for source of energy
Spiritual issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orphaned children • Disabled persons • Unhappy, spiritually unfulfilled and destitute people • No education / no vocation / training

4. STRATEGIES FOR THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INDIGENT POLICIES

The research revealed that the systems and processes for the formulation and implementation of indigent policies at the different centres of research differed significantly from each other. This is an acceptable trend in terms of addressing the specific needs of each municipality and those of the people concerned in the most effective way.

The research also revealed that, regardless of the different approaches to this issue, the generic similarities with regard to problems that indigent people as recipients and non-recipients of the benefits are experiencing require a new look at strategies that may enhance successful implementation. An analysis of these problems might lead to the development of strategies that would address the needs of that specific group of people in communities more effectively. Based on the findings of this research project, the following recommendations could be made:

4.1 Interpretation of equitable share

The so-called "S" Transfer of the Equitable Share Grant payable to municipalities by Central Government aims at the enhancement of equity in terms of municipal service delivery. The clear intention is to ensure that poor residents of towns and cities have access to basic municipal services such as water, sanitation and electricity.

From this perspective, the logic conclusion is that beneficiaries from this policy should be limited to people who are financially not in a position to afford the payment of basic services. The research findings indicate that the majority of municipal indigent policies implemented by the municipalities where the research has been undertaken meet this requirement. This approach (referred to as the targeted approach) clearly involves a magnitude of administrative functions and it seems rather complex to be managed effectively.

Cognisance should, however, be taken of the practice followed by certain municipalities that culminates into the so-called universal/blanket approach towards the utilisation of the "S" Transfers. This way of dealing with the grant seems to be a softer option in the sense that it does not require intensive efforts to manage. It is, however, questionable whether, in these cases, the objective referred to above i.e. assistance and support to the poor is eventually attained. Respondents, particularly community members, where this approach is followed showed a lack of understanding of the whole concept of "S" Transfers. It was, therefore, not possible to draw valid conclusions from their inputs in this regard.

From the part of municipalities where this approach is followed, the view was expressed that the Transfer should be looked at as an additional source of revenue that enables the municipality to render services to all the inhabitants. From this perspective, the apparent danger exists that the delivery of partly free services to all the users regardless of their financial position may be seen as one of the underlying reasons for the ongoing culture of non-payment. No proof could be found that the additional income through higher tariffs for services utilised (by consumers who can afford it) above the maximum that qualify for subsidisation, was allocated and spent for the alleviation of poverty. Neither could indications be found that this

"additional" source of income was allocated for the improvement of existing subsidies of services to the poor.

Although it is a cumbersome management process, the targeted approach seems to be the more justifiable of the two options in terms of fairness and the accountable spending of money. The recommendations in this report will, for this reason, be based on strategic actions that have to be undertaken for following the targeted approach towards indigent policies. The research findings revealed that two clearly distinguished overarching strategic processes have to be undertaken when this approach is followed. First is the strategies related to the formulation of the policy. Second, the strategies focussed at the implementation of the policy. These strategic areas will be dealt with in the next part of this report.

4.2 Formulation of indigent policy

Policy formulation comprises a variety of complex activities. For the purposes of this report emphasis will be placed on the processes followed for the design of indigent policies.

4.2.1 Policy design problems

The most serious shortcomings with regard to the design of these policies are the following:

- The **unconditional** nature of the Equitable Share Grants by the Central Government
- leads to discrepancies in interpretation. The interpretation of the targeted approach seems to be within the spirit of the "S" Grant, which is to enhance equity with regard to the provision of essential services. Utilisation of this grant for the benefit of any members of the community other than the poor contradicts the objective of equity.
- In the majority of cases no evidence was found that the formulation of indigent policies was preceded by well-conducted socio-economic **research**. Such efforts could lead to the conclusion that the focus on the indigent factor in isolation from other socio-economic problems would merely be to address the consequences rather than the causes of the problem. This leaves room for doubts about the

validity of the policy and difficult, if not impossible, to determine whether the needs of the right people were addressed and whether the objectives have been achieved.

- There is also no evidence of a scientific base for the determination of the **qualifying criteria** for households to be registered as beneficiaries of the Grant. Many members of the community complained about the inadequacy of the qualifying amount (based on the amount of old age pensions) and suggested that it should be increased.
- **Unemployment** appears to be the main cause of the problem and municipalities should take note of the solutions suggested by workshop participants and other respondents. Suggestions varied from private sector involvement and the identification of sustainable projects, to combating blatant favoritism in the appointment of municipal personnel. A close look at the solutions that were identified for combating unemployment leaves the impression that a strong sense of responsibility exists among members of the community to become more self-reliant. There were, however, also strong demands for support by municipalities to create opportunities for employment and other capacity building projects. There was also indications of dependency shown by some members of the community through suggestions that the qualifying age for old age pensions should be lowered to 50 years of age.
- **Consultation** with communities in the formulation process seems to be inadequate and in certain instances non-existent. The opinions expressed during focus group discussions and workshops showed a serious level of mistrust in existing structures such as ward committees as consultation mechanisms. It is from this background that the formulation of indigent policies is seen as a unilateral process that does not necessarily represents the views of indigent people.
- In cases where the targeted approach is followed, respondents and participants were unanimous that the **communication** of the policy when it was introduced for the first time was done satisfactorily. Since then the communication has deteriorated and targeted people were left in the dark, particularly those who still need to be registered.

- The identification of qualification criteria in the formulation of indigent policies appears to be a matter of concern among members of the community.

4.2.2 Suggested strategies

As a result of these shortcomings indigent people, in general, feel excluded from the formulation process. Municipalities should consider the design of strategies that would include the following:

- Research and analysis of the socio-economic needs in their communities. Much more energy and time should be spent on addressing the real causes of the indigent situation. Indigent policies should be integrated with municipalities' broader poverty reduction policy. This requirement also applies for local economic development (LED) initiatives taken by municipalities as well as the implementation of integrated development programmes. Such an analysis would contribute significantly towards the determination of the nature and scope of the qualifying criteria for registration.
- Following on the above should be the implementation of the Constitutional provision for co-operative governance between municipalities and the other spheres of government. A variety of provincial government departments are active in the field of poverty alleviation. Duplication e.g. with regard to the identification and verification of indigent people could be eliminated if the role players representing the different spheres of government would collaborate in the processes of strategy design.
- Steps should be taken to re-activate municipal and community structures (including those established by law as well as NGOs and CBOs) to fulfil their roles as representative bodies of the community, particularly the poor;
- The re-orientation and where necessary, re-training of councillors, officials and communities in the fields of consultation and communication in the indigent policy formulation process.
- The design and implementation of monitoring and control mechanisms that would enforce sustainable consultation and communication in the formulation of indigent policies.

- An assessment of the impact of indigent policies on the quality of life of the poor leads to the conclusion that Equitable Share Grants should rather be made conditional. Alternatively, a more effective monitoring system should be designed that would enforce municipalities to utilise these grants for the earmarked purposes.

4.3 Implementation of indigent policy

Implementation seems to be the main hampering factor for the effective management of indigent policies. This is the origin of dissatisfaction among community members and the cause of frustration among career officials.

4.3.1 Policy implementation problems

Concerns identified with regard to the implementation of indigent policies could be categorised in three main areas. These are the following:

- The process of **identification** of people/households was regarded as a significant obstacle in the way of implementation. The poor quality of service delivery by officials and the carelessness of councillors were often regarded as direct attributes towards problems relating to the identification of indigent households. As in the case of the formulation of indigent policies, these shortcomings are caused by communication gaps, leaving room for confusion and misunderstandings. Employees, without exception were of the opinion that they were adequately trained and experienced to undertake their tasks. The state of affairs with regard to the training of councillors cannot be reported on since the number of councillors who attended the workshops was limited to one. An analysis of the opinions expressed at the workshops reveals that the major problems experienced with the identification of indigents relate to procedural issues. Here the fact was emphasised that the community needs a continuous flow of information about the existence and working of the indigent policies. Participants in the workshops argued that the fact that indigent policies are discussed during meetings of a council does not mean that the communities are informed about such policies.
- The second implementation problem is the **verification** of the validity of applications. On the one hand officials raised complaints about continuous efforts by some members of the community to manipulate the system by applying for

registration as indigents while knowing that they do not meet the requirements. Members of the community on the other felt that the implementation phase of the policies is characterised by poor communication. The absence of decentralised offices in the townships; inadequate office hours and the incompetence of employees working in those offices and councillors mainly cause this. They are of opinion that the implementation lacks a customer care approach.

- The third area of concern is the **monitoring** of the process. Here it mainly refers to whether or not payments to individual households should be continued. What should be done to ensure that households that qualified at a certain point in time, are still eligible for the subsidy in course of time?
- Forth is the problem of **arrears of consumers** as well as the fulfilment of their **obligations** for consumption beyond the maximum that qualifies for subsidy. These inevitably lead to the issue of **legal actions** against defaulters. Community members expressed their discontentment about this issue in no uncertain terms.

4.3.2 Suggested strategies

Findings made during focus group discussions and workshops indicated that the following strategies might improve the quality of indigent policy implementation:

- The crucial factor in the implementation process is the appropriateness and applicability of the formulated qualifying criteria. As indicated in Paragraph 4.2.2 above the identification of those criteria should, as far as possible, be based on thorough socio-economic research. Once that has been done, municipalities should design procedures for the identification of potential beneficiaries. The suggestions by workshop participants and focus group attendees about these procedures can be summarised as follows:
 - The design of procedures for the identification of indigent households should be undertaken in close collaboration with potential and current beneficiaries of the subsidy. Regular information dissemination by means of road shows should be considered. From a community's perspective, face to face contact seems to be the preferable way of communication in this regard.
 - Members of communities must be educated in order to have a clear understanding of the policy and its implementation. Educational programs should be based on needs analyses. This will contribute significantly towards

the elimination of unrealistic expectations both in terms of qualifying for the subsidy as well as service delivery in general.

- In order to eliminate the high occurrence of invalid applications, the identification procedures should place the onus on members of households to prove that they qualify for subsidies in accordance with the criteria. Here it was found that municipalities have appropriate measures in place to deal suitably with fraudulent cases.
- The verification of the validity of applications is one of the more personal issues and as a result of that, community members as well as officials emphasised the sensitivity surrounding that process. Here the suggestions for strategic options were the following:
 - Officials dealing with the verification of applications must be easily identifiable and trained in handling matters of a sensitive nature.
 - Employees with experience in social work are in the best position to evaluate the social and economic situation of applying households in a broader context of living.
 - Proficiency in the language of the residents of a particular area should be one of the indicative prerequisites for appointment indigent officials. The political affiliation as requirement for jobs in this field should not be a consideration.
 - Officials and councillors should treat indigent people with dignity and respect.
 - A communication strategy based on the principles of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele) must be developed.
 - Education of communities must, in addition to other issues, be focused at changing their attitude. Although municipalities have a constitutional obligation to improve the quality of the life of their inhabitants, communities have to understand that indigent benefits are only due to those who need it most.
- The monitoring of the continuation of indigent subsidies to specific households is one area that perplexes municipal officials. A typical catch 22 situation occurs when on the one hand it is argued that unnecessary spending for subsidies to non-qualifying households should be stopped. But, monitoring actions, on the other hand is time consuming, complex and expensive to undertake. The strategic option for dealing with this problem, as mentioned above, is to be guided by scientific

data. A survey of the socio-economic status of a particular area would normally include detailed information about the unemployment trends in that area. Based on such findings, a realistic timeframe can be determined between the first allocation of the subsidy and when follow-up activities have to be undertaken.

- Suggestions for possible solutions for the problems that community members experienced with regard to arrears and the payment for services ranged from unlimited free services to indigents to the creation of job opportunities. In many instances ignorance on the part of the community about the concept of subsidisation was found to be the major reason for the discontent. Another reason for this could also be the lack of discipline with regard to water and electricity consumption on the part of the community. To a lesser extent the blame for this was also placed on incorrect meter readings and unreasonable qualification criteria. Strategic options were identified as :
 - The reduction of rates payable by pensioners and indigents;
 - To use the financial position of households as the only criteria for qualification and to exclude properties from that process; and
 - The installation of pre-paid meters for electricity consumption. It must be mentioned that the officials were in favour of this, but members of the communities opposed the idea.

Community members expressed their frustrations with regard to legal actions against indigent people. Although there may be justifications for this view, this issue should be look at as an integral part of the indigent policy concept. If indigent policies are formulated in accordance with the suggestion made in this report, it would be reasonable to argue that the final step to take legal actions against indigents would be limited to cases where consumers acted against their own convictions.

5. SUMMARY

This study could be concluded by the statement that, in South Africa, the problem of indigence is one that will remain an integral part of the municipal policy agenda for the years and even decades to come. The lack of sufficient sources of revenue in the municipal sector is one of the most crucial stumbling blocks in the way to fulfil its Constitutional obligation of service rendering to all the inhabitants of towns and cities. For this reason the national government regarded it essential to intervene. This was done through the introduction of the "Equitable Share" formula for local government.

Although this intervention enables municipalities to render services to a broader spectrum of the community, particularly the poorest of the poor, the formulation and implementation of the policy suffer from some inherent problems. The unconditional nature of the grants may be consistent with the constitutional right of municipalities to manage their own affairs independently as a sphere of government. This characteristic of the grant, however, also creates problems. First is the absence of guidelines for the formulation and implementation of the policies. This results in the non-equitable division of funds made available by central government. Second is the problem of control. The study revealed that in the areas where data was collected, control measures (by central government) that would ensure that the funds were spent for the purposes it was allocated were non-existent. On its part, this shortcoming leads to an unfair exclusion of some indigents from the benefits.

The study also revealed that, although councillors and officials are committed to the professional and fair formulation and implementation of the indigent policies, the execution of these processes are complicated. Communication seems to be a major problem. On the one hand councillors and officials are "accused" of not informing the community about the existence of the benefits. On the other, cases were reported and witnessed where community members were guilty of abuse of the system. In the smaller town these problems are addressed more successfully than in municipalities with city status.

Finally, it is suggested that the processes of indigent policy formulation and implementation should be undertaken within the broader context of poverty alleviation. Socio-economic surveys need to be undertaken and the information gathered from that should be utilised for the development of criteria for the identification of indigents and the verification of their continuous status as indigents.

APPENDICES

- 1. Schedule of questions**
- 2. Focus Group Transcription**
- 3. Fieldworker Profiles**
- 4. Workshop Agendas and Venues**

APPENDIX 1

Schedule of Questions

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS: INDIGENT POLICY

Questions to persons who are recipients of the benefits

1. How did you find out about the policy?
2. What procedures did you follow to get access to the indigent policy?
3. What problems and/or obstacles have you experienced in terms of the procedure required to qualify for assistance? (list all answers)
4. How do you think can these problems be solved (suggest possible solutions)? (list all)
5. Are you satisfied with the assistance that you got with regard to the indigent policy in terms of:
 - Your account (Please motivate your answer)?
 - The assistance you got from the municipal officer?

1.4.4 Questions to persons who qualify, but do not benefit

6. Are you aware of the municipality's indigent policy?
7. If it's the case, how did you find out about it?
8. Did you apply for a discount on your municipal account in terms of the municipality's indigent policy?
9. If it's the case, are you satisfied with the assistance you got from the municipal officer/s?
10. Are you satisfied with the assistance that is offered to inhabitants of your town in terms of the indigent policy (please motivate your answer)?
11. Is the municipality doing enough to disseminate information about the indigent policy? (e.g. in terms of the filling in of application forms)
12. Are you aware of the period and conditions under which you may qualify for benefits?
13. If you haven't applied for benefits yet, what is the reason for that?

1.5 Questions to officials

14. What is your position in the municipality?
15. Who requested you to deal with applications for indigent benefits?
16. For how long have you been working with indigent cases?
17. Do you believe that a real need for such a policy exists?
18. In your opinion, how could be ensured that only persons who qualify benefit from the policy?
19. Do you verify the information supplied by applicants in their application for assistance? (yes/no)
20. If yes, how do you practically go about this? (explain)
21. If no, how do you ensure the credibility of applications (e.g. information on form verified by commissioner of oaths before application submitted) (explain)
22. What is the average failure rate of applications (in other words, how many of the applications you receive are ineligible because they were not verified or individuals do not qualify) and do you keep record of this? (get records and info if kept, otherwise record guesstimate)

23. Is there a limit to the number of beneficiaries, i.e. do you have to select from a large number of applications or do you only select a certain number so as to comply with budgetary requirements.
 - (i) If yes, how do you go about screening applicants?
 - (ii) If no, is the value of the subsidy lowered so as to supply benefits to all applicants?
19. What problems and/or obstacles have you experienced in terms of the implementation and administration of the indigent policy?
20. How do you think can these problems be solved (suggest possible solutions)?
21. Did you get any training in dealing with indigent cases?
22. What is the impact of the policy on the budget?
23. Should there, in your opinion, be a uniform policy about the maximum amount to qualify for the benefit?
24. Are the conditions of the policy with regard to the responsibilities of the council/official being complied with?
25. Do you think that more services/benefits should be included in the policy?
26. Do you have any credit control policy in your municipality? How is it applied?
27. Is your council/municipality in a position to deal with cases of unauthorised utilisation of the benefits?
28. Which procedures are followed with the collection of money?
29. Do you get sufficient support from the other spheres of government or do you feel that you are entitled to better financial support?
30. For how many months should the subsidy be allocated?
31. What criteria are used to identify beneficiaries, e.g. income, employment status? (list all and supply detail, e.g. minimum income and whether person must comply with all requirements or only with some, e.g. be unemployed and receive no grants or housing subsidy)
32. Do you have an official application form that people must use when applying for assistance? yes/no (if yes, please collect a copy of this form or forms from the official)
33. How long do successful applicants benefit from the policy before having to reapply for assistance? (indicate in number of months)
34. How are benefits transferred to beneficiaries, e.g. subsidy is subtracted from account? (explain)

APPENDIX 2

Focus Group Transcriptions

- CERES – Nduli
- PORT ELIZABETH – Motherwell
 - Zwide
 - Arcadia
- BLOEMFONTEIN – Phahameng
 - Freedom Square
 - Rocklands
- DURBAN – Kwadabeka
 - Ntuzuma
 - Folweni

2 NDULI FOCUS GROUP 1

People registered as indigent

Q = Question

A = Answer

Interviewer: Zama Mvulane

3 Introduction

The Centre for Development Support (CDS) in the University of the Free State conducted a study about payments of services. This focus group discussed the way Municipality is helping communities with their payment of water, electricity, sewage and rent.

The municipality has been asked about how they make the policy for helping communities with the payment of services, how they get the policy to the communities, whether the policy is working or not and finally how it is working.

The CDS decided to it was better to ask for a meeting with the people who are entitled to the use of the policy. This was done to try and find out how they feel about it and whether it is helping or not. The residents are asked to complete a certain form and there the CDS would like to know what the residents encounter when they are completing this form. They would also like to know whether all the people who ask for help are really indigent.

The people were asked to speak freely, as there would be no names will be mentioned in the final script.

Interview:

Q: How did you find out about the policy that helps people with their municipal accounts?

A: I applied for the policy last year, after my husband lost his job. After that, I continued to apply thinking that my account will be reduced but it never did. I tried again end of last year after my husband fell ill, and renewed the form every three months as we had been required to do but my account was still the same in January. I then decided that it would be better if I asked my husband to move out of the house so that I can reregister the house under my own name since it was my house. I still receive accounts from my husband's owned rent.

4 Q: Before applying for this policy, how did you find out about it?

A: I asked for help because I saw and heard from other people who were already using the policy. I asked for advice from other people when I noticed that I could not pay my account of up to R2000.00 because my son was not working either.

5 Q: Do you still owe that amount?

A: yes I do and the rent is still increasing. I then opted to use the policy and I went through the whole procedure. I also do not have electricity at the house. My electricity account was closed because I could not pay my rent that is increasing by R1000.00 every month. By January I owed them R8000.00 and there was no decrease what so ever.

6 Q: After applying for the assistance, did you receive a notification that you will be assisted?

A1: No!

A2: Sir, I also do not have electricity and water in my house. I went to the municipality to ask for a job but did not get it. I have noticed that the municipality is not working with us because it keeps on mangling with the application forms.

A3: On Monday I went to the municipality to try and sort out my brothers electrical and water account problems. They told us that everyone who has not paid by Friday would have their services terminated. What is that considering the fact that they are on our side? We do not have jobs. We usually get 5 months jobs, we do not have food and we have children. What is the municipality doing?

A4: I am 25 years old and I live with my parents. Problems at home are my problems. At home and in the neighbourhood we do not have jobs. The municipality claims to be of help to us but I do not think it is helping because for example, my neighbour has a problem with her electricity and the municipality claims that she is back-riding from others or the municipality. She was then fined R1000.00 and could only have her electricity connected after paying that fine. The problem is that she is not back-riding and even if she was doing that, she does not have money to pay for her account. Instead of helping, the municipality requires R1000.00 from everyone, people who do not even have jobs.

A5: The reason why people back-ride for the electricity is because they do not have the rent money. As a result of this, electricity and water services are terminated. People stay in the dark. The municipality is the reason we cannot stay without these services therefore people will do almost everything to get the services.

7 Q: How do residents find out about the municipal services' policy?

A: The policy you are talking about is not applicable to everyone. The municipality goes to certain houses and tells the people that they can help. If the municipality was helping the accounts would not have increased but they are and the rent too. I therefore do not see any help. For example, if you buy electricity, you pay R10 and you receive R8 worth electricity. Where does the rest of the money go.

Q: In order for you to get help, which procedures are you supposed to follow? For example, which forms are you supposed to complete, which procedures do you go through?

A1: As I have already said, there is a gentleman who goes from house to house and where he can help with the services. The information is then passed to others by word of mouth. This is one reason most people do not, know about his policy.

A2: I was staying at home with my parents when they passed away. Everything was then changed (transferred) under my name. I then paid for services rendered and was never on arrears ever since my parents passed away. I paid for the services from the R300 I got from my 3 months job. I heard about the policy from another person. I then visited the municipality and was told to pay a certain amount of money before hand. I did that until I lost my job. I then set down because I did not know that I was supposed to renew the policy. My account is now on an increase because I lost my job.

Q: is one of the procedures asking your neighbours to agree about your economic status?

A1: Yes

A2: there are not meetings held regarding our municipal problems. We even have to pay thousands for the land, plus the rent. How are old people supposed to pay for their erfs. We also have to buy the electricity.

8 Q: Did you know that you are supposed to renew the forms every 3 months?

A1: No, we did not know. We are not well informed about these things. It would also be better if there was a difference in the accounts when you renew or fill in these forms, but there seem to be no difference, instead the more you ask for help the more the account increases.

A2: there is another problem. Your tap might start leaking and you then pay for this leak. My tap leaks all the time and therefore I have decided to block the leak with paper and this leads to an increase in rats coming into the house. The municipality does not come and help instead they tell you that someone will be sent to look at the problem but that person never comes.

9 Q: What solutions do you have for these problems?

A: We have councilors that we elected. We last saw them the day we voted for them. When you have a problem they do not help. For example, my house burnt down, instead of them helping, I had to go to and fro without getting any help. All I was told was that someone will be sent to look at the situation.

10 Q: Do you have any meetings?

A: No, even if there are work opportunities, people take people they already know. For example, friends and relatives. What about us? We also do not have jobs and money. Instead they send us to lawyers. The municipality says the council lay the rules. If they close their services it is because of the council's command.

Causes for lack of money

No job opportunities. Grandparents having to take care of their grandchildren with the pension money. Food is a basic need and therefore money is mainly used for this

purpose. Children have to be sent to school therefore have to pay school fees and bus fees. Single parenthood.

It is worse because we are sent to expensive lawyers once we fail to pay.

11 Q: When you ask for help, does the account come back as it was or does it increase?

A: It goes up every month. The municipality does put in money but it is not much. It does not make much of a difference. They say that they put in the money just to help but we should put our own extra money. But where do we get this extra money? They give small amounts of money because there are many more people who require this help.

12 Q: How do you get the assistance money after you have applied?

A1: They send forms to Cape Town and responses come from them. The money therefore from CT.

A2: My mother applied, but she never got any response.

13 Q: How do they tell you that you have received the money?

A: They state it in your account. It is not much money at all because when a new season starts, your account is back to square one.

Q: Which way do you think is the best, which the municipality can use to help? Do you think the municipality should pay for the accounts?

A1: We would like the municipality to cancel our accounts and let us start afresh and create new job opportunities. For example, we are willing to clean our location but this job is given to prisoners. We need these jobs because we have the responsibility of being both mother and father to our children.

A2: We would like to see our municipality prosper and therefore we are willing to pay rent but we do not have the money. For example, 25 year olds are not at school and yet are not working. They have to get their money from their parents who are probably pensioners. These parents also have to pay for rent. It is impossible. The municipality should therefore try and create job opportunities. They will definitely see the difference because we are willing to pay the rent.

14 Q: If you go to the municipality looking for a job, do they help?

A: No! in fact, it depends on who you are. If you do not have someone you know inside forget. For example, I applied for a job and the form was due at 13:00. I went there before 13:00 and they told me they were not taking anymore forms. The next person gave them the same form and they took it. When you confront them about this, they rudely inform you to pay the rent.

As a result of not having jobs, we go and steal and therefore we get arrested every now and again. We do not do this because we like it but because of our needs.

Q: Did the municipality inform you that according to the policy you cannot receive more than R1140? Are there any residents who receive at least R1000 from them?

A: No, all they told us was that if you earn more than R800 they cannot help you, but they never said anything about the amount of money we are supposed to get. They can help only if you earn plus or minus R500. The municipality should just have a proper agreement about how we can help them and how they can help us. For example, if you do not have a job they can help you pay and then when you get a job you pay or they should not increase the account while you are not employed.

15 Q: Are there any projects that help residents to accumulate money?

A1: Not in this area.

A2: There are some projects around this area but we just never get informed about them in time. Again they are given to certain individuals who they know already. Some projects have even been closed down because they do not talk to the community. There is one project where you get R100 p/m but what can you do with that money. Problems are far more than that. When I tried to voice my opinion I was told to leave.

16 Q: Are there any developmental projects

A: No, there was a project that we went to. In this project the lady told us that we should pay before hand and yet we do not have money to eat at this instance, knit and sell for her before getting paid. This meant that we were not going to be paid for at least two weeks as compared to a project that we once had, where we were paid every Friday. That lady told us that we were not going to get anything. We were not used to this kind of project and the lady just told us that her project is run in a different way. We do all the work, she sells and then pays us.

Interviewer: We went to the municipality and listened to their side of story and then decided to come to you and see what kind of problems you encounter.

Focus group: That was a good idea. Next time bring some of the municipal people because we want to know what they have to say for themselves. You also have to look around at the townships and compare them to our area. You will definitely see the difference. Besides this, go to the shop. You will notice that the employees are mainly Coloureds. You will find that to every 20 Coloureds, there is one Black. They do not employ us and yet we elected people to be our voices. Besides looking for work in the shops, there is a lot of work to be done in the Nduli area but the municipality is not willing to employ us. They tell us that they do not have money. How are we supposed to rent. If they do not have the money, where are we supposed to get it?

17 Q: Do you ever have general meetings with them because they told us that you do?

A: No, the only time we see these people is when they talk to us just before the elections. During this time they promise us heaven and earth and yet nothing comes,

not even show of interest about what is going on in our lives. They promise us jobs, electricity, free water and they say that we do not have to pay rent. These are all lies because soon they are going to disconnect our electricity. We are having more difficulties now. For example, they will advise you to pay at least R500 to R1000 and when you go there, they do not take the money. Instead they want more and they take you to the lawyers. They practically do not do anything for us. Your house gets burnt down and they renovate you neighbour's house.

Q: Did you know that the municipality is supposed to give a certain portion of free water to those in need?

A1: They were supposed to have started a long time ago but that is a new procedure. For example, there is a house that reported that they do not have water two years ago. They still do not have any access to that water. You can imagine the odours in that house because this was two years ago.

A2: My neighbour does not have access to water or a toilet because he does not have money to access these things. He uses a bucket and he covers this bucket with a black plastic. That situation is a shame. You can just imagine that. We went to the municipality with an inspector about this problem but we have not received any help.

18 Q: Did you go back to the municipality about this issue?

A: Yes, my neighbour visited the municipality time and time again until he gave up. He said so himself. He said that he was sick and tired of going there for the problem because it has started to embarrass him. We do need a meeting with this municipality, which claims to be helping us. What is it exactly that the municipality helping with?

A from interviewer: He said he was helping with free access to water (a certain % of water), free 20 km of electricity, they give water and toilets to people who need them but cannot afford to pay for them. They also take the garbage.

A: That is not true. We do not even get the black plastic bags in time. And as we have already said, the municipality just does not help us.

19 Q: Did you ever go and ask for help from the municipality?

A: Yes

Interviewer: What we will do now is go and analyse this information and write it down and then we will come back on the 24th of October, at 9:00. We will tell you about the municipality's response because before we come here we will first go to the municipality and try to explain to them how you feel about the services granted to you.

Interviewee: Does the municipality have a right to take you to the lawyers when you are not able to pay? The thing is whenever we have money we pay. We sacrifice the money and pay. We really do not see why we voted for these people. It was better during the old regime. We got some vegetables and other kinds of food that were not needed anymore but now all this goes to the tip. These days you will find people

eating from the tip. The people we voted for get paid for doing nothing. Next time we will not vote because our needs are not met. What does electricity have anything to do with rent because if you cannot pay rent they close your electricity down? In other areas people do not face the same difficulties as we do. Their councillors do their work. We last saw ours the day we voted.

Thank you very much everyone. We will give your complaints forward to the municipality and find out what they say and then we will get back to you.

20 NDULI FOCUS GROUP 2

People that are registered as eligible but not beneficiaries

Interviewer: Zama Mvulane

21 Introduction

We are busy conducting a study about payment of services and we would like to know more about the subsidy or indigent policy that subsidises people with their service's accounts (electricity and water). We are now busy researching about people who need assistance from the municipality and those who need assistance but do not get it. We asked the officials whether they really did give the subsidies to people who need it. We then decided to talk to the community to hear their side of story. Your names will not be used for the final draft of this work so feel free to talk. You will remain anonymous.

22 Interview

I am a single parent with two children who are still at school. We do not have all the needs for survival and therefore I need help.

Q: Do you know about the subsidy that the municipality gives out to the community who needs assistance?

A1: I also do not have electricity.

A2: What the interviewer is asking is whether you have gone to the municipality for help.

A3: No, I did not go because, I did not know about the policy.

23 Q: Did any of you get a response from the municipality?

A1: Yes, there are some people who did get some response.

A2: I did get a discount but only for my water account and not for my electricity account.

24 Q to another participant: Did you apply for assistance?

A: yes I did. They asked me bring my husband's death certificate. I went to home affairs to ask for the certificate because I did not get one when my husband passed away. They did not give a certificate but asked me to fill in the dates of my husband's death in the application. I did that and then took the form back to the municipality offices. They accepted the form and I am still waiting for response. They asked about my rent payments and I told them they have changed it into my son's name.

25 Q: Have you received any help yet?

A: No, I went there time and time again but nothing.

26 Q: How did you find out about the subsidy?

A: Our municipality came to the community. He had announced in the community meetings that he was going to come. He then told us all the procedures required for a person to qualify for the subsidy. Eric then walked door to door in the community doing his work. I submitted my form too but have not received any response.

27 Q: When did you apply?

A: Last year.

28 Q: Did any one else ask for this subsidy?

A: I applied too but I have not received any response.

29 Q: How did you find out about this policy?

A: They completed the forms for me at the municipality but I have not seen any difference in my account.

A2: They promised to subsidize us with R68.00.

A3: what has been promised at the moment is assistance with water account and not electricity ones. They have started assisting many people already. They just told us that if we do not pay, they would start all over and let us pay the electricity rates because we stopped paying some time ago.

A4: I went home (to the rural areas) for a while and when I came back I reopened my water and electricity accounts that were closed down while I was gone. After a week my electricity circuit tripped. I told the municipality about this. They came to inspect what had happened and then told me that I had been back-riding. I was not doing that. My circuit was opened again but the same thing happened. I then noticed that there were cockroaches blocking the card space. I reported this again but they refused to reopen it again because they claimed that I was back-riding.

30 Q: Have you been fined for this claim?

A: No. I do not get an electricity bill either. I only pay for my water account.

Q: Who in your opinion is entitled to this policy? Is it all the people or just those in financial need?

A: there are some people who deserve assistance and those who do not need it because they have better financial statuses.

31 Q: Do you think the majority of the people know about this indigent policy?

A: At the beginning most people did not know until Eric was hired. He does his work properly.

32 Q: How is the community informed about this policy?

A: They go door to door and explain to the people. After that there are meetings.

33 Q: Did they tell you that you have to renew your form every three months?

A: Yes.

34 Q: I there any one of you who did not apply for this subsidy?

A: I did ask for assistance and then continued paying for three months. After that my water access was closed down. There was no response from the municipality about my application form. I went there again and requested I was requested to first pay a certain amount of money and I did. They opened up the system after looking at my pay slip. I have not received any response and have not been there again.

35 Q: Is there anyone who did not apply at all?

A: After my mother's death, I never asked for assistance. I do have here death certificate. The house is also still under my mother's name.

Q: What do you think the municipality should do to people who can afford to pay for their services and yet submit false information in order for them to be granted this subsidy?

A: That is a problem. There are a lot of people in the community and if people are not being faithful, the municipality will not afford those who really do need help.

36 Q: What do you think should be done about this?

A: I do not what should be done. All I need from the municipality is for them to change the house I am living in into my name because my son passed away and will not be able to pay ever again. They should let me start a new account of my own. I will pay the rent because I do earn some money and I would not like to see other people suffer because of me. Some people do not earn a cent.

37 Q: If the owner of the house passes away do you continue paying his account?

A: Yes, my husband passed away too and the municipality asked me to pay a sum of money before closing down his account.

38 Q: What do you mean?

A: What I mean is that I receive two accounts. My husband's account and my account. I paid money to erase my husband's account and changed the house into my name but now I receive both accounts. They told me to first finish his account. What I have noticed though is that I do get a discount in my account sometimes and the municipality has asked me to pay whatever amount of money I have as long as I pay.

39 Q: Do you get a subsidy for your water account?

A: the thing is, I do not necessarily pay everything. I pay whatever I have. We do around here because sometimes we do not have all the money.

Q: Are you satisfied/dissatisfied with the kind of help you receive from Eric and the municipality? Do they explain every procedure to you?

A1: We cannot really complain about Eric because he does his work and then sends it to the municipality offices. These offices then determine what should be done. What I would really like to know is how is it possible for one person to receive two accounts. Is it not the municipality's responsibility to delete the husband's account.

A2: I did go to the municipality about that and I even paid. All they say is that I have not paid. All I have paid for is my account and not his. I do get a discount for my account though.

40 Q: Did you tell the municipality that you receive two accounts?

A: Yes, anyway they are the ones who issue these accounts to me.

41 Q: Did you go to the superior officials about this problem?

A: No, I did not think about that possibility

42 Conclusion

Thank you very much for coming today. We will report all this to the municipality and tell them all about your problems. We will then come back to you on the 24th of October and tell you their response.

Focus group 1- P.E Motherwell
19 september

Interviewer: Lungile
Malusi

Interview:

Q: How did you find out about the indigent policy?

A: I would like you to explain to us, what the indigent policy is.

Q: Before we do that we would like to know the number of people who know about this policy amongst you?

A1: We have never heard about it

A2: This policy pays for the service charges

A3: I did apply for the policy in 1999 and I was told to go to the police station for an affidavit. I took it to the city treasure where I owed R10.000. They told me that I qualify for this policy. I was asked to pay R20 a month. I tried but failed, the municipality again summoned me and I visited them. They told me to pay R10 per month. I did and I noticed that my account had been cleared and I had to start afresh.

Q: Does anyone else know about the policy and who applied but did not receive an answer?

A1: There are about seven (7) people

A2: Two years back I also got a summon and I went to the city treasure. I was then told to get a job because I did not have one. I asked to pay R10 but I failed.

Q: This policy assists people who are not able to pay for their municipal services. It has been found out that both the community and the municipality encounter problems during the procedure of applying and afterwards we would like to find out what these problems are.

A1: Some of us are illiterate and we do not understand the terms used by the officials and no one bothers to explain to us. Secondly, we do pay but we do not receive any balance statements that show that your account has decreased. You pay until you hate the place because you do not get a satisfactory service. You go to the city treasure to pay your account and when you get there the teller ignores you and keeps chatting to his or her friends. This is a waste of time, and by the time you get helped, you are no longer in a good mood or even worse, the teller is rude.

A2: We pay every month but there is no decrease in our accounts instead they increase.

A3: I received mw account balance of R775.28 last month and this month it was around R252. I do not know how this happened.

A4: I also made an arrangement at the city after my account was cut off and they reconnected it back. They cut it off again and I was requested to pay R300 before the reconnection. I did with the money I got from my mother in law because we do not a job at my household. Last week someone came to the house and told us to R50 or else my electricity account will be disconnected again. We pay those R10s but we are not assisted. We would also like some jobs.

A5: What I would like is to contribute about a problem I had for some time now until 1999. I used to tamper with the electricity and I was caught. I had to pay R750 for this and I noticed that my account had increased when I tried to settle it. I had already applied for the indigent policy (before 1999). My account was up to some thousands. I asked someone to investigate this for me and I was told that my account was estimated all along. I did not understand this because my yard is not fenced and even if it was, there is always someone inside the house. I talked to the people at city because my account was about R13000. they also checked and they told me that an electricity account would never be that high. It is worse because sometimes I am not at home. They told me that I should wait for a letter that they will write for me. Another account came and it was R6000. I was going to query this as well.

A6: I was not in the mood to come here because we never come out of meetings with anything productive. But I am happy to hear that you are looking in other people's complaints and like it when people are unhappy. I have never heard about this policy that subsidizes people without jobs. I am very surprised. I would therefore like to like to know when and how it came to existence because people are supposed to be informed about these things.

A7: This policy was first announced in 1997. There were complains about it. At first the officer went from door to door telling people to go and register for this policy. Some people registered us in our houses. There was then a meeting held for everyone where people were registered again. We still receive letters that tell us to renew the application.

A8: It is clear that you never go to mass meetings and no one does in your household, because each month there is an announcement about the indigent policy. You should these meetings.

A9: I am happy for your advice because in our area we do not attend these meetings

A10: We did tell you about this policy. You must have forgotten. You came to tell us that you receive two accounts and we told you to go and see the city treasure and tell them to combine the accounts and arrange to pay the R10 and then apply for the indigent policy.

Interviewer: We have been informed that there is another office that was opened in the location to make sure that every person can be able to visit the municipality. We would like to know if people use these offices.

A1: we do use them but the officials there are rude and I do not know much about their work. What I would advise is for people to go to their counselors first before going to the city treasure. The counselor will then arrange everything for you. He will give you a lift and leave you at the city treasure queue. Some people just walk out again without paying. They do not appreciate all this help and the next thing they do is to accuse the counselor of not doing his job properly. It is better to first go to your counselor so that you know what you will be paying.

Q: would you prefer the counselor's office other than the other offices?

A1: Yes, the Motherwell branch is the best.

A2: The problem is that sometimes you get a short period of time from work to come and pay. When you get there at about 11:30 only to find out that the tellers are busy chatting to each other and 12:00 they close for lunch. All tell you is that they are closing and don't care about you. These places should be open all the time for people who work and do not really have time to go and pay.

A3: I prefer the White people if I want to be helped because Blacks never help. All they want is money. They do not advise you and if you do not have all the money they will just tell you to leave.

A4: My problem is that they want to take my furniture.

A5: people's furniture are no longer pounded. All you have to do is go to your counselor and arrange to pay R10 a month than nothing. The counselor will then give you a letter to stop the people from taking your furniture away.

Q: What problems do you encounter while applying for the indigent policy?

A1: I will say this again. Some of us are illiterate and when they give you a form to complete it is difficult or impossible because we do not understand the language or terms used. We need help while completing the forms but the officials are never in the mood to help. They will just tell you that everything is in the form. The other problem is that the counselor does its work but when we are sent to the other offices, the whole thing changes. Officers in the other offices do not do their work properly. It would be better if we all worked together as the communities. I think people should join hands, give out funds so that our accounts are cancelled and we start paying afresh and when we do we should be told all the procedures.

A2: I know that I did not receive the policy at the beginning, what can I do now because I owe the municipality R10 000.

A3: You should go and see the counselor. In order for you to qualify for this policy you should be earning less than R800 in your household. You should other people who already know about this policy.

Q: What do you think the government should do to solve your problems?

A1: The government should realize that we do not have jobs and officials should stop being impatient and rude.

A2: Officials should be tolerant and should be taught how to deal with people. The government should really be careful about people chosen to deal with other people's problems.

A3: We would like to pay for our municipal services. It would be very wonderful if there were more job opportunities opened because some of the people here are still very young. If people have jobs they will be willing to pay.

Everyone emphasized patience among officials in the city treasure and their satisfaction with the counselor.

A4: It is very painful when your things are pounded and yet they were all you had. The municipality should stop taking our things.

A5: the imbalance in our accounts is cause for trouble because in one month it is R500 and the following month it is R5000. People become discouraged and therefore stop paying as a result of all this. How can you pay if you query your account balance. We hate the fact that they estimate our water readings.

Interviewer took the accounts for clarification.

A6: there is something that might confuse us. When you go to the offices for help you might not be helped but a person behind you receive the help for the exact problem you had. These people look at who you are before helping. These kinds of people do not deserve their jobs. They should be fired.

A7: In the case of our accounts, people do not understand that their account increases because they do not pay. They concentrate on paying the R10 for settling the old account and do not pay for the current account creating a bigger problem. They should pay for both.

Q: Do you think the indigent policy is a solution to your problems or is there something else that can be done?

A1: We would like the government to create job opportunities.

A2: Another solution would be for the government to try and let us see the amount of free water we receive so that we can limit ourselves when we use water and maybe stick to those free liters. Another problem is that our pipes are leaking and therefore we have to pay for that water as well.

A3: Yes, water pipes are leaking and we do not have the money to repair them because most of the time these things are not in our budgets. When the water leaks out of the pipes, the money leaks out of the pockets.

A4: I think the subsidy is a very good idea because sometimes even if you have a job you will not be able to settle your previously huge account but will only be able to help you with the R10 and the new account. We really appreciate what the government is doing for us.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING HERE. WE WILL COME AGAIN ON THE 26TH.

FOCUS GROUP 2: NON-RECIPIENTS FROM MOTHERWELL

Interviewer – Lungile and Malusi

Interview:

Q: Do you know anything about the indigent policy?

A: **Yes we do.**

Question from focus group: What can be done for people do not earn anything at all?

A: **All questions will be answered during the course of the interview because this policy is all about your questions.**

Q: Do you know about this policy and how can the municipality help with the problems you encounter?

A1: **I went to the city treasure after receiving a lawyer's notice. They sent me to the Enquiries to get my account balance. It was R15 000.00 and I also pay for service charges. My account balance was not cancelled and it is increasing by the day.**

A2: **I also went there but did not get help. They told me that I have received the subsidy but I have not seen any deductions in my account. It is therefore clear that this subsidy is not being sent to the city treasure. It is just floating around somewhere.**

A3: **I heard about this policy but my problem is that I receive letters at home. I try to pay for my services though. For example, my balance was R80 but I only had R50. I tried to pay but was sent back home because I did not have the whole amount of money. I then decided to use the money for something else. The following week I had the R80 and I took it to the municipality but was sent back again because the money had increased to R90. I asked if they were sure about what they were saying and they took the money and I was told to pay the rest later. I then received a R29 account that I paid as well. We also get a lot of letters from the lawyers. When you go to see these lawyers you have to have at least R80 and then the balance. We do not have all this money. I only get R500 pension money for my disabled child. If I have to pay all this money to the lawyers, how do I pay for my other needs because R500 is nothing these days. When I check my accounts, I noticed that there are no deductions.**

Q: Have you applied for the policy?

A1: **Yes, but I have not seen any action. After every year I reapply. Other people have told me that their accounts have been cancelled. They have started their accounts afresh.**

A2: **I know about this policy. I heard about it from the community meetings addressed by the counselor. I listened to all the criteria of qualifications and I**

applied ever since then. I noticed a difference in my account. There were some deductions. The accounts only increased when I failed to pay for that particular month. My problems are not the same anymore. I can even pay the lawyers properly now because when I received letters from them, I took them to the counselor. I used to go to the city treasure but have never received any help. I go to the counselor now and I have seen the positive difference. It was announced at the meetings that we should see the counselor about our problem and not the city treasure and I did just that.

Q: So, did you get the subsidy?

A1: Yes

A2: My problem is that I loaned R4560.00 and I was told that I still owe R300.00. I went to loan this money too. My electricity was disconnected and it is still off. I also received a letter from the lawyers and I told them that I couldn't pay because I do not have a job. I went to see the counselor and I noticed that I have different accounts. My account at the lawyers is R15 000 and yet I receive a R5000 account from the municipality.

Q: Do you think this policy is successful or not?

A1: Which policy are you talking about exactly because there is one policy that allows you to arrange for the way you pay your account and the indigent policy. Some people do not know how to differentiate between these two policies.

A2: I'm one of those people.

A3: I also know that you have to pay R10 when you apply and not more than that.

A4: So why did I pay R80?

A5: Your application might have been approved but you never paid afterwards. Your money then increased. Each month you are supposed to pay R10.

A6: I do not receive any assistance though.

A7: If you pay for your accounts every month then you will see the difference.

A8: When you fail to pay for your accounts they pound your furniture and paying for it is expensive. How do they expect us to have all this money? Water and electricity are problems. The municipality just cuts them off.

Q: Do you think the municipality is doing enough to inform people about this policy?

A1: No, he does not inform us properly.

A2: The municipality does call for meetings and therefore we get informed there. They meetings are usually in every area and we are told what to do.

Q: Does the municipality ensure that people get this information without going into too much trouble and do you get pamphlets?

A: We had a meeting last week with the counselor because they wanted to find out about our problems and why we have all these problems. People were referred to the counselor for their problems. I have not seen any pamphlets.

Q: How long does it take before you qualify for this policy?

A1: I was never informed. I even made a mistake of paying R50 for a long time before noticing that I had an erf. No one explains these things to us, especially the illiterate people. All they do is take the money. The account statements are difficult to understand. Now I get two accounts. I do not even know what they are for.

A2: We all have a problem with our water accounts. I have to R3000 and I have a job or someone to support my four children and me. Two of them go to school and two are looking for jobs. I owe the municipality R3000 but I only get R560. I think the government should do the same thing with water as they did with electricity. This will help us a lot because then we will not receive huge accounts. These people also waste water that can be used to irrigate our vegetable gardens with. A vegetable garden is my only survival food source. The water account is stressing me because I do not understand it. Some of us cannot attend these meetings because they start late in the evening. There should be meeting during the day as well for the old people.

A3: the fact that I paid R80 worries me because everyone else pays R10. I wish I understood what this means. No one cares about us. old people are not cared for and people are not well informed about these things.

Q: Did you apply for the indigent policy or not?

A1: We did.

A2: I did not know that we have this kind of a policy. What should I do now?

A3: I would like to know why I have to pay R29 while everyone else is paying R10? I do not understand.

A4: You should go and clarify this with your councilor because you might be paying something you are not supposed to pay for. Did you have a job before?

A5: No, but my husband did.

A6: You must go and clarify that because they do not know that you do not stay with your husband anymore. You are probably paying for your account and your husband's account. You should also be aware that we do not pay the R10 as our installments. The R10 is extra money on top of your account, which might also be another reason for getting a R29 account.

A7: I did not know that. I thought the R10 would appear on my account because that is what I was told.

A8: Someone must clearly explain this policy to us. They should also explain how the account works or we will pay forever because we do not know what we are doing.

A9: You better see your counselor instead of going to the city treasure.

A10: I applied for the subsidy 2 years ago. I was asked about my salary. I told them that I receive R500 from the pension fund and then I was asked whether I was just sitting at home and doing nothing. I told them that I sew for people sometimes. They then told me that if I do that I probably receive R800 and then said I was not entitled to receive the subsidy because I make enough money to sustain myself. Sewing is not a steady income though and I never make R800. I decided then that this subsidy thing is nonsense.

Q: The municipality told us that some people submit false information while they are applying. What do you think should be done with these people?

A: In my area we have not encountered such problems but we will be aware of this now. These people need to be reported and should then pay even more because they are making us suffer.

Q: People in New Bright do not pay for their water services. Why is that?

A1: We do not know but your question will be forwarded to the municipality.

A2: We also have a problem of paying for the person who owned the house before we moved into that house while this person is living a luxurious lifestyle somewhere else. When you move into the house you receive a huge account in the first month and then you blame the municipality. People should start being faithful and stop blaming the government for everything.

Q: Do you think the policy is working or is there something else that can be done?

A1: I think it is working but maybe we are not informed about how we should pay.

A2: we would also like the government to create job opportunities for us. For example, cleaning around this area so that we can be able to pay for our municipal services.

Interviewer – the government wants people to create jobs for themselves by forming projects. People get funded for this and then they share their profits. You should also start your own projects.

A: Gardening would really be a great idea. We can all share plots. One can then eat or sell the products in their plots. We need these kind of projects to help ourselves.

Q: What is your advise to the government about your officials?

A: It would be better if they employed qualified people who really want to do their jobs and who are continuously evaluated. The officials should not discriminate against people by helping only those they know.

Q: Do we all agree that we found problems while we were applying for this policy?

A: Yes, especially when the application forms are not in our language. For example how do you know “indigent” if you are illiterate.

Q: How long do you think the application should take?

A: I think it should take 7 days because when I am being raided, they give 7 days notice. Everyone agreed.

Q: Which way is the easiest to find application forms?

A: They should bring them to this center so that we come here whenever we encounter problems with the forms.

Q: What advise can we give the government in making sure that all the people who are entitled to the policy receive it?

A: Everyone who earns less than R800 should get the application forms. We would also appreciate operation hunger. The old government used to help us with some food.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. WE HEARD ALL YOUR PROBLEMS AND WE WILL BE BACK WITH A REPORT FROM THE OFFICIALS ON THE 29TH OF OCTOBER

FOCUS GROUP 1 – RECIPIENTS OF THE INDIGENT POLICY IN ZWIDE

INTERVIEWERS – Lungile and Malusi

The University of the Free State and P.E Tech are doing a thorough research about the indigent policy that assists people who are not capable of paying for their municipal services. In 1999, after the elections, the government visited some communities. They found out that some of these communities do not have money to pay for their municipal services and therefore the government formed the indigent policy. This policy assists the municipality to know the difference between the people capable of paying for water, electricity and garbage and those who are not. A criterion was then formulated for qualifications of the people who will need the subsidy. These criteria stated that it would only subsidize people who are pensioners and those who earn less than R800.

A person has to apply for this policy. The communities and officials have some complaints about this policy. The two institutions would therefore like the focus group to tell them everything they know about the policy and all the problems they encounter in the community and with the policy. The focus group should also voice their opinion about how these problems can be solved and should not be worried that their names will be publicized because names will not be used at the end. All that would be said is that the focus group was of the opinion that...

Interview

1 Q: Do you know about the indigent policy?

A: We do but some of us do not know.

2 Q: How does the policy work and what is the procedure before receiving the subsidy?

A: I did receive it but only for my water services. I do not know how they calculate the rates though. When you apply you go to the city treasure and you have to bring some documents and then sign the application form.

3 Q: How did you find out about this kind of policy?

A1: By word of mouth.

A2: I was informed at the community meetings.

A3: I have never heard about it.

A4: I applied but I have not seen any deductions in my account. All I have noticed is that there is an increase.

4 Q: What other problems are you faced with?

A: I went to see the municipality because I could not pay my accounts. This is because I receive pension money and yet have to buy food and pay school fees for two children. No one helps me with these things because my husband passed away. The municipality asked me to pay R10 a month. I paid for two months and then I did not have money afterwards. I have never heard about this policy though.

5 Q: How do the officials treat you?

A1: the city treasure sent me to another official who told me to pay R700.

A2: officials went to my house and threatened to sell it if I did not pay my dues. They asked me to tell them the plan of how I was going to pay and my sister said she would try and pay for me.

6 Q: Did you already apply for the policy?

A1: No.

A2: If you go to the city treasure they will just tell you to pay or move off the line so that they can help the next customer. The Black officials are difficult to work with. They just do not help you. If you talk to the White people and Coloureds you will be helped though.

A3: My husband went to the city treasure but was not informed about the policy.

A4: I received a letter from the lawyers and was asked to pay plus or minus R3000 for my services. I tried to explain that I could not because I do not have that kind of money. I have to support myself and two children who attend school but I was never told about the policy.

A5: Another problem is that we receive letters in English and our parents do not understand this language, making it difficult for them. This is because some of them are illiterate. Another problem is that the officials are not well informed about these policies and therefore are not capable of informing us properly. It would be better if there was another way of informing us about this policy except through counsellors.

A6: what I would like to understand is, why is it that you receive two accounts in one household if your husband dies. I took this complaint to the city treasure and they told me to pay R200. I did this but they did not cancel his name and I still receive two accounts. After some time I took all his accounts and told them to send them to him in his graveyard because I cannot pay for him and myself.

A7: I still pay for my brother's accounts too.

Q: How should the government deal with all these problems and the officials?

A1: I think the official's background should be checked because some people do not understand that poor people can really go to sleep with only a glass of water in their stomach. Officials should therefore understand this or should come from the community.

A2: Officials should be continuously trained and evaluated. They should be trained also on how to deal with people especially old people and the illiterate people because these officials are not good at explaining anything to the people. Mostly the problem is that the documents are also in English and therefore illiterate people do not understand them.

A3: Officials should also be given duty in their job description because a receptionist only knows about typing and filing but nothing about accounts. If officials do things out of their job description they might start being rude and will give people wrong information and document it as such.

A4: The municipality should make sure that the meter takers are doing their work properly because sometimes you go on holiday for a month and when you come back you receive a huge water account. All the municipality really needs is White people to work because the Black people are rude.

A5: White people are rude too sometimes. All that is needed is to concentrate in helping the government. We should not look at the people's complexions but try and advise whoever is working now.

7 Q: What do you have to say about your accounts?

A1: We are not happy because the municipality does not do its work properly. They will just guess what your account is supposed to be. The municipality should therefore be called into order because the accounts are not even balanced.

A2: Sometimes when you receive your account you will find that there is no balance (what you still owe them) included. Some people stopped paying their accounts because of their problems but the account keeps on increasing.

8 Q: Do you have any problems with your water pipes?

A1: There was a water pipe burst in our street last week to date. We reported it and nothing has happened yet in response. There is therefore only one house in our street with an intact water pipe and every one goes there to get water. That person has to pay. The problem with the water pipes might be because of cheap labour and ignorance to people while they are being trained. This way rates increase.

A2: My toilet is broken and therefore leaking. I have not received any help from the municipality. In fact they told me to fix it myself.

Q: What do you think the municipality should do in order for him to make sure that everyone who deserves assistance does receive it?

A1: the government should make sure that all the people are well informed about the indigent policy. This can be done during the meetings and maybe through the media as well because old people are not able to attend these meetings because they are usually held in the evening.

A2: All news media should be used to inform people so that all people know exactly what is expected of them.

9 Q: Do you think the indigent policy is the answer to the people's problems?

A1: There should be job creations for people who can work because then people will also be able to pay.

A2: Committees should be formed. For example, pensioner's committees. Governments departments should also work closely with the municipality.

10 Q: Some people misuse this policy, what do you think should be done to them?

A: There should be a partnership between the municipality and the people because these problems will make both the community and the municipality to suffer.

Q: Do you have anymore comments about the policy and your problems.

A: The municipality should try and understand how the estate agents work because the agents have their own system of doing things and are not concerned about hot the community works.

Thank you to all of you for coming and listening to what we had to ask. We know that you might feel like we did not answer all you questions but we will submit a report to the municipality hoping they will help. We will come back again on the 26th.

FOCUS GROUP 2 – ZWIDE NON-RECIPIENTS

Introduction – same as in the other focus group

INTERVIEW

Q: Do you know about the indigent policy?

A: There are meetings usually here in Zwide and municipality officials talk about the policy that subsidizes people who do not have jobs or do not earn much but I never went to the municipality offices because I do not have money to travel to the officials.

11 Q: Is there someone else who knows about this policy?

A: My husband knows because he attends the community meetings and the water account is registered in his name. He informs me and he asked me to attend this meeting.

12 Q: Did any of you try and apply for the policy?

A: Yes!

13 Q: What is your experience concerning this policy?

A: I went to the city treasure and tried to explain my situation. They asked if I had any brothers who had jobs and I said no because I know that they have their own troubles. They told me to try and talk to someone who can help. I then applied for the policy

Q: Was your application successful?

A1: I do not know

A2: I did apply but nothing happened to my accounts. All these people do is ask us to pay for everything.

14 Q: So you did apply but you have not received any response?

A1: Yes!

A2: I went there when the grant was first introduced in Zwide. They told me that the accounts are in my husband's name and he should come with me but I told them that he left me. I was then sent to the city treasure to change the account into my own name. I did go because I receive the letters. They asked if I had a job and I said no. I then left my payslip. I cannot remember when this happened I received the subsidy. My account balanced was deducted but the problem is that I still receive my husband's account.

15 Q: Where is he?

A: I do not know because he just left me. I do not even receive the grant anymore because the letters I receive are in my husband's name. I told the counselor about this problem and he said he would look at it. I have not heard from him yet.

16 Reintroduction because new people came in

17 Q: do you know about the indigent policy?

A: We do not know anything. we were once informed that there will be a policy but we have not heard or seen anything again.

Q: How will you be informed that your applications have been successful or not?

A1: They did not tell us. All they told us was that we would have the grant. We are usually informed about everything during the community meetings. We have noticed though that our accounts are still increasing. I received a letter from the municipality and then my account again. Here is the letter.

Interviewer – the letter means that your house has been evaluated for sale. The estate agents told the municipality that your house would cost R5430.00 if it was sold and you owe them R6146.20. You should see your counselor about this problem.

A2: On Tuesday officials were walking door to door. They told us to go to the city treasure and when we get there we should not use the main entrance but a door next to that one. At the city center we were told to go to the police for affidavits. We did all this. While at the center I was told to bring my mother although it was my account. We then signed to papers and were asked to bring R103.00. If you do not do this, your account increases. I have a part-time job in which I do not work or do not get paid sometimes. I have not paid my accounts for the month nor the R103.00 because I have not received my salary yet. We did not even know about this meeting. We just heard about it but because we heard that it was about municipal services we came.

Interviewer – Let me explain about this meeting. P.E Tech and the University of the Free State are doing a research about the policy that assists the community with their payments of municipal services. There is therefore a list of people who applied for this policy. Because the list is too long, we asked for just 10 people who applied already. We were also concerned about people who did not apply but who are probably eligible. This is just a sample of these people in a focus group and there will be a proper meeting when we come back with a report. We only took few people so that we can all talk and clearly understand each other. Let us continue.

A: My problem is that I got a letter from the municipality that has evaluated my house for sale and yet I was not consulted about it. I cannot pay for my electricity account because I do not have job and I only receive pension money. Instead of helping (as they claim to be doing) the municipality is going behind my back and judging me. Is that help? The municipality should consult the community about their problems first before taking action.

Q: Who applied for this policy?

A: I did go but mine was not successful.

18 Q: What was your experience?

A: I applied so that I could be subsidized for my water services. I was asked to get an affidavit from the police. I did and then told them that I do not have a job. I applied again this year but my account is still increasing.

19 Q: Did you get any response?

A1: No, I just received another form.

A2: We have the same stories. My husband also applied but we have not seen any difference in our accounts.

Q: how do you feel about the fact that you have not been answered yet and your accounts are increasing?

A1: it is a very difficult situation and living. We do want to pay but we do not have the means. The municipality also reduced our water capacity. You can open your tap early in the morning but your bucket will take about 5 hours to fill up. If we had the money we would pay.

A2: we really have problems. Even the houses we live in are run down. We cannot find people to help us with the rent. We do not even get help. All we see is lorries that come and repossess our furniture because we owe the municipality. You than have to pay for these belongings because there is nothing else you can do. When you get to the city treasure you never get any help. If you go as a woman you are requested to bring your husband and when you get there you are sent to all directions without any proper explanation and when you leave you are not satisfied. When you get home you probably find another account plus a lawyer's notification waiting to be paid for. The counselor never has any answers to our problems.

A3: When you get into the city treasure's office you sit there the whole day and yet there are numbers of people employed there. All they are good at is sit and chat or be rude to us. If you need any assistance you should just go to the door next to the city treasure's., there is a White lady there and she will help you.

A4: It would be better if people were nominated and told everything about this policy and then they relate it to us. During the meetings we are not properly informed about what should be done in order for a person to get this grant.

A5: We really do not get help. My electricity was cut off because I owed About R300.00 but I still get an account and now it is up to R6000 and they want to sell my house for this. I get both the water and electric accounts but my electricity was cut off. They took my meter claiming that they will fix it for me but every month I receive an account of about R90.00. Someone is using my meter.

A6: Sometimes you are not able to open a bank account because of the service accounts.

20 Q: Some of you did not apply for this policy, why is that?

A: I did not apply. All I did was for a pension grant. When I get this I will pay for my accounts but the accounts are increasing now.

Q: Do you know how long this policy will take before it is successful.

A: We know nothing about the policy. I did go but I could not apply because I was asked to pay R40 before hand.

21 Q: Where did you apply?

A: At the city treasure. We do everything there.

Q: The municipality feels that people take advantage of the subsidy/policy because they do have money. What do you think about these people or statement? For example, they stay in the suburbs and have houses here. They then lease the house to someone else.

A: How does the municipality know this?

Q: They have verification officers. When you apply, these officers will go to the applicant's houses and check if all you have submitted is true. When they get there, they will find the renter who does not know anything about the subsidy. What should be done?

A: The idea of verification officers is good. The government should just do their work clearly and check every house.

Q: Do you realize that the money they pay these officers with is the money that could have gone into the policy?

A: The community cannot really do anything because we will not be sure if the house is sold to someone else or not. It will be difficult for me to be a police after these people.

22 Q: What do the other people think?

A1: the community must form committees so that we all know each other and when you leave the community people should know.

A2: we do inform people when we move in but rarely do when we move out, but how do we help the municipality with people who are not eligible and yet take advantage of the policy?

A3: We should try and find out about people living in our community so that if something happens we can report it to the municipality. They can then go and check.

A4: The municipality should tell us what we should do to help.

A5: We do not have this kind of a problem in our area yet but our main problem is that the houses are usually left vacant.

A6: In our area we know each other very well, even visitors are introduced.

Q: Do you think this indigent policy is successful or is there something else that can be done?

A: It is difficult to say anything yet because the municipality has not applied the policy yet. We were just told that there is a policy coming up.

Q: Do you have anything you want to say now (in summary) about the policy.

A1: I would like to say that the government should bare with us. We are not doing all this because we want to. We really do not have money. We would really like to pay for municipal services. We would also like to thank him for listening to all our grievances and trying to help.

A2: the municipality should try and talk to us before taking drastic actions such as evaluating your house for sale.

A3: We would all like to see this indigent policy being applied in our area. Serious action should be taken against people who have money and yet apply for this policy.

A4: the Government should try and create job opportunities for us because some of us are still young.

Thank you, all for coming today!

ARCADIA 1

FOCUS GROUP NO. 1 FRIDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2001 ARCADIA

FIRST SESSION WITH RECIPIENTS

INTRODUCTION

During the session we will be talking about the subsidy that people can receive for paying for their water usage. We will be discussing how the policy work, who qualifies to receive the subsidy and how a person should go about to apply for the subsidy.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

➤ *How did you find out about the subsidy?*

- We received information letters with our water accounts.

➤ *How long ago did you receive the information letters?*

- It was almost 4 years ago.
- It was almost 3 years ago. I remember that I applied last year for electricity.
- I remember that it was longer than 3 years ago. I received the letter with my water account and in the letter it said that we should go to the West-end Community Centre to apply for the subsidy. I filled in the application forms at took it to the centre. Shortly afterwards there were girls send to the houses to ask the same questions that was asked in the application forms.

➤ The girls that went round to the houses. Did they confirm the information that was asked in the application forms, or did they inform the household of the policy?

- She only said that we could receive money to pay for water. We did not know how to apply.
- We had to tell them how many people are living in the house and what our income and expenses are a month. What is the total income per month?

➤ *Was it the first time you heard about the subsidy when you received the information letter with your water account?*

- Yes, it was the first time we heard about the policy.

➤ Have you ever seen posters or heard over the radio information of the policy?

- No, never.

- After the first time that you heard about the policy – what did you do? Did you go somewhere to fill the necessary application forms in?
 - **We went to the West-End Community Centre to fill in the application forms.**
- How far is the centre from where you are living?
 - **It is almost 1 km from our homes.**
- Is it close enough to walk to the centre?
 - Yes.
- After filling in the application forms – did they send anyone to your home to confirm the information that was filled in on the application form?
 - Yes.
- *How long did it take before you started to receive the subsidy?*
 - **Between 3 to 4 months.**
- *Do you think that the process went smooth and without any hassles?*
 - **Yes, I think so. When your water account is very high at the end of the month, the subsidy helps a lot.**
 - The process did run smooth, but the people that came to the houses did not inform us of all the details.
 - The people that came to the houses made us sign on the forms, but they never explained the rules of the policy to us.
 - The fieldworkers come to visit your house and if they see other people in your house you will not receive the subsidy. Nobody informed us that we are not allowed to have other people living in our houses.
 - At the West-End Centre we were not informed that other people should not be living on our yards.
 - They did not explain that the total income per household should not be more than R800 per month.
 - The lady that came to visit our house didn't inform us of the details of the policy. She wanted to know what were our income, expenses, and how many children over 18 and if there were any other persons living in our house.
 - We only did what we were told to do.
 - The conclusion was that we did not receive the subsidy because we were not properly informed of the rules and regulations of the policy.
- *Do you receive 100% subsidy?*
 - Yes, you get 100% subsidy if you do not have a job.

- If your income is a bit more than R500 per month then you only receive 50% subsidy.
- *The first time you went to the community centre did you know which documentation to take along?*
- No, we were not certain. We took the water account with us.
- *Do you think that the policy is fair if they reject your application because of extra people living on your ground and that the total income should not be more than R800 per household?*
- **No, it is not fair.**
- The other person who is living on your ground does not have a job and therefore does not have any income. The people at the community centre informed the people without work to go to the police station to get a certified copy to prove that they are jobless.

The reason for this research is to inform other municipalities that are not making use of this policy on how to implement the policy in an effective way. We want to give them guidelines on to making the process easier for the public to apply for the policy.

- *What can you suggest to the municipalities on making the process easier?*
- **The community must be informed about all the necessary detail and information regarding the policy.**
- *Do you think this is a good policy to help the poor people?*
- **Yes, it helps a lot if you don't have any source of income.**
- *There is a story going round that the community will receive basic services for free without applying therefor. Each household will receive six-kilo liter of water free. Do you think is a good idea or should the people rather apply for the subsidy?*
- I think it will be better if people could apply for the subsidy.
- I don't think that they will really give water to everybody for free. You will have to qualify for the water and therefore still need to apply therefor.
- *After receiving the subsidy, did anybody visit your home to confirm your details? How many times per year did somebody from the council visit your homes?*
- **Once a year. Sometimes you don't even know that there was anybody at your home.**

- *What type of questions did the fieldworkers ask?*
- **The normal questions that are on the application form. How many people live in your house, how many children under the age of 18, what is your monthly expenses and income?**
- *How do you feel about the fieldworkers going the houses during the day? Do you think that they should rather visit the houses after hours?*
- **It will be easier if they go around after 5 in the afternoon.**
- *Do you know of someone who is receiving the subsidy, but does not really qualify?*
- **No.**
- *How do you feel about people receiving the subsidy, but does not really qualify?*
- **It is not fair.**
- *What do you think should be done to these people receiving the policy, but does not qualify?*
- **The subsidy should be taken away immediately.**
- *Do you think it is fair when the council say that the income per household should not exceed R800 per month?*
- **R800 is not a lot of money.**
- **With this R800 a person need to pay for water and electricity, buy food, school tuition fees and to ensure that you have funeral coverage.**
- *Which amount would be fair?*
- **R1 500 per month.**

According to the policy the total amount should not exceed the amount of two government pensions. That is round about R1 140. Subsidy will not be awarded if more than this amount. According to the institution responsible for the paying of subsidies – fewer people will receive subsidies when the amount of R800 will be increased.

- *Do you think that fewer people should receive more money or should more people receive less money?*
- **The money should be divided so that everybody can get something.**

- It is not fair if only certain people receive the subsidy.
- *Does the subsidy help that you are receiving?*
- **Yes.**
- *What are being subsidized?*
- **Water. We need to pay for our own electricity.**
- We do pay a certain amount towards water.
- We do not understand the accounts. One month it will be reasonable and the next it will be so high that you cannot afford to pay everything. If I do not pay everything I need to pay the difference the next month.
- *You applied for the subsidy because you can't afford your expenses. How do you go about with your accounts in arrears?*
- **We need to make arrangements with our debt-collectors. This is a very difficult task.**
- You arrange to pay R10. For example you owe R3 000 and you only pay R10 per month then you are suppose to only owe R2 990, but because of the interest you actually owe more at the end of the day.
- *There is people complaining that the amount on their account is not the same as the amount of water that they use throughout the month. Do you think that they only estimate an amount and do not really read the meters?*
- This is the truth.
- I went to the municipality to inquiry about the total on my account, but the lady told me that there is nothing wrong with the total on my account.
- I only use water when necessary. How can my account be different each month?
- I think that we pay for those people who are not paying their water accounts.
- *Do you have any ideas on how to improve this process?*
- **We do not stand a chance against the municipality.**
- The rules of the municipality are law and we need to follow them.
- The amount that we are paying for water does not justify for people who do not have any source of income.

CLOSURE:

This research is currently being done in Port Elizabeth, Durban, Cape Town and Bloemfontein. We ask questions to the community regarding the policy and then we give feedback to the council. At the end of this research there will be a

document compiled for the councils on how the implement and manage the policy in an effective way.

FOCUS GROUP NO. 2

INTRODUCTION

The University of the Free State in conjunction with the Port Elizabeth Technikon is currently busy with research on subsidies on water and free services that are being delivered to the community. This research will be done at four different municipalities namely Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban. We want to find out from the council how the policy is working and how it is suppose to work. We already held interviews at the different council to hear their point of view and know we are holding interviews with the community to hear what they are thinking of the policy.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

➤ *Do you receive the subsidy?*

- Yes, but I do not know where it comes from.

➤ *Did you apply for the subsidy?*

- Yes. I need to pay school fees for six children and only receives a pension and therefor I had to apply for the subsidy. We can't live without water and electricity.

➤ *Is there any of you who do not receive the subsidy?*

- Yes.

➤ *Do you know about the policy? Do you know that you can apply for the subsidy?*

- Yes I know about the policy, but I don't want to apply for the subsidy.

➤ *How did you hear about the subsidy?*

- Fieldworkers came to our homes.

➤ *Do you know how to apply for the subsidy?*

- No we are not sure.
- The fieldworkers that came to our homes informed us to go to the West-End Community Centre to apply for the subsidy. We did not know which documentation to take with us.
- The lady at the community centre took my application form, but she could not tell me how long it would take to be processed for approval.
- As from the beginning of this year I am not sure if I'm still receiving the subsidy because my water account is very high and I need to pay everything out of my own pocket.

➤ *Which other methods should the council make use to inform the community about the policy and the subsidies available?*

- The need to put posters up at the pension offices.

A household may only receive the subsidy if their monthly income does not exceed a total of R800. If the income of a household is between R500 and R800 per month they may receive 50% subsidy. If the income of a household is less than R500 per month they may receive 100% subsidy. The community also receives six-kilo litre water and other essential services free.

If a household qualifies for the subsidy they need to go to a specific centre with the correct documentation to apply for the subsidy. A fieldworker will visit the applicant's home to confirm the information given on the application form. If the information is correct the fieldworker will take it back to the centre to be keyed into the system in order for the household to start receiving the subsidy.

➤ *Do you think that that the above process is fair?*

- If you receive more than R800 per month you are not allowed to apply for the subsidy, but know you receive such a small pension that you can't afford to pay everything in a month.
- My mother and I stayed in my brother's house. My mother applied for the subsidy, but it was later taken away.

➤ *Why was the subsidy taken away?*

- My mother was very sick and my sister had to come and stay with us to look after our mother. A lady from the council came round to our house and saw my sister with her husband staying with us in the same house. She went back to the council informing them that there are more people and therefore more income, but she never asked if they were permanently staying with us.

➤ *Did the council assume that the monthly income exceeding R800?*

- Yes that is what they thought, but my sister is actually paying for their own home.

➤ *How many times did the fieldworker visit the house to confirm the information?*

- Once.

➤ *Do you feel that the process are being handled wrong?*

- The process is unfair.
- Sometimes I wonder if I am not paying for the other people who are not willing to pay their accounts.

➤ *Have you ever tried to complain to anyone?*

- Yes, we did go to the municipality, but the lady there told us that there is a specific company reading the meters, but sometimes they only estimate an amount per household.
- Every month I see another person coming to read the meters, but if they can't find the meters they just estimate an amount because they think that nobody is at home to see them.
- I went to the municipality, but the lady told me that she could not help me. She referred me to Mr. Plaatjies. He told me that it is a very difficult case to help me. I told him that I paid R100 last July and that I want to pay another R100. My son that is not staying with me gave me the money.

➤ ***Do you think that the people at the council are helpful?***

- No, they are not very helpful.
- I went to discuss my problem with Mr. Plaatjies. He told me that I should pay R390 to bring my mother's account up to date and that he will help me to put the account onto my name. I borrowed the money and went back to Mr. Plaatjies to pay the money. He referred me to the cashier to pay the money. The lady at the cashier told me that I should pay R690. I explained to her that the matter was discussed with Mr. Plaatjies. She called Mr. Plaatjies and he said that I should pay R590. I had to go and borrow more money. The account is still not on my name and therefor I can't apply for the subsidy.

➤ ***According to the council a washer must be installed at each household, but then they will receive less water. How do you feel about this?***

- The council did send someone to take out my water meter and to put in a washer, but know the water is flowing at a higher pressure and therefor I need to pay more for the water being used.

➤ ***Why don't you apply for the subsidy?***

- I did apply, but the council informed me that because there is more people staying in my home – the income is more than R800 per month.

➤ ***What do you think about the people who is not paying for services, but they can afford to pay?***

- The subsidy should be taken away from those people.
- It is not fair.
- They believe that someone else will pay for their services.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- The council wants to install a new electricity box at my home. The installation cost is R180 and now they expect me to pay, but I don't even have a job.
- My neighbours never paid for their water and suddenly my water account is more than before. My neighbours reading are on the same meter as mine.

- I have been staying in my house for almost 31 years and I have never seen anybody from the council coming to check if the pipes are in perfect working condition.
- The president said that we will not have to pay for water, he did not say anything about subsidies. Know he is saying, no, the people must pay for water.
- My neighbour has got a tap that is dripping all day, but their reading is also on my water meter.

PHAHAMENG DATA COLLECTION

Sello More

25 October 2001

FOCUS GROUP 1

1. How did find out about the policy?

The respondents provided different replies to this question, but the following were situations that brought the policy to their attention:

- # Receipt of letters from the council requesting some significant insight into their economic circumstances, which in turn they were told would assist the council in easing up their accounts.
- # By going to the municipal offices to express their inability to pay their municipal bills.
- # By the current ward councilor during the electioneering campaign. This lady claims that she told the councilor during his/her campaign that she was not going to vote because the council was not doing anything for them.

However, before they could get any assistance they had to pay lots of money for reconnection of water. Some claiming that they had to pay hundreds of rands first.

2. What procedure did you follow to get access to the indigent subsidy?

The council just sent them forms (letters) to fill in their details. These people did not even know that by filling in those forms they were declaring their indigence. As stated above, people had to pay lots of money.

3. What problems and/or obstacles have you experienced in terms of the procedure required to qualify for assistance?

- # As indicated above, people, majority of who are pensioners and unemployed, had to pay lots of arrears, before their water could be reconnected.
- # Elders had to walk long distances to get to the places where they have to submit their forms.

4. How do you think these problems should be solved?

- # The council should visit all the elderly indigents in particular, to know about their status.
- # The council should not expect the indigents to pay lots of money before reconnecting their water.
- # The customer care offices should be nearer and clearly visible.

5. Are you satisfied with the assistance you got with regard to the indigent policy in terms of:

- # Your account: No! Our accounts do not really change for the better, instead we pay the outstanding amounts with lots of interest, which is increasing every month. Some of them brought along their accounts. In fact they did not even believe that they got anything from the council until when I have shown that to them.
- # The assistance you got from the municipal officer: No! the procedure is demanding, and they would send you from pillar to post. One of them claims that her water is not even reconnected, even though she filled in the form. Her name appeared on the indigent list.

6. Do you think the indigent policy is the best way for the municipality to help the poorest of the poor?

If they could cancel our arrears, so that we can start afresh, the accounts are just too huge.

If they could allow us pensioners in particular to pay an affordable flat rate.

What was also evident was the fact that majority of them say that the council never really responded to them. They are not even aware that they are beneficiaries. Some of them brought their bills, and I could show them that they are actually benefiting. What disturbed them most, was the fact that their accounts do not show any difference with the subsidy, consequently they want the cancel to cancel their debts and allow them to start afresh so that they can really benefit from the policy. The policy can be good, but currently the feeling is that it is not good enough.

PHAHAMENG DATA COLLECTION

25 October 2001

Sello More

GROUP 2 (THOSE WHO DO NOT BENEFIT)

**NB Only people who are aware but do not benefit
did attend the focus session**

1. Are you aware of the municipality's indigent policy

The majority of these people were aware of the existence of the policy. I then explained it in detail to those who did not really understand it., but after that I have explained it to them, they showed signs of understanding the policy.

2. How did you find out about it?

They knew through the media, in particular the express and radio. The others knew about the policy through the ward meetings. One of them is a ward committee member who explained that she knew exactly about the policy and that she also took time to explain the policy to her neighbours. The lady explained that when people were asked to pay connection fees, it was about the policy. Those who paid, had their water reconnected. However, others claimed that it was unfair that only people who could pay the reconnection fees benefited from the policy, whereas the poorest of the poor (who are supposed to benefit) do not really benefit.

3. Have you ever applied for a discount on your municipal account in terms of the indigent policy?

They never really applied because they did not have adequate information about the policy. They thought the policy was for pensioners only and people who do not really earn anything. They did not know that even young people whose household income

was less than 2 old age pensions stood to benefit as well. In their own view, they could have applied if they knew about the policy. They consequently claimed that the council was not doing enough to disseminate information about the policy.

5. Are you satisfied with the assistance that is offered to inhabitants of your town in terms of the indigent policy?

They could not basically agree or disagree, because they do not know adequately about the policy, however, I explained it to them and then they agreed that it is a good way of assisting people. However, they stressed the fact that the elderly may not benefit from the policy because council is not doing enough to inform them. They insist that for policy like these, meetings only are not adequate means to disseminate information.

6. Is the municipality doing enough to disseminate information about the indigent policy?

A general agreement was that the council is not doing enough to disseminate information about the policy, if they could use all the media, including going to people's homes to inform them, particularly the elderly. However, they agreed that they would apply for the subsidy.

7. Are you aware of the period and conditions under which you may qualify for the benefits?

They believe that it's the people who are unemployed, people with unsolvable problems, the elders (pensioners) and every one who is poor. They did not know anything about the period.

8. If you haven't applied for the assistance, what is the reason for that.

As mentioned earlier, majority of them did not really know much about the policy. The ward committee member said her household did apply, but they are still waiting for a response from the municipality. The others indicated that they feared municipal

attorneys. A common belief was that once you declare your indigence status, you are exposing yourself to litigation.

9. What do you think the municipality should do to people who lie in their applications and are not really eligible?

They should be litigated against. The council should hold them accountable for all the services that they got for free. However, one of them expressed disagreement about that, stating that one cannot solve a household's problems by just looking at their standards of living. He claimed that currently majority of Mangaugers live in debt trap, consequently only a few people can really claim to be reach.

10. Do you think that the indigent subsidies are the best ways for the municipality to help the poorest of the poor? If no, what do you think they can do to help you?

This is a very significant policy, particularly for the unemployed. They further agreed that the government must also address the other social needs, by for instance increasing the pension benefits. They indicate that the elders earn so little and they cannot afford to buy groceries and pay for services out of the meager allowances that they got from the government. They indicate that the disabled will never be able to be reach in the lifetimes, particularly those that are not educated. However, they agree that although they want the government to increase pension allowances, the pensioners should pay something for their services, as they get something at the end of the month. People who afford should pay for services to relief those who do not afford. Some people rely entirely on petty donations and cannot afford to pay for services, such people should in actual fact not pay anything to the municipality.

FREEDOM SQUARE DATA COLLECTION

Date : 31 October 2001

GROUP 1 (those who benefit)

FIELD WORKER : SELLO MORE

1. How did find out about the policy?

Some claim that municipal officials actually told them to fill in some forms. One of them had a funeral at home and because of the demand for water, she went to beg the council for some assistance with water. The other one only knew about the policy when the municipal workers came to cut his water supply. The other heard from a neighbour who is very fond of attending meetings.

2. What procedure did you follow to get access to the indigent subsidy?

They had to fill in some forms that demanded a lot of some information. Some claim that part of that information is private and the world does not deserve to know about their poverty status. One says that she went Glass palace to enquire about her account and then she was asked to fill in a certain form.

3. What problems and/or obstacles have you experienced in terms of the procedure required to qualify for assistance?

The fact that they had to declare their poverty status. Others however could not really comment on this, its as if what ever problems they met, they saw as necessary sacrifices. Also the fact that they had to enquire about their accounts, before they could be told about this useful policy.

4. How do you think these problems should be solved?

The council should disseminate information adequately. They should not presume that everybody is attending their meetings. Not everyone is having a radio or access to newspapers. The council should make sure that everybody knows about policies as significant as this one.

5. Are you satisfied with the assistance you got with regard to the indigent policy in terms of:

Your account: It seems as if by declaring our indigent status, we are saying to the council that they should inflate our accounts. Some claim that their accounts are now accruing interest than ever before. Their accounts run at thousands of Rands.

The assistance you got from the municipal officer: The idea that was mooted out was that the municipal officers were not explaining their accounts to them adequately. The other problem was that, they were told to pay anything that they have, but officials

reject the little amounts that they have. They asked me to ask the council to strongly reprimand this people as they are getting fed-up with them.

6. Do you think the indigent policy is the best way for the municipality to help the poorest of the poor?

These people don't think so. They think that there is no use to pretend that you are assisting people whereas you definitely are not. They believe that declaring one's indigent status opens one to litigation, highly limited water in particular and all the other evils. They get their water in drops. One has to put a bucket for 2 hours before it can be full of water. As a result, they reject this policy, unless if it can be reconstructed.

What was also evident was the fact that majority of them say that the council never really responded to them. They are not even aware that they are beneficiaries. Some of them brought their bills, and I could show them that they are actually benefiting. What disturbed them most, was the fact that their accounts do not show any difference with the subsidy, consequently they want the cancel to cancel their debts and allow them to start afresh so that they can really benefit from the policy. The policy can be good, but currently the feeling is that it is not good enough.

Although the majority of respondents were benefiting, some two or so did not benefit from the policy. Below is a summary of responses to randomly asked questions.

These people did not really know about the policy. They just have huge bills and cannot go and enquire at the municipality, as they fear that they may be victimized. These people re the poorest of the poor, just an idea that they are not aware of the fact that they are benefiting simply implies that the subsidy does not really assist them. Majority of these people were elders, and they claim they do not have water supply, some of them, its been a year to two since they got water from their taps. Some of them were having summonses and they were afraid that if they go to report to the municipality, they may asked to surrender to the police.

These were very old people and consequently claimed that the council is not doing enough for them, instead the council would rather cut their water supply. Some of them doubt the authenticity of their water bill, because they say that the meter readers sometime do not actually read the meters, they just make assumptions. This is based on the fact that some of them claim that their meter boxes have never been opened in months, yet they get huge water bills. These people as well want the council to cancel their arrears and allow them to start afresh, as they won't be able to see the benefits of the indigent policy as long as they also have to service the arrears.

FREEDOM SQUARE DATA COLLECTION – 31 OCTOBER 2001

Group 2 (those who do not benefit)

FIELD WORKER:

SELLO MORE

The focus group was composed of people, of whom majority were not aware of the policy, while some two were aware. It was a group of elderly citizens of the square.

1. Are you aware of the municipality's indigent policy?

An overwhelming no was the answer, except for 2 or three who claimed to know about the policy. Those who know about it, claimed that they heard about it in the meeting.

2. Have you ever applied for a discount on your municipal account in terms of the municipality's indigent policy?

No, because they did not really know about the policy. Those who knew did not know enough. They also claimed that they could not enquire about their accounts, because initially the cutting of water and services was not rife at all. What irked them most was the huge water accounts. They claim that they also hate summons from the council, but the cutting of services is unforgivable.. Some claim that their accounts are in the range of R 6000.-00. They further claim that they would be satisfied if they can get any assistance from the municipality.

3. Is the municipality doing enough to disseminate information about the indigent policy?

An overwhelming no in this regard as well. They claim that its maybe because they are the elderly who are staying in a very un-fashionable area. The feeling was that the municipality was not doing enough to inform Freedom Square people. Those who knew about the policy accused those who did not know of ignorance and inability to attend meetings. However those who did not attend the meetings countered by saying that not all of them are able to attend meetings, due to the age and endurance factors. Some claimed that instead of addressing the issues, the council and their "committee" members engage in "useless" debates about "useless" issues. They don't address bread and butter issues as a priority. Some claim that they are always told to pay, no-one really bothers to tell them about opportunities when they arise.

4. Are you aware of the period and conditions under which you may qualify for benefits.

They did not actually know, but I explained the conditions to them, and they were all so excited about the situation because as old age pensioners they stand to benefit..

5. If you haven't applied for the benefits as yet, what is the reason?

- # Those who did not know claimed that they could not apply for benefits as they did not know anything about the policy.
- # Those who knew were afraid that their names may be given to lawyers who continue to terrorise and harass them.
- # Some know of their friends who want to the municipality, only to have their water supplies cut.

6. What do you think the municipality should do about people who lie in their applications and who are not really eligible?

They should be really reprimanded and warned, because they take away from the poor what is rightfully theirs.

7. Do you think that the indigent subsidies are the best ways for the municipality to help the poorest of the poor?

Only if they could first cancel the people's arrears and second remove people's names from the attorneys.

8. How do you think the indigent policy could be advertised adequately?

- # They should visit the elderly's houses
- # They can also use the old age clubs to inform the elderly
- # They should call meetings and indicate the significance of such meetings in their notices.

Generally people want to urge the council to stop cutting their water, as they cannot survive without water.

Rocklands - will be completed later

DURBAN – will be completed later

APPENDIX 3

Fieldworker Profiles

FIELDWORKER PROFILES

PLACE	FIELDWORKER	STUDYING	INSTITUTION
CERES	Zama myulane	Masters in Public Administration	University of Cape Town
PORT ELIZABETH	Malusi Ngxongo		Port Elizabeth Technikon
	Lungile Mxube		Port Elizabeth Technikon
BLOEMFONTEIN	Sello More	Masters in Public Management	University of the Free State
	Khali Nena	Masters in Sociology	University of the Free State
DURBAN	Bongani Gumede	Masters in Development Studies + Development Consultant	University of the Free State

APPENDIX 4

Workshop Agendas and Venues

**AGENDA FOR A WORKSHOP WITH MUNICIPALITIES
WITH REGARD TO LOCAL INDIGENT POLICIES**

SESSION 1 (08h30-09h00)

OPENING AND WELCOMING – City Treasurer or Indigent Policy Head

SESSION 2 (09h00-09h30)

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES – Prof Koos Bekker

SESSION 3 (09h30-10h00)

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT REALITIES - Ms Tanja Arntz

(10h00-10h15) TEA AND REFRESHMENTS

SESSION 4 (10h15-11h45)

IDENTIFICATION OF LOCAL INDIGENT ISSUES/PROBLEM AREAS (BRAINSTORMING) & CATEGORISATION (POLICY FORMULATION & POLICY IMPLEMENTATION) OF ISSUES/PROBLEM AREAS IN INDIGENT POLICY - Facilitator and participants

SESSION 5 (11h45 – 12h45)

IDENTIFICATION OF SOLUTIONS FOR ISSUES/PROBLEM AREAS - Break away groups

(12h34 – 13h30) LUNCH

SESSION 6 (13h30 – 14h00) IDENTIFICATION OF ACTION STEPS REQUIRED FOR THE SUCCESSFUL FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INDIGENT POLICY - Break away groups

SESSION 7 (14h00 – 14h30)

FEEDBACK BY BREAK AWAY GROUPS - Plenary session

SESSION 9 (14h30-15h00)

SUMMARY, WAY FORWARD AND CLOSURE - Ms Tanja Arntz

WORKSHOP VENUES

PLACE	DATE	VENUE
CERES	24 October 2001	Unfundweni Library
PORT ELIZABETH	26 October 2001	Centenary Hall, New Breyton
BLOEMFONTEIN	2 November 2001	MUCCP Offices, Rocklands
DURBAN	5 November 2001	Durban City Hall, Albert Luthuli