

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Water Quality Management  
Series**

**Managing the Water Quality  
Effects of Settlements: -**

**AN ASSESSMENT  
OF THE  
NON-PAYMENT PROBLEM**



Department of Water Affairs and Forestry

**OCTOBER 2001**

**Water Quality  
Management Series**

**MANAGING THE WATER QUALITY EFFECTS OF SETTLEMENTS:-**

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**Department of Water Affairs and Forestry**

**OCTOBER 2001**

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## **DOCUMENT INDEX**

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## PREFACE

Pollution from densely populated and poorly serviced settlements is perhaps one of South Africa's most *important*, but most *complex* water quality problems.

*Important*, because pollution in and from these settlements not only affects downstream users, but has its most significant impacts on the communities living in these settlements. Failing sanitation and waste removal systems create appalling living conditions in many settlements, and contribute to serious health problems in these communities. Pollution in and from these settlements is, therefore, not only a water quality issue, but has much wider implications for government's aims to provide a better life for all

*Complex*, because pollution in settlements is rooted in the socio-economic, political and institutional conditions in the settlement. The use, or misuse, of services together with the way in which the services are maintained by Local Authorities lies at the heart of the pollution problem in many settlements. This is further complicated by the legacy of South Africa's apartheid history. Solutions, therefore, lie in changing the way in which the services are supplied and used.

However, *sustainable* solutions to the problem lie not only in our ability to supply and use waste and sanitation services to best effect, but also in the longer-term capacity of local government to maintain these services. This is likely to be the biggest stumbling block to sustainable management of pollution from settlements. Local government in South Africa clearly has significant capacity problems, and misuse of services, for a variety of reasons, is endemic in many settlements across the country. More importantly, failing waste services contribute to poor living conditions, and hence to the misuse of the services. Non-payment for services also limits the capacity of the Local Authority to effectively maintain the services, which then leads to further failure of the services.

Strategies to manage pollution in settlements must take a broader view of both Local Authority capacity, and the socio-economic and political dynamics of the community in order to arrest this downward spiral. The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, therefore, initiated a study of the links between pollution, community perceptions and local government capacity, to run in parallel with the Test Cases. A number of reports have been produced to support this study.

It is hoped that these reports provide compelling arguments to address this problem both by ensuring better planned and run services, but also by active intervention and assistance where there are clear and immediate threats to community health and the environment. This report forms part of this process.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South African Department for Water Affairs (DWAF) has the responsibility for managing South Africa's water resources. This requires not only the equitable distribution and use of water but also the protection of the quality of water resources. One of the most serious threats to water quality is the pollution from densely populated urban settlements, partly as a result of inadequate waste and sanitation services. Recognising this DWAF approached the Danish Ministry for Environment and Energy (DANCED) for assistance. As a response the Project to *Develop a Strategy to Manage the Water Quality Effects of Dense Settlements* was initiated in June 1997. The first edition of the strategy was published in 1999.

One of the challenges of the strategy is to create a 'win-win' situation through a combination of providing improved and adequate services while at the same time improving the environment. Apart from insufficient technical and organisational capacity the major reason for the inadequacy of services in dense settlements is the poor financial status of most local authorities in South Africa. This often results in a capacity gap where the capacity required to effectively provide services is not matched by the capacity available within the local authority. One important contributing factor behind this is the high occurrence of non-payment for services. DWAF acknowledges, that if the problem of non-payment is not properly addressed, pollution will continue. Non-payment for services thus constitutes a major threat to the implementation of the strategy.

Measures have been undertaken to address the issue of non-payment in South Africa, notably the Masakhane Campaign. The campaign was successful in a few towns, but generally floundered because of its top down approach and its failure to involve local democratic structures. In addition, Masakhane was often perceived as a payment-only campaign, and not as a campaign about development, transformation of governance and improvement of the quality of life.

Grahamstown was one of the areas chosen for the pilot implementation of the National Strategy of Phase 2 of the Dense Settlement Project. A previous study within this Project has shown that non-payment, which is at 45%, is a significant contributor to a the lack of financial capacity in Grahamstown and that this would seriously hamper efforts to address the pollution problems in this Test Case.

The high rate of non-payment is partly a consequence of the non-affordability of services for a large number of low-income households. Though the indigent policy addresses the problem of non-affordability the level of payment remains extremely low partly because many low income households do not register for support or are unwilling to pay for services, which they consider inadequate. Grahamstown has undertaken a payment for services campaign, but the campaign was not successful apparently because it was not sufficiently rooted within local structures.

The Department of Provincial and Local Government, which funds local governments in South Africa, has shown interest in co-operating with the Dense Settlement Project to test the concept of providing limited operation and maintenance support to Grahamstown. This, in addition to the high level of non-payment was the reason for choosing Grahamstown for a case study of the population's willingness and ability to pay for waste and sanitation services. The objective of the study was to support current initiatives for improving the performance and financial status of the local authorities by analysing socio-economic, cultural, political and historic reasons for non-payment and on the basis of that analysis provide recommendations for improving payment rates.

It is often assumed that South Africa has a 'culture of non-payment'. The case study showed that non-payment is not linked to any specific 'culture' but must be understood as a social issue and as a consequence of a long political history of suppression, deprivation and dependency. It is also problematic to regard the concept of 'community' as referring to a more or less homogenous entity when, in fact, all communities are composed of a number of 'actors', who continuously interact in a dynamic process of conflicting and common goals.

One of the most central problems in terms of non-payment is poverty, unemployment and the unequal distribution of wealth in South Africa. Though unemployment and poverty often serve as an excuse for non-payment, it is also true that low incomes force people to prioritise their expenses. People with few resources are therefore not very willing to pay, even if they could afford to, especially if they perceive their poverty as being a result of suppression and deprivation by others, who continue to live 'the good life'. On the other hand many people could pay but fail to do so for a number of reasons including dissatisfaction with services, habit, a history of dependency and an attitude of 'why should I pay when others don't'.

However, people also know that with the new Government it is expected that they pay for the services provided to them and that it is no longer politically acceptable to boycott payment. The fact that many people use excuses to explain why they don't pay indicates that they are aware that it is wrong to do so.

The issue of non-affordability must be addressed by the indigent policy and other forms of subsidies. This requires that registration for the indigent policy is easy and straight forward, and that people understand they must apply for support if they cannot pay full services rates. It may be necessary to revise the indigent policy so that it takes account of the actual standard of living in applicant households and to ensure that households do not pay more than the max. 5% recommended by the World Bank for waste and sanitation services. The introduction of affordable levels of services is another aspect, which need to be seriously looked into at the local level.

While poverty and non-affordability can only to a limited extent be addressed by the Dense Settlement Project it can develop a strategy for changing the unwillingness to pay into a sense of responsibility at the community level. The case study and experiences from successful attempts to improve payment rates elsewhere in South Africa have shown that problems of non-payment and solutions to those problems are primarily related to the following issues:

- Education, communication and information
- Participation and Representation
- Incentives
- Enforcement
- Management

Neither of these issues can stand alone in an approach towards sustainable management of the non-payment problem in South Africa. It is, however important that the implementation of the strategy through specific activities is adapted to the local context and the diversity within local communities. This diversity not only includes gender but also age, social status, education, religion, individual interests etc.

Community participation, empowerment and responsibility are at the centre of both problems and solutions. Increased awareness and knowledge are crucial but do not necessarily persuade people to change behaviour. People must also feel that they are an important part of a process aimed at improving their living conditions, and they have the responsibility and the right to participate in that process. Through participation unwillingness can be turned into

willingness when people begin to see that they cannot rely on the Government for improving their lives. Learning participation is a long and difficult process, which demands considerable co-operation and support from local authorities and other stakeholders. Participation can only function if communities have someone to represent them, to mobilise them for activities and to focus diverse views and needs on common goals. The local councillors are supposed to act as elected representatives for the communities but they are often too much part of the political structure to focus their attention on the actual needs of the people they represent. Though civic organisations and local institutions may better be able to represent the diversified views and needs of a community, those involved in the political system must understand that it is their duty to support strategies for improving payment, however unpopular.

Non-payment has such a long history in South Africa and the black population has had so little reason to trust the authorities, that incentives must be linked to improved payment. People learn to gain confidence in their own power to change their living conditions, when they realise that they get something they want when they pay. It is, however, unrealistic to expect an 'ideal situation', in which everybody pays. Incentives must therefore be linked to enforcement. People must understand that if they choose not to pay, it will have consequences. This is a new situation for many South Africans, who participated in non-payment boycotts. Most local authorities and politicians are reluctant to enforce payment, because it may lead to social unrest and even violence. As a means to counteract massive dissatisfaction within the community decisions on a policy of enforcement must be taken in consultation with that community.

The adequacy of services is not only linked to increased payment but also to proper management. The authorities must be open towards modifying the system and towards regarding the communities as part of a process towards improving the living conditions in that particular town. Improved and continuous communication and co-operation with local communities and other important actors must be ensured. The authorities must acknowledge that they, as well as the communities, need to learn. The learning process includes the will to learn from others especially those towns in South Africa who have been successful in improving payment. The success of a strategy for improving payment will in the end hinge on the capability and will of local authorities to implement the strategy and to identify partners for cooperation at the local level.

For the sustainability of local governments in South Africa, for the implementation of promises given to the population by the Government to provide adequate services to all and for the continued provision of clean water it is vital that the majority of the population begins to pay for the services they receive. It requires a concerted effort by all interested parties, and it demands of local governments that they do not give up when their efforts are met with resistance and set-backs.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The Department for Water Affairs (DWAF) has the responsibility for managing South Africa's water resources. This requires not only the equitable distribution and use of water but also the protection of the quality of water resources. One of the most serious threats to water quality is the pollution from densely populated urban settlements, partly a result of inadequate or poorly functioning services. Recognising this DWAF approached the Danish Ministry for Environment and Energy (DANCED) for assistance. As a response the Project to *Develop a Strategy to Manage the Water Quality Effects of Dense Settlements* was initiated in June 1997.

During Phase I of the Project a Draft National Strategy was developed. As stakeholder participation in this phase was limited a bridging phase was formulated during which stakeholders had the opportunity to comment on and modify the Draft Strategy. The first edition of DWAF's *National Strategy to Manage the Water Quality Effects of Densely Populated Settlements* was published in 1999 after comments had been incorporated.

Phase II started in January 1999. The primary objective of this phase is to test the strategy in nine test cases, one in each of South Africa's provinces. Experiences gained in this process will be included in the updating and refining of the National Strategy. The local governments will be responsible for implementing the strategy, and its success will depend on enhanced capacity at the level of local government. It was therefore decided to allocate some of the resources from Phase II of the Project to capacity building and to integrating the National Strategy into the normal functioning of local governments.

One of the challenges of the National Strategy is to create a 'win-win' situation through a combination of providing improved and adequate services while at the same time improving the environment. Apart from insufficient technical and organisational capacity the major reason for the inadequacy of services in dense settlements is the poor financial status of most local authorities in South Africa. This often results in a capacity gap where the capacity required to effectively provide the services is not matched by the capacity available within the local authority. (The reports on the [Capacity Gap](#) and on the [Financial component](#) of the capacity gap provide more details on the links between pollution and the capacity gap).

One important contributing factor behind the capacity gap is the high occurrence of non-payment for services. DWAF acknowledges, that if the problem of non-payment is not properly addressed, pollution will continue. Non-payment for services thus constitutes a major threat to the implementation of the National Strategy.

### 1.2 Why choose Grahamstown?

Grahamstown was one of the areas chosen for the pilot implementation of the National Strategy in Phase 2 of the Dense Settlement Project. A previous study within this Project has shown that non-payment, which is at 45%, is a significant contributor to the lack of financial capacity in Grahamstown and that this would seriously hamper efforts to address the pollution problems in this Test Case. (see the [Financial Gap](#) report). Grahamstown has previously undertaken a payment for services campaign – without much success. These factors made the Local Authority in Grahamstown a prime candidate for a study into the willingness and ability to pay for waste services. The Department of Provincial and Local

Government, which funds local government in South Africa, has also shown interest in co-operating with the Dense Settlement project to test the concept of providing limited operation and maintenance support in Grahamstown.

### 1.3 The Objectives and Structure of the Report

The Willingness and Ability to Pay Study was conducted from April to June 2000 in Pretoria and Grahamstown. It was based on a desk review of information on the Dense Settlement Project, DWAF policies and Willingness and Ability to Pay studies in South Africa from the Dense Settlement Project Office in DWAF in Pretoria, and a field study in Grahamstown. The field study was carried out in close co-operation with the local City Engineer's Office. It included a desk review of information from local authorities and research, interviews with social scientists, authorities, health clinics, schools, and organisations, and an empirical community study in Rini, the township associated with Grahamstown.

This report presents the findings of the study as well as recommendations for a strategy to improve payment for services. The relevance of the study for the Dense Settlement Project as a whole is also discussed. The report has been structured as follows:

**Chapter 2** discusses water, sanitation, waste and non-payment in South Africa generally. This chapter is based on information from the Dense Settlement Project Office.

**Chapter 3 and 4** present and discuss the findings from Grahamstown including conclusions and recommendations for improved payment.

**Chapter 5** discusses the relevance of the study for the Dense Settlement Project and the National Strategy.

A list of references with the most important literature and information reviewed during the study is attached at the end of the report. More detailed information on a number of issues is included in the annexes.

## 2. WATER, SANITATION AND WASTE IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 2.1 Background

South Africa has a population of approximately 46 million people and an annual growth rate of 2.6%. 76% of the population belong to different black ethnic groups. The remaining population is composed of 13% white, 8.6% coloured including indigenous peoples (primarily Khoi San), and 2.6% Indians. At least 55% of the population lives in urban or semi-urban areas and the percentage is expected to grow to 70% within the next few years. The increase, which has primarily been in the black population, is the consequence of internal growth rates as well as of the continuing migration from rural areas and foreign countries. More than 40% of the black population now lives in towns.

The urbanisation pattern of the black population has been highly influenced by former policies, which restricted the movement, settlement and location of black people. Many South Africans were denied their inherited rights as a consequence of forced removals and the exclusion from ownership and economic activities in those parts of South Africa where they had previously enjoyed such rights. In the towns they were separated from the white population and restricted to live in less favourable areas, the so-called townships.

The result of these restrictions and the ensuing pattern of migrations (once formal restrictions were removed), contributed to accelerated urbanisation, rapidly growing informal settlements, inner city decay, overcrowding, low income and high rates of unemployment within the formal sector. Income from informal jobs and pensions now play a major role for the survival of a large percentage of people living in dense settlements, where lower income urban households tend to be concentrated. Dense settlements include informal (squatter) as well as formal settlements with inadequate services in urban areas. Many dense settlements are characterised by increasing densification due to backyards and other hitherto 'open' spaces being occupied by informal houses or shacks. Services do not always function well due to poor management by the Local Authority, and overcrowding beyond the existing capacity in the settlements. This has in many cases led to pollution of nearby watercourses.

### 2.2 Water and Sanitation Policies

The policy of the current South African Government on water, sanitation and waste is to achieve equitable access to basic services for all in as short time as possible. This policy is documented in the *Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) White Paper*, which provides the policy framework for all branches of Government. In the water sector this has meant that DWAF now has the responsibility to ensure that all people have access to at least minimum supplies of water and safe sanitation. While municipal infrastructure development and operation is the responsibility of Local Authorities, DWAF must take direct action where a local government is unable to perform its functions. The objective of managing the quantity, quality and reliability of the nation's water resources is to achieve optimum, long term, environmentally sustainable use of the resource, as well as social and economic benefits from the use of the resource.

A *Water Supply and Sanitation Policy White Paper* was published in 1994. The policy was aimed at ensuring that all South Africans gain access to a minimum of 25 litres of water per person per day at a maximum of 200 m from the house. In the sanitation sphere the *Draft Policy on National Sanitation* embraced the following objectives:

- Raise awareness of diseases caused by unhealthy behaviour and practices;
- Support and provide health and hygiene education;
- Increased demand and willingness to pay for appropriate sanitation facilities.

The Policy also dictates that if a community demands higher levels of services, these must be funded by the community itself. In addition, all projects must be environmentally sustainable, and operation and maintenance costs must be borne by the users, while capital costs are borne by the local service providers. In reality, in many dense settlements the levels of services provided exceed the affordability of the people. Providing people with a lower level of services is, however, politically controversial, often unacceptable to the community and in some cases problematic from an environmental point of view.

The overall guiding principles of the *Water and Sanitation White Paper* are that development should be demand driven and community based, basic services are a human right (some for all and not all for some), and consumers pay. In reality community participation has often been neglected, and local insights and information have not been included in the planning and implementation of projects. Where communities participated their advice was not always heeded and recipients did not get a feeling of responsibility nor were their representatives included in the formal management structure. In cases where community members contributed with labour, gender equity in the distribution of labour was not always taken account of, political issues influencing a project were not discussed and there was often a lack of transparency about finances and budgets. In addition awareness building activities concerning health, hygiene and environment have not always been included, and the media have not been widely used for information activities.

In the *White Paper on Environmental Management* (1997) some of the objectives supportive of the sanitation policy include the establishment of mechanisms and processes to ensure effective public participation in environmental governance, the promotion of education and empowerment by increasing awareness of and concern for environmental issues, and assistance in developing knowledge, skills, values and commitment necessary to achieve sustainable development.

South Africa has relatively high levels of waste and pollution impacting on air and water. Waste disposal practices are often unsatisfactory, and ineffective waste management and poor regulatory controls allow waste producers to externalise waste management costs onto the environment and society. There are no effective incentives to encourage waste producers to adopt cleaner production processes and minimise waste generation. Government policy does not systematically encourage waste minimisation, reuse and recycling and, apart from a few isolated instances, local authorities do not encourage these practices at household level. In addition, the wealthier sections of society do not provide residents in dense settlements with an example of regard for the limited resources but rather with an image of careless and uninhibited overuse.

## 2.3 Water and Sanitation Services

As a consequence of promises given to the black and coloured population during the liberation struggle and of the experiences within the Apartheid system, people in lower income dense settlements tend to have relatively high expectations towards the level of services to be provided to them. They do not realise that the level of services and their affordability are interdependent. In addition a high level of services seems to be automatically perceived as 'good', while lower levels of services are considered 'bad'.



These perceptions do not necessarily reflect realities. In terms of sanitation lower levels of services are, for example, generally less risky from an environmental and health point of view, when they break down, than higher levels of services. High levels of services are only desirable when they function properly. There seems to be a lack of awareness among a majority of the interested parties that an appropriate level of services does not exist per se but has to be identified in relation to context and affordability. Unfortunately many local authorities have opted for high levels of services, which are unaffordable to a large portion of the population and therefore not sustainable from a financial point of view.

The satisfactory implementation of sanitation projects is highly dependent on the participation of target communities. Sanitation is not as immediate a priority as the supply of clean water but it is at least equally important in providing a healthy environment. Sanitation is about improving people's health and just improving the sanitation system and the water quality without good hygiene practices does not necessarily improve the general health situation. When people become aware of the overall benefits of improved sanitation they are generally more willing to contribute to the costs.

DWAF is aware that communities are not always properly consulted but merely informed before receiving a water or sanitation project. This lack of consultation has sometimes led to conflicts and problems. In some cases communities have complained that they did not know before the beginning of a project that they would be responsible for operation and maintenance costs.

In 1996 DWAF estimated that approximately 31% of the urban population lacked adequate sanitation, and almost 50% adequate waste collection services. In the older urban areas full services have normally been provided in the form of piped water supply and a piped sewerage system. However, many of the existing systems have been poorly maintained, especially in poorer areas, and they are often overloaded due to densification of the urban areas. As a consequence of inadequate or non-existent collection systems in disadvantaged communities and a lack of public awareness littering is another severe problem. Solid waste represents one of the fundamental causes of deteriorating water quality in dense settlements, both in terms of direct contamination and as a result of blockage of sewerage and storm water systems.

Causes behind increased pollution of water sources are related to physical, institutional and socio-cultural/economic factors. Social factors directly contributing to water quality are generally associated with the lack of alternatives, ignorance of impacts, and convenience. Other contributing factors are the informal settling of undeveloped land, insecurity in terms of tenure, densification of settlements beyond their capacity, inappropriate and illegal use of services, vandalism, un-affordability or unwillingness to pay and inadequate services. Economic and household activities such as washing clothes in streams and keeping animals within settlements also contribute to water pollution.

To date few Local Authorities have promulgated regulations in terms of enabling legislation to specifically to control pollution in dense settlements. In addition, existing legislation has generally played a limited role in controlling or minimising pollution and waste generation, neither has it promoted an environmentally acceptable and safe disposal regime for waste. Environmental legislation often lacks means of enforcement due to a number of factors including insufficient trained personnel, financial support and inspection.

## 2.4 Water and Sanitation Related Diseases

One of the most important arguments for a well-functioning water, sanitation and waste collection system is that the pollution of the environment is directly related to health. Water and sanitation related diseases claim the lives of some 43000 people in South Africa each year. The social and economic costs associated with illness and death are enormous. While international studies have shown that sanitation and hygienic practices are major contributors to this problem, a polluted environment also increase the risks associated with poor health and hygiene practices.

Studies in South Africa indicate that most people are aware of the link between certain diseases, hygienic practices and unclean water but that they do not always act according to their knowledge. There is very little understanding in the population of the more complex relationship between pollution, environmental impacts and health.

## 2.5 Gender

*The Water and Sanitation White Paper* realises that the development of women in relation to health and water management is important. Women are the traditional custodians of natural resources. They suffer most from their degradation, and they tend to acknowledge the benefits of clean water and sanitation and the role communities play in creating and preventing pollution more readily than men. Women in control of money are often more willing to pay for services than men. Their potential willingness is, however, often hampered by the fact that they are either not in control of the finances of the household or that, on an average, women have less income than men.

In view of the inherent gender inequality in the South African society, it is an important step towards improving that situation, that DWAF commits itself to the promotion of gender equality in the supply of water and sanitation. Implementation of the National Strategy in the Test Cases has also shown that women, particularly older women, are more likely to recognise the role the community plays in causing pollution. This makes gender issues pivotal to the whole issue of increasing payment, and utilising the services to best effect.

## 2.6 The issue of non-payment

One of the major reasons for the inadequacy of services in dense settlements is the poor financial status of most Local Authorities in South Africa. This contributes to the [Capacity Gap](#), where the capacity required to effectively provide services is not matched by the capacity available within the local authority. One important contributing factor behind this is the high occurrence of non-payment for services.

The wide-spread problem of non-payment is based on a complexity of economic, historical, socio-cultural and political reasons. Many people in post-Apartheid South Africa expect services to be free, as they were during the liberation struggle. In addition, public awareness of the interrelationship between non-payment, inadequate services, health and environment is generally low and services have often been introduced at the local level without prior assessment of people's ability and willingness to pay and without the active participation of the community. Many people cannot afford to pay for the full operation and maintenance costs of services provided to them.

The issue of non-payment not only includes people's actual ability and willingness to pay but also addresses people's general lack of understanding of the importance of paying to ensure

meters, corruption, mistrust of service providers, inadequate services, convenience and lack of information. People tend to think that it is the Government's responsibility to provide services. They do not want to understand that "the others don't pay" argument is not valid.

The resistance to payment has continued after 1994 possibly due to a lack of community involvement. Many municipal councils have resisted punitive actions against non-payers, and municipal officials have been threatened with violence or mass actions when trying to enforce payment.

In many cases poverty is the dominant factor behind non-payment. The World Bank has recommended that a community should be expected to pay 3-5% of the average income for services, while some South African experts indicate that up to 8% would be appropriate. The indigent policy recognizes that this is only viable if households with a low income, but higher levels of services are supported by subsidies. A weakness in the whole cost recovery approach is the absence of good data on the actual economic ability of consumers to pay. In order to develop cost recovery as successfully as possible, the apparent willingness to pay for services needs to be carefully balanced with the ability. High cost maintenance schemes are not desirable if the ability to maintain them is not there.

The *National Strategic Process* has investigated possibilities of cross subsidisation at the local level where pollution has been shown to be the result of the poor financial status of local authorities. Cross subsidisation is based on a 'carrot and stick' approach meaning that a Local Authority may receive assistance to operate and maintain services in return for addressing the non-payment issue and for improving their financial management. (See the [National Strategy](#) Document)

## 2.7 The Masakhane Campaign

Some measures have been undertaken to address the issue of non-payment, notably the Masakhane Campaign. The primary objective of the campaign was to encourage payment for services but the success has hitherto been limited. The Masakhane Campaign is part of a broad strategy to create conditions necessary for the success of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The strategy is aimed at mobilising all sectors of society to become actively involved in redressing imbalances of the past. It also has as its objective to create a society characterised by new values and norms, and a sense of responsibility among all citizens. Masakhane has unfortunately often been perceived as a payment-only campaign, and not as a campaign about development, transformation of governance and improvement of the quality of life. The reality is that effective and viable local government can only be sustained if people pay for the services delivered.

In an assessment of the campaign (*Democracy in Action*, IDASA Journal. 1/3 1996) it was found that the campaign floundered mainly because of its top down approach. The campaign failed to involve local democratic structures including the street committees and civic organisations behind the launching of previous boycotts. Community organisations should have spearheaded the campaign and made people understand that services have improved and that the new political order will lead to more improvements. Another problem, which was not properly addressed was that many communities have complaints about lack of consultation and about rates, which do not correspond to affordability and rates (and services) elsewhere. Ignorance was found to be another hurdle to the campaign. In some areas people did not know why they should pay for services nor how much or they did not understand why they should pay now when they had not paid before.

## 2.8 Successful Attempts to Tackle Non-payment

Some local authorities have realised that the failure of traditional municipal credit control necessitates the introduction of a new approach of a well-structured system of revenue management. Middelburg, Midrand and to some extent Kakamas are among these.

### Middelburg

Do not be afraid to take unpopular decisions if they are correct

In Middelburg payment rates rose dramatically as the municipality began to tackle the non-payment issue in partly innovative, partly punitive ways. The successful approach was based on the principle that the consumer of services is a client who has the right to receive essential services but also the duty to pay for services consumed. Effective communication with consumers together with transparency in all decision making processes were also essential. It was acknowledged that councillors, officials and consumers must understand that non-payment of services creates a negative cash flow, which will eventually result in the collapse of essential services. It was found that in order to find appropriate solutions reasons for non-payment need to be identified through community meetings and interviews with defaulters. The community must be regarded as the most important element in the service provision cycle as no municipality can survive without paying clients. The support of the community was therefore important to the success of debt collection.

Councillors were informed to carry out their role as elected representatives by being in continuous contact with their constituents in order to ascertain their needs, aspirations and problems. Without the support of the Council and individual councillors it is impossible for the municipality to implement the revenue management policies. The community and civic organisations must be fully involved in the process of revenue management and feed-back must be provided to the grass roots levels at regular intervals. A formal policy on revenue management must be adopted in consultation with the community and civic organisations, and action plans must be implemented without deviation. The Council and officials must also ensure that services are of an acceptable quality at all times as customers rightly expect value for their money. Complaints and breakdowns must be taken care of immediately. In addition, efficient debt collection is not possible when the consumer data were inaccurate or not up to date.

These issues were supplemented by immediate and uncompromising actions against consumers who make illegal connections. Where monthly bills were not paid by due date punitive actions were taken in the form of cutting off services. As such there was no debt accumulation, which consumers may not have been able to pay. Tariffs were calculated to provide enough income to cover the costs of providing services and maintenance, but were also affordable. The consumers were presented with understandable accounts. The due date for payment was highlighted, and it was made clear to costumers that services would be discontinued if not paid for on that date. In addition a clear and understandable policy was determined for indigent support. Measures were also taken to improve the revenue system including the installation of all meters inside houses, the introduction of rewards and reconnecting fees, auditing of meters twice a year and the attendance to all complaints within 24 hours.

The initiators of the 'Middelburg model' admit that initially their credit control managers were extremely unpopular but eventually people began to realise that increased payment was the only way the town could survive. The initiators linked the Masakhane Campaign with the

Reconstruction and Development Programme and ensured that all new projects created employment for community members. The community was educated about the advantages of increased payment coupled with education in schools, churches and other public places. They ensured that their message was practical, community driven and social rather than political. At the beginning of each financial year the council informed the community how much money the TLC had, they listened to requests for improvements from each ward and consulted with politicians, priests, business people, civil servants and other stakeholders. Before finalising the budget the community was informed about what to expect in the following year. The poorest households were subsidised, and squatters were moved to one specific area, where they were provided with basic facilities at a minimum rate.

The success of Middelburg can largely be ascribed to community participation and good policy making by the TLC. As a result of the improved payment rate, all roads were tarred and the operation and maintenance of all services continues to be excellent.

### **Midrand**

In Midrand payment rates rose from 3% to 80% over a period of 14 months as a result of the Masakhane campaign, which was developed by the council and elected zone leaders from the community. The money raised was translated directly into the community with the creation and maintenance of facilities. It was recognised that there was a need not only to increase payment but also to involve people in the development of the area where they lived. The improvement was based on a 10 point plan<sup>1</sup>, which included among its principles an assertion of whether accounts were distributed in time, the area chosen for implementation was divided into smaller zones with an elected zonal leader as the responsible intermediary between the community and the council, incentives were provided for payment, successes were rewarded, payment was linked to development, and a transparent and clear communication policy, improved contact between the community and the councillors and enhanced community participation were ensured.

The Midrand experiment has not been evaluated. Payment has, however, gone down again apparently because the implementation of the 10 point plan has not been continuous and there was a shift in responsibilities.

### **Kakamas**

In Kakamas in the Northern Cape payment was raised to 110% (which included some arrears payments) by strict enforcement. Payment for waste was included in the pre-paid electricity bill. If people do not pay their rates electricity will be cut off. Even though residents are poor they manage to pay their bills once they had experienced the consequences of non-payment. It is not known why strict enforcement has functioned so well in Kakamas, but shared language between all partners may be part of the explanation.

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<sup>1</sup> The 10 point plan is included in Annex I

### 3 STUDY OF THE WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO PAY FOR WASTE SERVICES IN GRAHAMSTOWN

A study on the willingness and ability to pay for services was conducted during 4 weeks in Grahamstown. Chapter 3 and 4 present and discuss the findings of the study<sup>2</sup>.

The purpose of the study was not to collect quantifiable data on the target community's willingness and ability to pay but rather to achieve an understanding of **why** so many people are not willing to pay and on the basis of that to provide a qualitative analysis of **how** this may be changed, and which relevance this has for the Dense Settlement Project as a whole. The study was therefore primarily based on a qualitative approach<sup>3</sup>.

#### 3.1 Socio-economic and Historical Context

Grahamstown is a university town in the Southern portion of the Eastern Cape. The town is estimated to have approximately 75 500 permanent residents distributed as follows; 75% blacks, 16% whites, and 7,7% coloureds (1996). The majority of the population lives in the Eastern part of town, while the centre, the university and the white housing areas are concentrated in the Western part. The Eastern part of Grahamstown, also known as Rini, consists of several formal and informal dense black or coloured settlements. It is estimated that Rini currently has a population of 65 000 people.

Most areas in Rini are characterised by extensive poverty, a very high unemployment rate, relatively high housing density, inadequate services and pollution. The income distribution for Grahamstown shows a large share of poor households with an official monthly income below 800 Rand (41.7%) compared to the national average (21%). However, Grahamstown also has a relatively high number of higher income households most of them concentrated in the predominantly white areas.

Xhosa and Mfengu constitute the majority of the black population. Together with Khoi, Mfengu constituted the earliest African residents of Grahamstown. The Xhosa arrived later in town in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nowadays Xhosa and Mfengu seem to be assimilated by the bonds of their neighbourhoods, intermarriage, a shared language and common identity in Apartheid South Africa.

The idea of establishing a separate residential area for blacks was first raised at a municipal meeting in 1843. In 1857 a number of freehold titles were issued to the Mfengu and Khoi owners of the plots. The area of the surveyed plots became known as the Fingo Village. Fingo Village is the oldest example in South Africa of an African settlement established under a European system of land ownership. Although this provided a certain percentage of the black population with a measure of permanency, it did not solve the problem of continuous over-crowding and shortage of land in town. In 1870 leasehold plots were again released in an area known as Tanti. These steps did, however, not eliminate squatting, as the population continued to grow.

During the 1930s the deteriorating living conditions in the townships contributed to a growing anti-European sentiment among the blacks, but the black population never had any recognised channels for the articulation of their discontent until a well-educated citizen of Fingo Village founded the Fingo Village Vigilance Committee. At the committee's meetings

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<sup>2</sup> More detailed background information is included in Annex II

<sup>3</sup> The methodology is included in Annex III

the white community was vehemently criticised for doing nothing about the poor living conditions in the townships, and the residents encouraged to ignore the Grahamstown Municipality and to stop paying their rents. Non-payment thus has a long history in Rini.

Up to the early 1980s there continued to be a limited provision of family housing for blacks because the policy of the South African Government at the time was to discourage black urbanisation. As a consequence of the Government's opposition to black urbanisation, black urban residents had to contend with ever-increasing congestion. For decades a shortage of houses led to the building of illegal and mostly inadequate structures in the backyards of formal houses. Attempts to remove squatters were largely unsuccessful, as people came back due to lack of alternatives. During this period squatting continued. The decision of the National Party Government in 1967 to freeze all township development outside homelands thus resulted in an increase in informal settlements. This was followed by a gradual acceptance of black urbanisation. After the abolition of influx control in 1986 the number of people squatting increased even further. More and more left the homeland territories of the Transkei and Ciskei or the farms in the vicinity of Grahamstown in search of employment and a better life. (The process of urbanisation and squatting cannot be directly related as there is no proof that outsiders constitute the majority of those who occupy land illegally.)

The new phase in South Africa's political development in 1990 impacted directly on land reform and housing. When the new Government entered the policy debate on urbanisation the dilemma between illegal settlements and the responsibilities towards the homeless ended up being at the centre of issues raised in the democratisation debate. In Grahamstown housing issues were among the first to be taken up after the introduction of democracy. One result was that the street committees, which had formerly been more concerned with protest and boycott, organised and administered the occupation of unoccupied land in Rini. In terms of formal housing some houses were provided in the 1990s, but the number of houses built are way under the demand, and overcrowding and informal housing continue to be a prevalent feature of Rini.

### **3.2 In-migration and Population Growth**

Grahamstown has for decades experienced large in-migration of farm labourers from the surrounding countryside. In the 1970s-1980s this resulted in more than a 50% increase in the black population. Urbanisation has special implications for black South Africans because everything was done under previous governments to discourage them from settling in town permanently. Even though moving to town does not necessarily lead to better living standards – the life on the farms signified stagnation, while a move into town implied change and thus hope of improvement. This is generally a move of no return, since the farm labourers cannot expect to be accepted back once they have left the farms

A major reason why so many choose to migrate to Grahamstown despite the limited economic possibilities and lack of houses is its proximity to neighbouring farms, where migrants may still have relatives. It is often essential for a migrant to reside with someone, normally a kinsman, who will support him until he finds a job and accommodation. The extended family facilitates the adaptation of new arrivals in town and chain migration is thus a form of risk-spreading that makes it possible for relatives who succeed in establishing themselves in town to provide means for others to follow. People, however, have many reasons for moving into an informal area. Many squatters move from elsewhere in Grahamstown, because they want to have a place of their own, and to be independent but cannot afford to pay rent. Despite fear of being removed the many informal settlers regard their settlement as permanent.

### 3.3 Social Structure and Community Life in Rini

The Xhosa household is predominantly an association of close relatives, and seldom includes people who are not related to the household head. Nowadays the most common type of household is based on the nuclear family, but the members of a household are rarely restricted to this nuclear family. The reason for the prevalence of co-residential arrangement is that the household must assume responsibility for the welfare of the wider kinship group. Also pooling of income from a number of different sources is a common strategy that secures a household against total disaster when one wage earner loses her/his job, though many households have to rely on only one income or pension. Despite the continued importance of patrilineality at least 40% of the households in Rini have female heads.

Each household tries to support itself, but households are linked in various ways to other households to whom they are related. In this sense the community is protective. One way in which such values are upheld is through the maintenance of ancestor beliefs. Though the majority of the Xhosa are Christian they do not regard the belief in ancestors as being incompatible with Christianity.

Besides kinship ties, residents in Rini generally have a strong sense of neighbourhood, and neighbouring families will often help each other when one of them is short of food and money. The absence of any rigid class distinction in the black communities is most evident at the neighbourhood level. Though there are considerable variations in terms of income and education within the townships, the overall ethos stresses mutual understanding and community awareness. The interaction of people on such occasions shows that they share a basic cultural pattern, in addition to the experience of deprivation. The social network constitutes an element of stability in an otherwise often fluid and difficult situation.

### 3.4 Making a Living

The rate of unemployment has for decades been extremely high, while salaries for those who are employed are low. In 1986 it was estimated that at least 60% of the male population was unemployed. Today the percentage of unemployment is believed to be as high as 80% including women. The acquisition of skills improves people's chances of getting more than casual employment but well educated blacks tend to leave Grahamstown in order to look for better living conditions elsewhere.

The majority of people in Rini have to make a living from informal jobs and self-employment. These embrace a wide range of working arrangements. Most self-employed people do not provide a household with sufficient income without outside assistance. A large percentage of households are dependent on old age pension of one or two of its members. Although unemployment is the biggest problem facing Grahamstown there seems to be little the town can do in the short-term to change it. In the eyes of the residents in Rini having a home **and** employment are regarded as absolute priorities, but only regular employment would reflect real change.

### 3.5 Living Conditions, Services and Pollution

Pollution due to over-crowding, lack of proper sanitation facilities, littering and inadequate services has been regarded as a problem in Grahamstown since the first black people started to settle there in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is a problem that has never been



solved, partly because of the ever-increasing black population and partly because of the inability of the municipality to address it properly.

The provision of clean water and a proper drainage system is a relatively new feature of Rini. In the beginning of the 1980s only small parts of Rini had drainage systems, and water borne sewerage was available only in some sections of Makaanaskop. Other residents had to contend with the bucket lavatory system, a situation which people perceived and still perceive as being one of the most unpleasant aspects of their lives. Today an increasing number of residents in Rini have a full-flush sewer system and house connections for water supply. Blockages are, however, common and due to the hard surfaces and steep slopes, raw sewage often reaches the watercourses. Some areas have pit latrines, which sometimes overflow during heavy rains. This problem will be investigated in the near future. If a solution is found the municipality may try to promote the VIP system as a less costly alternative to the flush system.

The current waste removal system operates on the basis of a municipal tractor/trailer system, which collects household refuse bags and transports them to the municipal landfill site. All formal households are provided with black bags and a door-to-door weekly collection service. Apart from black bags there is a bin/container system for the management of solid waste and garden refuse but it is not always efficiently used and containers are often so located that solid waste enters the storm water systems mixing with sewage and sullage water. Some bins are only meant for garden refuse but are used for all solid waste. Also indiscriminate dumping into waterways occurs where containers are insufficient or inconveniently situated.

The municipal employees are over-loaded with work, and the municipality cannot afford to employ additional staff as long as the level of non-payment continues to be high. Due to vandalism and other social factors their workload increases. The billing system seems to be relatively acceptable and people have several easily accessible pay-points, some of which are open after hours. Corruption is not widespread though there have been some incidences of bribe in connection with the pail bucket service. The major problems related to water and sanitation that Grahamstown faces are associated with socio-economic factors, the political structure and lacking community involvement.

### **3.6 Water and Sanitation Related Diseases**

According to information from local health clinics major health problems in Rini are associated with TB, AIDS and lack of proper food, while diarrhoea and other diseases directly related to water and sanitation do not occur very often. Diarrhoea is most common among children under the age of five. There is a larger occurrence of diarrhoea in those areas with buckets/pits than in those with flush toilets. (The report on the [Economic impacts](#) of pollution provides more data on the incidence of diseases associated with pollution in Grahamstown.)

Staff from the health clinics are of the opinion, that the health situation can only be substantially improved if the general standard of living is raised, as better housing and food play a major role for health. Improved service facilities and a cleaner environment is, however, also believed to contribute to better health. Minor ailments can be avoided by improved sanitation – and this can be vital for patients suffering from for example AIDS and TB – and a cleaner environment can contribute to higher resilience towards diseases.

### 3.7 Non-Payment

The on-going and continuous functioning of services is the ultimate indicator of the success of providing these services. To achieve this not only requires the efficient and proper operation and maintenance of all water supply, sewage treatment, waste disposal and collection facilities, but also cost recovery from consumers. In Grahamstown a large portion of the town is characterised by high levels of services and low income, a fact that may partly explain the high percentage of non-payment (45%). In terms of the actual number of non-paying households the percentage is much higher. Unfortunately no study of the affordability of tariffs was conducted prior to their introduction, and there is very little precise information on actual affordability. There is a tendency in the white population to assume that non-payment is a 'black' issue and that the black people can afford to pay but do not want to.

In order to alleviate the problem of non-affordability the indigent policy was formulated. The principle applied in the indigent policy is that poorer households pay up a given amount and the higher income households are billed to make up for any shortfall. Though the indigent policy assures that people who cannot pay receive some support, it is obvious that many people need assistance with registering for the indigent policy. Another problem is that people who have registered for the support consider the rates they have to pay to be too high for their income.

### 3.8 Unsuccessful Masakhane Campaign

In an attempt to improve the level of payment, a Masakhane Campaign was carried out in 1997. The campaign did, however, not lead to increasing payment rates. In fact they decreased. The objective of the campaign was to encourage citizens to take ownership of the development process. The strategy for the campaign envisaged the participation of local institutions and organisations, the formation of local development forums by the community, clean up campaigns, cultural events, mass meetings and the widespread use of local media. Community participation and awareness raising were regarded as the key to success, and the Local Authority was expected to take the initiative in mobilising the community. It was also acknowledged that people who do not pay must understand that they hamper development in their own areas.

During the three months of the campaign local facilitators carried out a survey and conducted a large number of workshops. The campaign also included the dropping of awareness flyers, posters, adverts on Radio Xhosa and a weekly half hour programme on Radio Grahamstown. A magazine was produced with the title 'Building Grahamstown for a Brighter Future'. The magazine attempted to convey the message to its readers that if people work together and pay they can build Grahamstown into a place where they will be happy to live, and that people who do not pay harm everybody in town. The text is fairly moralistic and does not discuss the issue of poverty in relation to payment.

At some of the workshops held during the campaign participants were furious about being asked to pay rapidly increasing service charges while they continued to live in 'shantytowns' with inadequate sanitation and poor or nonexistent roads. This attitude was supported by a researcher at Rhodes University, who found that the Masakhane campaign was misconceived because it was based on the idea that blacks don't pay because of their supposed 'culture of non-payment'. According to her the truth is that many black people are poor and don't get proper services. She thought that people would start paying when they started getting decent services. What they needed were services, not messages.

The campaign has not been evaluated but it seems that it did not promote sustainability and three years after the campaign it was difficult to identify potential results of the campaign. One of the failings of the campaign seems to have been that it was not sufficiently rooted in local structures and there was lack of support from councillors. Its failings indicate that such campaigns must be implemented by and through the local structures with a high degree of participation of all stakeholders, and that the actual approach is less important than its being 'rooted' in local structures.

Up to now Grahamstown has not seriously considered learning from the successes achieved in Middelburg and other towns nor have their methods of improvement been tried out, though the mayor of Middelburg visited Grahamstown to advise the council.

### **3.9 Education, Communication and Community Participation**

Awareness campaigns are not carried out on a regular basis. Local health volunteers do, however, seem to do a good job in educating the population on health matters. People are generally aware of how to treat and prevent basic diseases. Many schools have some education on health and hygiene, and clean up campaigns have been organised by unions and schools. The Council sometimes arranges meetings in the communities. However, at the central level there is little information about campaigns being carried out and educational activities seem to be rather scattered and not integrated into an overall policy.

The organisational structures within the communities are relatively weak. The formerly very strong street and area committees under SANGO have lost much of their impetus and have in many cases ceased to exist. There's a relatively large number of NGOs, most of them welfare organisations, which attend to the poor, the disabled, the old etc. Most of the volunteers working in these organisations are not from the townships. Though most residents seem have a good sense of neighbourhood they do not seem to have a strong feeling of community. When they do something they want to see immediate benefits for themselves rather than indirect benefits by improving the living conditions for the whole community. There is an apparent lack of co-operation and co-ordination between the organisations and the authorities.

On the whole the black communities do not have a strong voice to represent them. The councillors are believed to be too involved with party politics to be really interested in socio-economic and other problems of the people, they represent. They do not contribute to a feeling of empowerment within the communities.

## **4 FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY IN GRAHAMSTOWN**

An empirical study was carried out in Rini with the aid of five health volunteers from local health clinics. This chapter presents the findings together with conclusions and recommendations for Grahamstown.

### **4.1 Why Don't People Pay?**

Political reasons do not seem to play a major role in non-payment. Most respondents claimed to be willing to pay, and they knew that paying was the right thing to do. Those who did not pay despite expressing the will to do so, did it out of convenience, habit, poverty, other priorities when spending their limited financial resources, dissatisfaction with services, lack of understanding of the implications of non-payment, and to a lesser extent, an attitude of "why should I pay when others don't". Especially elderly people have been accustomed to a high degree of dependency on their white employers. Many people do not consider it their own responsibility to improve their living conditions. Though the study indicated that people did think that they could contribute to an improved environment and that payment is linked to the quality of services, they did not necessarily see themselves as part of that process "because we are poor". In addition Grahamstown has a long history of boycotting payments. Many people think that their lives have not really improved since the change of Government and they do not see the reason why they should suddenly pay for something they did not pay for before.

There is a tendency, though possibly limited to a minority, to regard the provision of basic services as a human right. Those who adhere to this principle do not feel obliged to pay for that which they feel entitled to. They do not understand that services cost money and that they are actually hampering the improvement of their own living conditions by not paying. In addition many people do not want to pay for services, which they consider highly inadequate. They do not think that the authorities listen to them or that it would change anything if they would pay. They complain but do not expect the authorities to listen nor to react positively to their complaints indicating that they do not trust them.

It is extremely difficult to determine whether the high rate of non-payment is primarily a consequence of unwillingness to pay. The number of households included in the study is not large enough to be representative, and it is safe to assume that many if not most households did not provide the interviewers with a correct estimate of their income. A large number of households obviously have extremely limited resources. They do not have sufficient means to cover all their expenses and have to prioritise. It is hardly surprising that essential needs like food and electricity/paraffin are most often prioritised, especially when people have the experience that nothing happens if they don't pay service charges. On the other hand a relatively large number of non-paying households could probably pay. This is indicated by the fact that many of them seem to have a higher standard of living than their 'official' income would allow. Another indication is that many people have accounts with a relatively high monthly repayment rate. Personal communication with people who work with the communities (some of them also live there) indicates that it is not uncommon that people with a regular income not to pay for services. It is for these households, who could prioritise differently, that a strategy for changing behaviour needs to be devised. It is not sustainable to rely only on punitive actions as a way to make people change their behaviour. It is also necessary to develop a concept of development, which includes community members as active partners.

Gender does not seem to play a significant role in the attitude towards payment. Female headed households are often poor, and many of the female respondents, who do not pay, said that they could not afford to. This is not to say that gender should be disregarded. It is widely acknowledged that women play a significant role in terms of improving their living conditions and any actions towards a more community driven approach to improved payment should take a critical look at the gender aspect to non-payment, and to use these aspects to improve payment campaigns. Female respondents also expressed a clearer wish for a beautiful, clean and healthy environment, indicating that they may be willing to contribute to such improvement. Education and regular employment seem to play a larger role than gender in terms of payment and the understanding of the need to pay.

## 4.2 Poverty and Unemployment

All respondents agreed that unemployment is the major problem in Grahamstown. Unemployment was the reason, and excuse, most commonly given for non-payment. Many residents in Rini are poor and unemployed. They have little hope of finding employment in the near future and seem to have lost the initiative to try to improve their situation. Many younger people tend to have the same attitude although they are generally better educated than their parents.

As long as people do not expect any improvement if they pay for their services or fear punitive actions if they don't they don't give the payment of services higher priority, they are unlikely to start paying for services. When people spend money on furniture and clothes they experience an immediate reward through a perceived improvement of their living conditions and enhanced social status. Whether they pay for services or not does not seem to influence their living situation significantly.

Apart from unemployment, poverty has a number of other causes. It is, for example, very common that a pensioner supports a whole family with her pension. A pensioner on her own could afford to pay for services, a pensioner who has to support four other people on the pension can't. The actual economic conditions of a household need to be considered in the indigent policy. This is of course difficult because many households subsist on irregular employment, and some receive support from relatives living elsewhere. The number of children and old in a household compared to the number of people in the working age is, however, an indicator of that household's economic ability. So are other aspects, for example, permanent illness, alcoholism and the observable standard of living.

Many residents do not understand the indigent policy and they don't know how to apply for it. All households, which cannot afford to pay the full rates, must be told that they have to register. If it is true that 60-80% of the adult population in Rini are unemployed or pensioners, the majority of households should register. It is not quite clear why so many do not seem to want to. In some cases people may fear that they cannot open accounts in shops if they have registered. Another problem is that many residents in Rini consider the amount they had to pay for services to be too high despite support. The indigent policy determines that those eligible for support should pay as much as 10% of their income for water and sanitation. This is above the average of 3-5% recommended by the World Bank. There is a need to adjust the indigent policy in such a way that no household pays more than a set percentage of their income and that the actual payment is adjusted according to the number of household members.

The adjustment of rates to actual affordability has implications for the TLC, who is proposing a raise in service rates in the order of 8%. It could be asked whether lower but stable payment from low-income households would not contribute more to the overall budget than a

continuation of non-paid current rates. On the other hand, the municipality cannot lower rates and achieve financial sustainability. This is an indication of the problem that many South African towns face: the level of services they provide exceeds the average affordability.

Squatting and informal settlements continue to be a serious problem. Squatters are often poor. They mostly live under very poor conditions and many of them without basic services. This not only contributes to a low living standard but also to the pollution of the environment. On the other hand the Local Authority cannot provide more than very basic services to squatters, who may reside in areas, which are not suited for development on permanent basis. The town may have to consider moving squatters to one area and providing them with basic but adequate services as it was done in Middleburg. In terms of back yard dwellings it must be ensured that the levels of services (and the sanitary installations) do not represent a health or pollution hazard.

The problem of squatting and a continuing densification of Rini can't be solved by encouraging migrants to move to a place with better employment opportunities. Not only because this may be hard to find but also because loyalty and emotional attachments to relatives attract them to Grahamstown. In addition most squatters have moved to informal settlements from elsewhere in Grahamstown because they wanted to have a place of their own but cannot afford to pay for a formal house.

#### **4.3 Pollution and Health**

The study found that concern for the environment and the water quality was not central to most stakeholders in Grahamstown. The authorities were primarily concerned with increasing payment, while residents were more concerned with the quality of services and to some extent their relation to health. People did not express any concern for the long-term consequences of pollution on water resources.

People were well-informed on the relationship between a dirty environment and health. When children had diarrhoea despite this knowledge it was mainly because of factors that parents could not always control, like for example playing in a polluted environment.

#### **4.4 Education, Information and Communication**

The level of education and of communication with the communities in Rini needs to be improved. Residents are not well informed and many do not understand their own role in the development process. They have been told by the Government that it will provide equity in services for all, but they are impatient and do not understand that these promises can only be achieved within a realistic timeframe. Though the Government must improve its performance in terms of fulfilling its promises and prioritise social equity rather than, for example, a large military budget, it also has the duty to inform the population that the improvement of living conditions is a long and costly process to which they must all contribute.

At the local government level, emphasis must be put on correct information rather than on empty promises. Only when people begin to understand that they can and must contribute to their own improvement by paying for services, and that their health and living conditions are closely linked to the resources available to the council, can they realise that non-payment is an obstacle to development. Consumers must be informed about the consequences of non-payment, they must learn how the local council and the service system function and what

they pay for with their monthly bills. Changes in the payment system or the rates, the indigent policy, planned improvements in an area, change of waste collection days, due days for payment and all other decisions concerning a community must be communicated to that community directly and without delay. Residents must also know that they can trust the authorities and those employed by them.

Continuous transfer of important information from government and the Local Authorities to the population must be ensured through personal communications, meetings, and mass media. The media, especially radio and television, should be more consistently used for communicating essential information. Although communication through mass media is not always necessarily successful, the mass media can reach a large number of people in a short time. Other and potentially more effective means of informing people are the involvement of local institutions and organisations, for example the churches, women's and youth groups, the use of local cultural expressions, and door-to-door communication

The Local Authority needs to develop a communication policy. Such a policy could be developed in co-operation with local media organisations and the Media Department at Rhodes University, for example by asking students to assess local media. An assessment of the Local Authority's use of local media for communication was not part of the case study. It would, however, be useful to assess how effective local media are for communicating information to the community. If people in Rini listen to the local radio the authorities could use them as part of their communication policy. Programmes should, however, be broadcasted at times when many people listen to the radio and they should be a mixture of information and popular music (or something else), which attracts people. Young unemployed residents could assist with the programmes as volunteers. Newspapers are probably less useful since they have to be paid for and not everybody reads them.

People tend to learn most when information is linked to activities, which show immediate results. This could for example be clean up campaigns. Only 10% of the respondents in the study had participated in a clean up campaign or knew of such a campaign having taken place but many more thought that it would be a good idea.

There was some doubt among other stakeholders on the usefulness of campaigns. They had the experience that cleaning up campaigns did not have any effect on changing people's behaviour and that the rubbish would soon be back. It also seems that people are not eager to participate in unpaid work. In order to be more effective campaigns should be linked to education, for example through a sequence of workshops or public meetings or they should be part of a continuous activity, for example regular clean up days. Residents have argued that such campaigns contribute to unemployment, because the municipality can employ fewer workers, if residents clean up themselves. It is therefore essential for the education process that people understand that this frees resources in the Local Authority that can be used for other upliftment projects, and that this would ensure ongoing employment.

The desired output of campaigns would be that the community take over the responsibility for keeping the neighbourhood clean. Campaigns also support the objective of the *White Paper on Environmental Management* which is to ensure the establishment of mechanisms and processes to ensure effective public participation in environmental governance, to promote the education and empowerment of people by increasing awareness of and concern for environmental issues, and to assist in developing the knowledge, skills, values and commitment necessary to achieve sustainable development.

## 4.5 Community Participation

Education and information do not necessarily lead to a change in behaviour. If people feel that they are merely informed but not consulted on matters which have direct influence on their lives they are less likely to support them than if they are part of that decision. As it is now people tend to feel powerless in view of a system they do not understand and which they do not think they can influence except maybe negatively. This sense of powerlessness is unfortunately often coupled with the expectation that it is someone else's duty to solve problems. Community involvement is therefore key to the success of changing people's attitudes. The case study showed that residents in Rini feel disempowered, but that many of them want to be involved.

Research at Rhodes University shows that one of the problems in Grahamstown is that there is little indication of self-help initiatives and community projects aimed at improving the situation. Though people have good relations with their neighbours and participate in community issues there does not seem to be a deeper level of community participation through which constructive communal engagement could develop. In addition, civic organisations, which used to play a significant role during the boycotts, seem to have lost most of their momentum, though they are still strong in some areas. The NGOs in Grahamstown are mostly charitable organisations. They do not contribute to more active community participation but rather to support a tendency to depend on charity and activities from outside. Generally people do not think in terms of community but rather in terms of what is in an activity for them. This makes it difficult for many to sincerely co-operate towards a common goal. There is a tremendous need for awareness raising among residents of Rini that they can only participate if they cooperate and that they need to take responsibility if they want to be empowered.

In order to tackle the problem of non-payment in Grahamstown representatives from NGOs, CBOs, schools and authorities should get together and discuss how improved payment can best be implemented. Partners for education, awareness and campaigns should be identified. It would also be helpful to assess to which extent organisations already contribute to some of the measures which must be taken to improve payment, particularly community participation, empowerment, education and campaigns. Many organisations are directly involved with the improvement of people's lives. It should be discussed whether some of these could and would be willing to include the aspect of pollution through the inadequacy of services and the connection to non-payment in their work. It would also be a possibility to address the rotating credit and the savings clubs.

Some of the civic organisations, especially the street committees have on several occasions played an important role in strengthening a feeling of solidarity and providing people's discontent with a voice.

## 4.6 Representation

Representation is very closely related to participation. Residents in Rini need someone to 'blow the whistle', as one respondent said, and to canalise actions towards improving living conditions. They also need someone to act as an intermediary between them and the authorities. It must be someone they trust and who can communicate their desires, complaints and queries to the right instances and communicate back to the community. Generally people do not feel that the elected councillors represent them properly. The councillors are regarded as part of the political structure and therefore more interested in their own political careers than in informing and working together with the community they



represent. No organisations or institutions currently seem to have sufficient status among a large number of people to be accepted as real representatives, though churches and street committees may in some areas have the potential to fulfil that role.

Experiences from the Masakhane Campaign in different towns show that improvement must be linked to the political structure in co-operation with the community and its organisations. Education and improvement must therefore also take place within the political structure and the municipality. Councillors and other members of the TLC and the municipality must reconsider their roles vis à vis the community and learn to gain trust.

#### **4.7 Incentives**

People need incentives to change their behaviour. When people know that they get something they want for what they give – and that they will not get it if they do not give – they are more likely to support the process by paying.

There is a feeling among residents in the townships that things will probably never change. On the other hand people want improvements. By helping them formulate realistic needs and then fulfil them, they learn that it does help to pay. Incentives should not be given in such a way that they contribute to passivity and dependency nor should they convey the message that people can expect to be rewarded for paying. People must understand that it is their duty to pay and that they by paying give the authorities the economic possibility to provide the community with the services they demand.

#### **4.8 Enforcement**

Not all people are persuaded to pay by information and incentives. Incentives and education tend to be temporary arrangements and it must be avoided that people fall back into former habits when a satisfactory level of payment has been achieved. Some kind of enforcement cannot be avoided. Enforcement should as far as possible be an integral part of the consultation with the community, and punitive actions should support the decisions of that community. The case study showed that the majority of the respondents do not support the cutting off of services. They know that people, who cannot afford to pay will be affected, and that other people including perhaps themselves will also suffer. Some respondents said that everybody should pay their fair share, and that people who can pay but don't must be strictly dealt with but all agreed that services should not simply be cut off. Defaulters should be consulted on the reasons for their non-payment before drastic measures are taken.

There is no ideal way of enforcing payment, especially not in a low-income environment where it is of little use to punish people financially, since this would only add to their debts. Some stakeholders thought that a prepaid system similar to the one used for electricity would be the best way to enforce payment. Others suggested that service rates should be linked to water, and that the water supply should be cut off if any of the services were not paid.

The Municipality is already cutting off water as a consequence of non-payment. Because it is a time consuming task only a relatively small number of non-paying households have been affected. In most cases the cutting off of water leads to reactions in the form of payment. However, in areas with communal taps residents tend to react slower, because they have an alternative.

## 4.9 Management

The correct management of services and billing system is vital to improved payment. The meter reading and billing system does not always function well. Sometimes people's pay-offs of debts are not registered, meters are not read and bills do not correspond to actual consumption. The current system of reading meters every month is highly impracticable and has as a consequence that some meters are not read at all. A system of self-reading of meters with controls on, for example, a bi-annual basis would transfer some of the responsibility to the householders themselves and they would be in a better position to control their bills. Consumers must be assured that they can trust their bills and at the same time know that cheating will have immediate consequences. Another problem is that people are not always sure how to read the bills. They want bills they can understand and they want a breakdown of individual services so that they know exactly how much they pay for water, how much for waste removal and how much for other rates.

There are complaints that employees do not do their work properly. The bucket removal service is, for example, not always reliable, there have been problems with registering for the indigent policy and people have not always been allowed to pay only part of their bills. About half of the respondents in the case study were satisfied with the payment system, but many of them never paid.

One suggestion, which came up during the study was that individuals from the community should be responsible for collecting payment for rates on a door-to-door basis. He or she should then be paid a certain percentage of the money collected instead of a wage. This system would have the advantage that the responsibility of payment was given out to the community. It would probably improve payment rates as people are more reluctant to refuse payment when faced with the collector. The disadvantage is that the system offers opportunities for corruption and would need to be carefully monitored. Another option would be to hand over the responsibility for collecting payment to community based committees. Those elected for the committee would be paid for their work and the committees would be rewarded with a certain percentage of the money for improvements in their area of responsibility.

"If you can afford to pay, and you don't pay, we will find you, because you are preventing us from rebuilding our city"  
(message from the councillors to the community at a recent meeting, Grocott Mail, May 26, 2000)

## 4.10 Tackling non payment

Attempts have been made to tackle the high incidence of non-payment in South Africa, notably the Masakhane campaign launched by the Government. Many South African towns launched their own Masakhane campaigns, some of them successful and others not. Grahamstown spent 300.000 Rand on a campaign, which was unsuccessful in terms of increasing payment. The campaign acknowledged that people who do not pay must understand that they hamper development in their own areas. They must realise that if they do not contribute towards provision and maintenance of the basic infrastructure, it will be very difficult for any institution to invest in such a community. Educational programmes must be developed to encourage citizens to take the responsibility of promoting new ways of thinking and taking ownership of the development process. It was assumed that people would like to pay if they can see some improvement in their immediate problems. They must also

understand that they themselves and not the council are responsible for cleanliness in the townships.

No independent evaluation was carried out to identify the reasons for the lack of impact. One major problem seems to be related to the fact that the campaign was carried out by a private consultancy firm, which was not rooted in local structures. Despite following a similar approach to that of more successful campaigns the Grahamstown campaign probably failed because it was never firmly rooted within the political structure and the community. It leaves the impression that the campaign was not sustainable and the impact it may have had at the time disappeared when the campaign stopped. This indicates that the actual activities carried out through such campaigns are less important than the long-term involvement of interested parties and possibly a change in existing structures.

This was a problem that was not only found in Grahamstown. In an evaluation of the campaign as such it was found that the campaign generally failed to involve local democratic structures and was very top-down.

Some towns, including Middelburg and Midrand, achieved considerable successes as a result of the campaign. The success of Middelburg can largely be ascribed to community participation and good policy making by the TLC. As a result of the vastly improved payment rate all roads were tarred and the operation and maintenance of services are excellent. It is surprising that these successful examples have not been studied more closely. Though the mayor of Middelburg was invited to Grahamstown to talk about the 'Middelburg model', there was no follow up, possibly due to some inflexibility within the political structure. Though non-payment is primarily an issue to be addressed at the community level, it also demands flexibility, initiatives and will to address shortcomings within the system of local government. It is too easy to put the blame on a supposed 'culture of non-payment' while the problems may just as well lie within a 'culture of negligence and lack of flexibility' within local authorities.

The authorities in Grahamstown may achieve success by reconsidering the 'Middelburg model', though some adjustments may be needed to suit the specific context of Grahamstown. One possibility is to start out small in a limited area (for example a ward) during a limited period of time. Such a pilot project would allow authorities to try out and modify the model, it would give them the possibility to realise to which extent and how they must change their ways of managing the service system, it would provide them with an insight into ways in which the community and local organisations and institutions could be actively involved, it could contribute to the formulation of a functional communication policy and help define optimal methods of enforcements and incentives.

In that context one should be careful not to regard the residents of Rini, or any ward of Rini, as a homogenous community. In reality Rini, as any other community, is composed of a number of individual actors some of them with opposing interests. Community participation must be based on the understanding of the socio-economic, political and cultural dynamics within that community and, as far as possible, on an actor oriented approach.

## 5 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY FOR THE DENSE SETTLEMENT PROJECT

### 5.1 Introduction

One of the most central problems in terms of non-payment is poverty, unemployment and the unequal distribution of wealth in South Africa. Though the "I'm unemployed" argument often serves as an excuse for non-payment, it is true that poverty forces people to prioritise their expenses. Their limited resources do not allow them to pay for all their basic necessities and other needs. Every attempt to solve the problem of non-payment must therefore take poverty into account. Support to the poor through the indigent policy is a major step towards addressing the issue. An effort must, however, be done to ensure that the policy is clear and understandable, that people are informed on how to register for support and that people understand that they must register, if they cannot afford to pay regular rates.

The consequence of poverty and social injustice is not to conclude that the issue of non-payment cannot be solved. People's attitudes and behaviour are not an automatic result of their social and economic conditions. On the other hand willingness and ability to pay for services are in many cases linked to poverty. People who have few resources cannot be expected to be very willing to pay especially if they perceive their poverty as being a result of suppression and deprivation by others, who continue to live 'the good life'.

Poverty and unemployment are a fact of life in dense settlements and must be regarded as a 'cross-cutting' issue, which must be addressed both in a strategy for improved payment, adequate levels of services and by the individual TLCs. Though the strategy cannot be aimed at solving the unemployment issue non-payment can be linked to development, as it was done in Middelburg. This includes the creation of jobs related to the payment scheme for the poor communities.

The study of the willingness and ability to pay for services indicated that problem of non-payment and solutions to those problems, apart from poverty, are primarily related to:

- Education, communication and information
- Participation and Representation
- Incitements
- Enforcement
- Management

Neither can stand alone if the objective is to achieve sustainable success in terms of increased payment. This is because increased awareness may not convince people of changing their behaviour towards increased responsibility if they do not participate actively in their own development. Participation can easily become meaningless if people do not have anyone to represent them and to mobilise the community. People must be confident that they achieve something they want by changing their behaviour. Incentives are therefore critical to gaining the community's trust in the authorities. Incentives must be supported by punitive actions to keep people from lapsing into previous behaviour once services have improved and to prevent that some people rely on the engagement of others for the situation to improve. Without proper management of the service system, and co-operation from the TLC no improvement will be sustainable, but proper management alone will not change people's attitudes.

## 5.2 Addressing Non-Payment in South Africa

Sustainable management of the non-payment problem in South Africa must address all five of the issues raised above. This section discusses the issues in more detail. It does not include concrete recommendations for activities.

### **Education, information and communication**

People must understand why they must pay for the services provided to them, what their money is needed for and how they will be affected if non-payment continues. Such knowledge and understanding is often lacking. People must understand the relationship between pollution, health, waste services and payment. They must learn to acknowledge how pollution is detrimental to their health and quality of life. Education and information must therefore be linked to 'learning about the environment'. People who struggle to make ends meet are seldom interested in the environment for 'its own sake'. The link to their own living situation must be established. They must also learn that improved services alone will not solve the problem. They themselves must change their attitudes especially in terms of littering, which is a major contributor to pollution in South African dense settlements.

The need to learn is not restricted to the communities. The authorities, the service providers and the politicians must also learn to co-operate with the communities, to listen to their needs and priorities, to communicate and not to let political interests come in the way of implementing the strategy.

In order to learn and to become part of a process people must have information. Information not only includes education which enables people to understand relationships between non-payment and other issues but also up-to-date and reliable information on finances, proper use of facilities, payment procedures, alternative sanitation systems, punitive actions etc.

It is the duty of the authorities to provide the community with that information. To make sure that this is properly done they must develop a communication policy. This policy must ensure that information is focused and correct, and that it is provided at the right time and to the right people. The policy can also support education and information activities by using national and local mass media, campaigns, 'traditional' cultural means of communication and others.

### **Participation and representation**

Community participation, empowerment and responsibility are at the centre of both problems and solutions and are regarded as essential to success in policies on water and sanitation. Awareness and knowledge do not necessarily persuade people to change behaviour. People must feel that they are an important part of a process aimed at improving their living conditions, and that they have the responsibility **and** the right to participate in that process. Participation is about taking responsibility, about being listened to, and about democracy. Through participation unwillingness can be turned into willingness when people begin to see that they do it for themselves and that they cannot rely on the Government for improving their lives. Learning participation is a long and often difficult process, which demands considerable co-operation and support from the local authorities and other stakeholders.

Democracy is based on the responsibility and participation of citizens and it is based on the notion of 'community'. Without these there cannot be any democracy. South Africa is struggling to become a democracy in its true sense. In a small way the Dense Settlement Project can contribute to that struggle by helping provide people with an experience of responsibility and the equal right of all citizens to contribute actively to their own development.

Participation implies that diverse groups in a community have the opportunity to express their views and participate in decisions. Women must be allowed to play a major role in matters related to sanitation, health and environment.

Participation can only function if communities (or parts of communities) have someone to represent them, to mobilise them for activities and to focus diverse views and needs on common goals. At the local level councillors are, in principle, supposed to act as elected representatives for the communities. In reality the councillors are often too much part of the political structure to focus their attention on the actual needs and desires of people. Civic organisations and local institutions may better be able to present the diversified views and needs of people belonging to a community than the political representatives. It is, however, also important that councillors and the political system generally are compelled to support strategies for improving payment.

### **Incentives**

The black population of South Africa has never had reason to trust the authorities. The change of Government has not entirely altered the perception that politicians are more interested in their own political career than in poor people, and that neither they nor the authorities can be trusted. People must therefore realise that a change in behaviour towards regular payment leads directly to improved services.

Non-payment has such a long history in South Africa that incentives must be provided as a reward meant to persuade people to pay. Incentives must be linked to consultation with the community and identification of the community's most urgent needs. Incentives can be provided to a community, a ward, a street, a committee or even to an individual depending on the situation and the kind of incentive. Incentives are important for assuring people that things do improve when they pay, and that their payment may even contribute to the kind of improvement they regard as particularly desirable.

### **Enforcement**

It is unrealistic to expect the 'ideal situation', in which everybody pays. Incentives must be linked to enforcement. People must understand that if they choose not to pay, it will have consequences. This is a new situation for many South Africans, who participated in non-payment boycotts. Punitive actions, for example cutting off services, have not been widely used. Most local authorities and politicians are reluctant to enforce payment, because it will make them unpopular, and may lead to social unrest and even violence. As a means to counteract massive dissatisfaction within the community decisions on a policy of enforcement must be taken in consultation with that community. Punitive actions must also be strictly enforced though it must be ensured that households, which are about to be cut off from services, can pay. The economic situation of a household can change swiftly, some households may not have registered for support, and some may be so poor they cannot pay the indigent rates. Enforcement demands that the authorities have correct and up-to-date data on non-paying households.

### **Management**

The adequacy of services is not only linked to increased payment but also to proper management. The authorities must ensure that services are provided regularly, employees do their job properly, billing- and meter systems are correct, complaints are attended to in due time and the community is informed and consulted on all matters of relevance to that community. The authorities must be open towards modifying the system and towards regarding the communities as part of a process towards improving the living conditions in that particular town. They must also acknowledge that they, as well as the communities, need to learn. The councillors must understand, and be made to understand, that it is their duty to support the strategy and the decisions of the Local Authority in the community even if this makes them politically unpopular.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The study of willingness and ability to pay for waste services showed that reasons for non-payment are complex. Poverty was, not unsurprisingly, a major cause but also an excuse for not paying. Dissatisfaction with services was the second most important reason and possibly excuse given for non-payment.

It is problematic to assume that there is such thing as a 'culture of non-payment'. In a South African context the concept of a 'culture of non-payment' also has racial undertones, because those who are believed to have that culture are invariably non-whites and predominantly black. Non-payment is not linked to any specific 'culture' but must be understood as a social issue and as a consequence of a long political history of suppression, deprivation and dependency.

While many people accept the need to pay for services, they often continue not to pay. The fact that people use excuses to explain why they don't pay indicates that some of them feel that they know it is wrong not to pay. The Dense Settlement Project cannot address the issue of poverty and social equality and much less solve it. By regarding poverty as a cross cutting issue which must be addressed through the indigent policy, the Project can, however, concentrate on unwillingness to pay.

The conclusions from Grahamstown showed that problems and solutions pertaining to non-payment must include five major 'issues' - education and communication, participation and representation, incitements, enforcement and management. These issues must be addressed together in a strategy for improving payment. They were important for the successful payment campaign in Middelburg and for similar campaigns elsewhere in the world. There is clearly a need to learn from others and to evaluate approaches which led to success elsewhere. Activities also need to be adapted to particular contexts.

The success of the strategy will in the end hinge on the capability and will of the local authorities to carry the strategy through, to identify partners for cooperation at the local level and to find funding for interventions, which cannot be financed by increased payment.

"We can't do everything for you. If you want to improve your lives you must do it yourselves"  
Nelson Mandela in a speech to the South African nation in 1994.

Education, information and communication do not have to be expensive. The formulation of a communication policy can, for example, be developed together with media institutes at local or regional universities and with local media NGOs. Students and volunteers could assess local media and help develop local communication policies. Education can be carried out in co-operation with civic organisations and institutions, for example churches, health clinics and schools. By using existing local capacity within the community financial resources costs can be kept low, the local capacity will be enhanced and the community involved. Such an approach also opens up for a greater involvement of youth, women and other members of the local community, who are often marginalised in decision making processes.

The study in Grahamstown delivered two important messages: there is a wish for someone to 'blow the whistle', and 'people seem to have lost hope'. The strategy must therefore address the need for someone to get things moving and it must provide people with an opportunity to rebuild hope. This can best be done by involving people in the development process, even if



it is only in a small way, by showing them that involvement helps and by giving them a chance to recognize their own capacities and talents.

The liberation struggle in South Africa was about democracy and about hope. It would be fatal for the future of the country if either of these were lost. Solving the problem of non-payment is therefore not only about money, but also about changing people's attitudes.

By focusing too much on history and on people's unwillingness to pay and their dependency on interventions from above, the so called 'culture of non-payment', neither the communities nor the local authorities are given the chance to develop new ways of tackling the problem and enhance people's will and capacity to participate. An attitude of 'this can't be done' is certainly not the way to handle the problem and to build responsibility. The findings from the case study in Grahamstown confirm that the unwillingness to pay is not so deeply rooted that it cannot be changed. The study also indicated that some people are waiting for initiatives towards such change.

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## ANNEX 1 Midrand's 10 Point Plan

1. *Measure your success and failure*  
The idea was to ascertain in a limited area whether people received their accounts on time. If they weren't people could not pay on time;
2. *Look at a manageable size for evaluation and implementation*  
The area chosen for implementation was divided into zones with a limited number of households. The community was asked to elect a zonal leader responsible for liaising with the Council;
3. *Provide incentives for payment*  
In recognition of the fact that people need incentives for every rand paid an equivalent amount was given back to the area in the form of development. Those who do not pay are thus directly obstructing development.
4. *Recognise and reward successes*  
Successes were recognized through award ceremonies and quarterly parties to celebrate the successes of the zones. Successes were also covered by the media;
5. *Link payment to development*  
Community members were encouraged to elect and prioritise projects. Also complaints from a paying household would be attended to sooner than complaints from a non-paying household;
6. *Communicate findings and decisions*  
All failures and successes were communicated to the community. Billboards with barometers of payment levels were erected and a monthly newsletter hand-delivered with the accounts;
7. *Meet the people – walk about programme*  
One of the greatest successes was the process of councillors going all over town to meet with residents and react to queries and needs of the community;
8. *Have a customer care centre*  
Customer care centres were erected to take care of complaints and queries;
9. *Establish get cash committee*  
Communities need additional funding sources. One initiative was to set up a trust fund for various activities;
10. *Adapt and create*  
It was acknowledged that in order to be successful the local authority must be creative and listen to the needs and desires of the communities they serve. The best way to do this is to encourage exchange between community and authority. This was for example done by organising fun days and by using the World Environment Day and other events for co-operation.

## ANNEX II Methodology

The Willingness and Ability to Pay Study was conducted from April to June 2000 in Pretoria and Grahamstown. It was based on a desk review of relevant information from the Dense Settlement Project Office in DWAF in Pretoria. The field study in Grahamstown was carried out in close co-operation with the City Engineer. It included review of relevant information and research, meetings with social scientists, authorities, health clinics, schools and organisations, and an empirical community study in Rini.

The issues addressed included:

- People's willingness and ability to pay for services;
- The potential unequal distribution of both willingness and ability to pay among different households and different areas of Rini;
- Gender aspects;
- Socio-cultural, historical, political and other factors behind non-payment;
- Relationship (trust/distrust) with local authorities;
- Acceptable modes of billing and payment;
- Enquiry into why the Masakhane Campaign was unsuccessful;
- General levels of awareness of the interrelationship between non-payment, pollution, health and environment;
- Assessment of the information and education provided on these issues to the community;
- The level of community participation;
- Involvement of civic organisation;
- Relations between levels of services, tariffs and affordability.

The study was primarily based on an empirical approach meaning that the findings of the community study were central to the analysis and recommendations of the report. The purpose of the study was to identify the complex reasons for the extremely high rate of non-payment in Rini including both 'won't and can't pay' factors.

The study and the analysis of its findings were based on the following considerations. An approach limited to primarily quantitative means of collecting information is not appropriate for approaching complex issues, while a purely qualitative approach based on anthropological methodology is not realistic in a study such as this. Participatory methods are essential to gather deeper insights and trust in a community but such methods are extremely time consuming and demands that those who carry out the study are trained. The principles behind methods like Participatory Action Research (PAR) can, however, be at least partly employed. Apart from a high degree of flexibility one of the primary principles of PAR is that learning about a community comes from, with and by the people themselves. Experience and information is thus gained from working with the community. Enquiries do not only focus on those issues, which are most interesting from the researcher's point of view, but also include issues, which the community and its members consider to be the most important. In addition participatory observation complements any kind of enquiry, as the reality of people's lives is not only expressed in words.

Another basic methodological assumption was that the concept of community must be based on an understanding of the socio-economic, political and cultural dynamics within that community and, as far as possible, on an actor oriented approach. It is thus not sufficient to focus on, for example, gender. Other factors also play a significant role including age, level of education, status within social and other hierarchies, religion, political ideology, visibility etc. The actor-oriented approach could not be taken very far, but the notion of 'dynamics' and 'actor' was kept in mind during the analysis of information, the development of strategies and the identification of people to be interviewed and invited to meetings.

The Study was primarily based on:

- Flexible questionnaires ;
- Interviews focused on a limited number of key issues;
- Participant observation;
- Meetings with stakeholders and others;
- Review of relevant information from the TLC and others;
- Review of research on Rini at Rhodes University.

The empirical study included 200 questionnaires, and 16 in-depth interviews. Unfortunately the planned discussion meetings did not take place as nobody came to the meetings. The interviewers assumed that people were tired of going to meetings especially as two other meetings concerning payment were held during the same week. People are willing to talk when addressed at home, while going to a meeting demands more energy.

The analysis of the findings took place in a continuous process of dialogue with the interviewers, the City Engineer, a nurse from a health clinic, and an environmental advisor.

It had initially been planned to use anthropology students from Rhodes University in addition to health workers for the interviews. It was, however, not possible to mobilise students with such short notice. In the end it was probably a good idea to use only health workers who were well acquainted with the areas they worked in and who did not raise suspicion within the community. Students coming from outside would have needed to return to the same households several times in order to gain confidence. On the whole the health workers performed their work well, and the continuous dialogue with them helped clarify open questions while at the same time providing valuable background information.

## ANNEX III Case Study in Grahamstown

### Socio-economic and Historical Context

Grahamstown is a university town located 60 km inland from the sea in the Southern portion of the Eastern Cape. Excluding the students, the town is estimated to have a population of app. 75 500 distributed on 12 296 households. The population consists of 75% blacks, 16% whites, and 7,7% coloureds (1996). The majority of the population lives in the Eastern part of town, while the centre, the university and the white housing areas are concentrated in the Western part. The Eastern part of Grahamstown, also known as Rini, consists of several formal and informal dense black or coloured settlements. It is estimated that Rini currently has a population of app. 65.000 people. Rini is today comprised of the following main areas: Makanaskop consisting of extension one, two, three, four, five and eight, Xolani, Tanti, Fingo Village, Sunnyside, lower Makenaskop and Kingsflat consisting of extension six and seven.

Most areas in Rini are characterised by extensive poverty, a very high unemployment rate, a relatively high housing density, inadequate services and pollution. The income distribution for Grahamstown shows a large share of poor households with an official monthly income below 800 Rand (41.7%) compared to the national average (21%). However, Grahamstown also has a relatively high number of higher income households most of them concentrated in the predominantly white areas.

Xhosa and Mfengu constitute the majority of the black population. Together with Khoi, Mfengu constituted the earliest African residents of Grahamstown, who squatted on common pasturage in the 1830s prior to the establishment of Fingo Village. The Mfengu were dependants of a Xhosa king and refugees from the Zulu chief Shaka's total war in the 1820s. Because of their collaboration with the whites against the Xhosa in the frontier wars in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Mfengu obtained grants for land in Grahamstown. The Xhosa arrived in town in the second half of the century. Nowadays Xhosa and Mfengu seem to be fairly assimilated by the bonds of their neighbourhoods, intermarriage, a shared language and common identity in Apartheid South Africa.

The idea of establishing a separate residential area for blacks was first raised at a municipal meeting in 1843. In 1855 Mfengu and Khoi took over the appointed spaces and paid for the sites. Those who could not find such land squatted on open spaces. In 1857 a number of freehold titles were issued to the owners of the plots. The area of the surveyed plots became known as the Fingo Village. Fingo Village is the oldest example in South Africa of an African settlement established under a European system of land ownership. Although this provided a certain percentage of the black population with a measure of permanency, it did not solve the problem of continuous over-crowding and shortage of land in town. In 1870 leasehold plots were again released in an area known as Tanti. These steps did, however, not eliminate squatting, as the population continued to grow especially after the arrival of Xhosa refugees in the 1880s. Before the turn of the century some blacks and coloureds began taking up residence in slum areas in the city where living and health conditions were extremely poor.

During the 1930es the deteriorating living conditions in the townships contributed to a growing anti-European sentiment among the blacks, but the black population never had any recognised channels for the articulation of their discontent. It was then that a well-educated citizen of Fingo Village founded the Fingo Village Vigilance Committee. At the committee's meetings the white community was vehemently criticised for doing nothing about the poor living conditions in the townships, and the residents encouraged to ignore the Grahamstown Municipality and to stop paying their rents. Non-payment thus has a long history.

Despite increasing over-crowding only few new houses were built until around 1960, when an inadequate number of 1000 houses were built at Makenaskop. Up to the early 1980es there continued to be a limited provision of family housing for blacks because the policy of the South

African Government at the time was to discourage black urbanisation. During this period squatting continued for example in the squatter camp of Dead Horse Kloof. The decision of the National Party Government in 1967 to freeze all township development outside homelands thus resulted in an increase in informal settlements. This was followed by a gradual acceptance of black urbanisation but the need for 'orderly urbanisation' was emphasised.

The squatter camp was later to a large extent evacuated and blacks told to move to the edge of the townships. In 1981 a self help housing scheme (Zenzele) was developed on 218 sites at Tanti, and in 1982 a few houses were built at Thatha. The quality of the houses was often bad, and many residents thought that rents were too high, but the self-help scheme was a success with better houses and more space. The new houses did, however, not nearly cover the need. In 1990 25000 people had to share 2220 houses, while 9000 people occupied some 1260 shacks.

As a consequence of the Government's opposition to black urbanisation black urban residents had to contend with ever-increasing congestion. For decades a shortage of houses led to the building of illegal structures in the backyards of formal houses. Attempts to remove squatters were largely unsuccessful, as people came back due to lack of alternatives. Many of the backyard dwellings are in extremely poor condition. In a situation where people have no security of tenure, self-improvement is difficult and some people tolerate discomfort rather than risk losing their investments to their successors when they have to leave and reside elsewhere. The poor conditions are also a result of neglect on the part of the landlords.

After the abolition of influx control in 1986 the number of people squatting increased even further. More and more left the homeland territories of the Transkei and Ciskei or the farms in the vicinity of Grahamstown in search of employment and a better life. According to a study on informal settlement (Coetzee 1999) the process of urbanisation and squatting should, however, not be related in a direct, causal way, as there is no sufficient basis to prove that outsiders constitute the majority of those who occupy land illegally. The majority of the informal settlers interviewed during the Coetzee study had lived in Grahamstown for most of their lives. This was confirmed by the Dense Settlement Study.

The new phase in South Africa's political development in 1990 impacted directly on land reform and housing. When ANC and others entered the policy debate on urbanisation the dilemma between illegal settlements and the responsibilities towards the homeless ended up being at the centre of issues raised in the democratisation debate. In Grahamstown housing issues were among the first to be taken up after the introduction of democracy.

One result was that the street committees, which had formerly been more concerned with protest and boycott, organised and administered the occupation of unoccupied land in Rini from 1991 to 1993. The unoccupied land that was invaded consisted mainly of empty spaces within Rini. This contributed to the fact that the invasion could take place without uproar. No private land was affected, and squatters were not forcibly removed. In terms of formal housing some houses have been provided in the 1990s, for example 70 new houses in ext. 6 and Mankaskop in 1997, but the number of houses built continue to be way under the demand, and overcrowding and informal housing continue to be a prevalent feature of Rini.

### **In-migration and Population Growth**

Grahamstown has for decades experienced large in-migration of farm labourers from the surrounding countryside. In the 1970s-1980s this resulted in more than 50% increase in the black population. As Cecil Manona (1988) pointed out in his work on migrant labourers urbanisation has special implications for black South Africans because everything was done under previous governments to discourage them from settling in town permanently. Even though moving to town does not necessarily lead to better living standards life on the farms signify stagnation,

while a move into town implies change and thus hope of improvement. It is generally a move of no return, since the farm labourers cannot expect to be accepted back once they have left the farms

The lack of economic opportunities on the farms is likely to be the main reason why so many farm labourers choose to migrate into town, but there is a complex set of other reasons for choosing to move. A major reason why so many choose to migrate to Grahamstown despite the limited economic possibilities and lack of houses is its proximity to neighbouring farms, where people may still have relatives. Loyalties and emotional attachment to kin already living in Grahamstown also attracts many people. It is often essential for a migrant to reside with someone, normally a kinsman, who will support him until he finds a job and accommodation. The extended family facilitates the adaptation of new arrivals in town and chain migration is thus a form of risk-spreading that makes it possible for relatives who succeed in establishing themselves in town to provide means for others to follow. Co-operation between siblings is extensive. It is common for a son or daughter to take in elderly parents or for grand-parents to take care of grand-children, while their parents are absent. Apart from kinship ties their old-age pension is often a key economic component in an erratically employed household.

The study on informal settlements in Rini (Coetzee 1999) shows, that people have many reasons for moving into an informal area. An obvious reason is lack of alternatives, but many people also move from elsewhere in Grahamstown, because they want to have their own site, and to be independent but cannot afford to pay rent. Despite fear of being removed the informal settlers generally regard their informal settlement as permanent, though some would prefer to live in a formal settlement with adequate facilities if they had employment. The informal sites are mostly owned by the head of the household residing on the site, but sometimes informal sites are rented from people who moved away. People generally consider the move to an own house, even if the house is informal, a substantial improvement to former living arrangements.

### **Social Structure and Community Life in Rini**

The Xhosa household is predominantly an association of close relatives, and seldom includes people who are not related to the household head. Traditionally the Xhosa lived in homesteads with extended families defined by patrilineal descent and virilocal residence. Patrilineality is still an important principle influencing the structure of the household. Wives usually join their husband's home when they marry and there is an emphasis on relationships through males. Nowadays the most common type of household is based on the nuclear family, but the members of a household are rarely restricted to the nuclear family. The tendency is that for example parents or other siblings are included. The reason for the prevalence of these co-residential arrangement is that the household must assume responsibility for the welfare of the wider kinship group and this measure of inter-dependency gives support to those in need. The extended family thus continues to play a significant role in urban settlements in the absence of alternative agencies of security. Despite the continued importance of patriliney a very large proportion (at least 40%) of the households in Rini have female heads sometimes centred around several women. Domestic relations are heavily influenced by the people's dependence on money. It is therefore the working generation, which wields authority in the homes. Pooling of income from a number of different sources is a common strategy that secures a household against total disaster when one wage earner loses her/his job, but many households also have to rely on only one income or pension.

Each household tries to support itself, but households are linked in various ways to other households to whom they are related. In this sense the community is protective. One way in which such values are upheld is through the maintenance of ancestor beliefs. Though the majority of the Xhosa are Christian they do not regard the belief in ancestors as being incompatible with Christianity. The growing interest for participating in ceremonies associated with the ancestors may be an indicator of growing self-awareness and pride in own traditions. Circumcision and burial ceremonies are other vital expressions of Xhosa identity, and the people do not shun large expenses in order to participate in a socially accepted manner.



Besides kinship ties, people in Rini generally have a strong sense of neighbourhood, and neighbouring families will often help each other when one of them is short of food and money. The protection of neighbours and friends can in some cases be vital. The absence of any rigid class distinction in the black communities is most evident at the neighbourhood level. Variations in income or occupation do not seem to have any relevance for example in social gatherings. Though there are considerable variations in terms of income and education within the townships, the overall ethos stresses mutual understanding and community awareness. People do not primarily interact with each other in terms of their social rank and status. This mode of equality is enhanced through group participation in the neighbourhood life and in the traditional Xhosa ceremonial, social and religious rituals. The interaction of people on such occasions shows that people share a basic cultural pattern, in addition to the experience of deprivation. The social network constitutes an element of stability in an otherwise often fluid and difficult situation.

Voluntary associations play a certain role. Many of Rini's inhabitants are attached to the Zionist or other churches. The churches provide people with a sense of community and reciprocal assistance. The congregations are generally small and centred around inspired leaders. The services are often held at the homes of the members and involve people who know each other intimately. Mutual aid among members is especially prevalent in the Zionist churches.

There are also a number of non-Christian aid associations including burial societies, women's organisations, street committees, credit associations and savings clubs in addition to ANC branches.

The rotating credit clubs often involve co-workers who pool fixed portions of their earnings, which are later given to each member in rotation. In this way each member receives at regular intervals relatively large sums of money allowing them to buy what they could not otherwise afford. In the savings clubs members contribute fixed amounts of money that are lent at interest. At the end of the year the members share the capital and the interest. These clubs deal with larger sums of money than the credit clubs and they enable members to make real gain from their capital.

Some of the organisations, especially the street committees, have on several occasions played an important role in strengthening a feeling of solidarity and providing people's discontent with a voice. At present the various organisations seem to be rather weak and in many areas virtually non-existent.

### **Making a Living**

The rate of unemployment has for decades been extremely high, while salaries for those who are employed are low. There is little hope of changing that situation in the short term, as Grahamstown has little economic growth. In 1986 it was estimated that at least 60% of the male population was unemployed, a percentage which has probably not decreased. The percentage of unemployment is by some believed to be as high as 80% including women. The acquisition of skills improves people's chances of getting more than casual employment but well educated blacks tend to leave Grahamstown in order to look for better living conditions elsewhere.

The majority of people in Rini have to make a living from casual jobs. These embrace a wide range of working arrangements. Sometimes casual workers undertake certain tasks only on some days of the week, for example gardening. Some regard a combination of several casual jobs as a better deal than one permanent badly paid job. Informal jobs and self-employment are widespread as well. They include, for example, fruit and vegetable selling, handicrafts, hair dressing, painting, taxi driving and repair activities. Most self-employed activities do not alone provide a household with a sufficient income. In the Dense Settlement Study a very large percentage of the households were dependent on the old age pension of one or two of its members.

The people have on several occasions protested against their bad living conditions, for example during the protests against the education system in the 1970es, the boycott of white shops in the 1980es and against costly developments like the building of a by-pass road in 1985. There is, however, little the town can do on a short term basis to change the dominating problem of unemployment, though better education, the provision of vocational skills, larger mobility of the work force, family planning and the development of small scale industries and perhaps also tourism could contribute to positive long term changes.

Having regular employment is an absolute priority for many if not most residents in Rini. The high rate of unemployment is also the reason that more than 57% interviewed in the study by Coetzee (1999) did not think their lives had changed to the better since 1994. Some felt that there had been no change at all and that Apartheid was still dominating their lives and especially their work situation. Having a home **and** employment are regarded as absolute priorities, but only regular employment would reflect real change.

### **Living Conditions, Services and Pollution**

Pollution due to over-crowding, lack of proper sanitation facilities, littering and inadequate services has been regarded as a problem in Grahamstown since the first black people started to settle there in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is a problem that has never been solved, partly because of the ever-increasing black population and partly because of the inability of the municipality to address it properly. The townships are to a varying degree characterised by small low quality housing, inadequate services in terms of streetlights, road maintenance, waste disposal etc., lack of trees and green spaces, indiscriminate littering and the non-existence of facilities, which a white town would have: sports facilities, a library, a community building.

Main problems in the study on informal settlements (1999) were related to lack of facilities. When asked how they thought their living conditions could be improved almost all respondents listed a number of facilities essential to a better life including tarred roads, running water in each house, flush toilets, electricity, telephones, rubbish removal, and an ambulance service. The largest problems were associated with the lack of proper toilet facilities (82%), lack of running water (72,5%), lack of electricity (62,5%), lack of space (57,5%), unacceptable structure of house (52,5%), too small gardens (30%), lack of tarred roads and street lights (20%). Toilet facilities were thus an immediate priority. Expectations were often unrealistic and nobody referred to the logistical problems of providing the desired services in occupied areas not suitable for residential development. There was also an inability and in some cases unwillingness to pay for the desired services. One respondent said that they would like to have roads, telephones and electricity. They got big rubbish bags but were told to pay 30 Rand for rubbish removal, but most people could not pay that much. Without exception the respondents expressed that the Government should provide the improvements. In addition to the widespread feeling of entitlement combined with the unwillingness to pay for services there was also an element of the expectation that 'the white man should improve this place' among the respondents.

It is expected that pollution will increase with the continued densification of settlements unless something is done to prevent it. The pollution is believed to be a particular threat to the water quality in the Kowie River. Rini is located at the head of the Kowie River into which the pollutants discharge affecting storage facilities downstream serving farming communities between Grahamstown, Bathurst and Port Alfred. The impacts on the greater eco-system have not yet been looked into nor is it known whether the increasing number of flush toilets combined with an inadequately serviced sewerage system have led to a significant increase in pollutants. As a consequence of the relatively large number of tarred roads and lack of drains in Rini rainfall and sullage water tend to run off instead of being absorbed in the ground. This is exacerbated by the hilly topography of the town. The streams in Rini have been channelised to prevent pooling of sullage. In dry periods these streams flow constantly with highly polluted sullage water. No study of

the actual level of water pollution was available during the case study, but littering and open drains certainly constitute a problem in the whole of Rini.

The provision of clean water and a proper drainage system is a new feature of the townships. In the beginning of the 1980s only Makenaskop and Raglan Road had drainage systems. Elsewhere wastewater was collected in shallow channels. Water borne sewerage was available only in some sections of Makenaskop. Other residents had to contend with the bucket lavatory system, a situation which people perceived and still perceive as being one of the most unpleasant aspects of their lives. They smell, are perceived as unsafe for small children, have to be emptied and sometimes spill over. In 1989 most of Rini was still served by a night soil bucket system. Today a maximum of 50% of households are on a high level of services indicating that substantial improvements have taken place. Some sections of Rini now has a full-flush sewer system and house connections for water supply. Blockages are, however, common and due to the hard surfaces and steep slopes, raw sewage often reaches the rivers. Some areas have pit latrines, which sometimes overflow during heavy rains. Water born sewage is gradually being extended to encompass the whole of Rini. Extension one, four and five are services by water borne sewerage, while Sunnyside, Tanti, Xolani, and ext. 2,3 and 7 are currently operating on a bucket system. Lower Makenaskop and ext. 6 in Kingsflats have pit latrines. There has been a number of problems related to pit latrines in Rini, possibly related to the quality of the soil. There will be an investigation of this problem in the near future, and if a solution is found the municipality will try to promote the VIP system as a less costly alternative to the flush system.

The current waste removal system operates on the basis of serviced areas in the community being divided into sectors and household refuse from each sector being cleared on a rotational basis. A municipal tractor/trailer system collects household refuse bags and transport them to Grahamstown municipal landfill site. All formal households are provided with a door to door weekly collection service. The households are issued black bags free of charge. The bags are filled and placed on the kerbside in front of the houses on their removal days. Though the system seems to function relatively well, it does have some problems. For example, people do not always know when they have to put out their bags with the consequence that bags are either not put out or left in the street for several days allowing straying animals to tear the bags. The rubbish normally remains in the street and is not collected. Commercial and industrial sites receive the same level of service. Apart from black bags there is a bin/container system for the management of solid waste and garden refuse but it is not very efficiently used and the containers are often so located that solid waste enters the storm water systems mixing with sewage and sullage water and reaches the river. Some bins are only meant for garden refuse but are used for all solid waste. Also indiscriminate dumping into waterways occurs where containers are insufficient or inconveniently situated.

Informal settlements are provided with basic services for which households are supposed to pay a flat rate of R 35. Access routes to informal households are sometimes impassable for the tractor/trailer system. This has as a consequence that a number of informal households are not provided with any service and waste is dumped in open spaces, storm water channels and streams. The Council encourages these households to burn their refuse, but this also creates problems. Domestic refuse in Rini typically contains high percentages of organic material and when washed into the water systems, increased organic loads result in the contamination of the water. There is no separation of waste, and neither organic nor other kinds of waste are re-cycled.

In 1992 a research based project led to the development of a night soil/domestic refuse composting plant in Rini. Compost was created within 40 days, and the compost products were ideal for the use in parks, for trees and vegetable gardens. The system was regarded as economically feasible, low cost, and environmentally friendly. It facilitated the separation of non-biodegradable recyclable elements. The process was labour intensive with significant job creation

potentials. Unfortunately management and staff problems led to the plant's closure in 1993, and no further attempts have been made to re-introduce recycling.

In Grahamstown services are generally well functioning but the staff is over-loaded with work. The municipality cannot afford to employ additional staff as long as the level of non-payment continues to be high. Due to vandalism and other social factors the work-load increases and the overload of work which in some cases lead to inadequacy of services can to some extent be attributed to social factors. The billing system seems to be relatively acceptable and people have several easily accessible pay-points, some of them open after hours. Corruption does not seem to be widespread though there have been some incidences of bribe in connection with the pail bucket service. The major problems that Grahamstown is facing are associated with socio-economic factors, the political structure and lacking community involvement.

Despite shortcomings, the level of services in Grahamstown is generally better than in many other South African towns. There are, however, a number of operational difficulties experienced by the City Council including a high level of non-payment by customers. It has been calculated that if non-payment could be reduced to 5% within 10 years the debt problem within the local authorities could probably be eliminated.

### **Health and Water Borne Diseases**

In the Eastern Cape 100 out of 1000 children die before they reach the age of five. In Grahamstown infant mortality is considerably lower, and diarrhoea does not play a role in infant mortality.

According to information from health clinics major health problems in Rini are associated with TB, aids and lack of proper food, while diarrhoea and other water and sanitation related diseases do not occur very often. Diarrhoea is most common among children under 5 and it occurs more often in summer than in winter, primarily due to flies on food and stagnant water. There is a larger occurrence of diarrhoea in those areas with low level sanitary installations (primarily buckets) than in those with flush toilets.

In the case of Grahamstown it has not been proved, that pollution is a major contributor to health problems. An over-all improvement in the health situation can probably only be brought about by considerable improvement in the standard of living including better housing. However, it can be expected that improved facilities and a cleaner environment will contribute to better health. Minor ailments may for example be avoided due to improved sanitation – and this can be vital for patients suffering from for example aids and TB – and a cleaner environment can also contribute to higher resilience towards diseases.

Prior to the Study it was assumed that not everybody in the black settlements would interpret causes for illnesses in Western medical terms. Diarrhoea may for example just as well be caused by someone else's ill wish as by dirty water. If this was the case an education programme concerning environment and health would perhaps not have been an appropriate means to address the issue. This assumption could, however, not be confirmed by the Study, maybe because it was carried out by volunteers associated with the health clinics.

### **Widespread Non-Payment**

The on-going and continuous functioning of services is the ultimate indicator of the success of providing these services. To achieve this not only requires the efficient and proper operation and maintenance of all water supply, sewage treatment, waste disposal and collection facilities, but also cost recovery from consumers. In Grahamstown a large portion of the town is characterised by high levels of services and low income, a fact that may partly explain the high percentage of non-payment (45%). In terms of the actual number of non-paying households the percentage is even higher. There is some indication that many households are not able to pay. Unfortunately no

study of the affordability of tariffs was conducted prior to their introduction, and there is very little precise information on the actual affordability of services. There is a tendency in the white population to assume that non-payment is a 'black' issue and that the black people can afford to pay but do not want to.

In order to alleviate the problem of non-affordability the indigent policy was formulated. According to this policy the maximum monthly payment expected from households is as follows (Grahamstown policy):

<b>Income Category</b>	<b>Amount payable</b>
Less than 800 R./month	50R
R 800-1500	120
1500-3500	240
More than 3500	Full costs

Households with an income to up to 100R per month pay no charges and they are fully subsidised.

The principle applied in the indigent policy is that poorer households pay up to the maximum levels indicated and the higher income households are billed to make up for any shortfall. Though the indigent policy assures that people who cannot pay receive some support, it is obvious that many people need assistance with registering for the indigent policy. Apparently people are not always aware how to register and some of those who have tried were turned down by the Treasurer. There seems to be a lack of communication between the Council and the communities. The councillors do not always fulfil their obligation to inform the community in their ward about their rights and new laws and regulations, nor do they fulfil their feedback function. Another problem is that people who are supposed to pay the low rates still consider them as being too high for their income.

According to the interviewers it is sometimes a problem that people, who come to the pay office with some but not all the money they should pay for services, are not allowed to pay at all. Apparently there is a problem with one person working in that office. Considering the economic circumstances many families are living under it should be accepted though definitely not encouraged when people sometimes choose to pay only part of their due fees.

In order to improve the level of payment, a Masakhane Campaign was carried out in 1997. The campaign did, however, not lead to increasing payment rates. In fact they decreased. One of the questions the study looked into was why the campaign did not succeed. It was assumed that the approach was not adequate, and that the campaign failed because face-to face consultation did not take place. People also protested that Masakhane does not mean that people should pay without services being improved.

The campaign was carried out by a private consultancy firm from East London. The strategy for the campaign envisaged that churches be contacted and street committees revived and used for the campaign. Communities should form local development forums, cleaning campaigns and cultural events should take place at the local level, and the local authority should take the initiative in mobilising the community. A widespread use of radio community programmes, local newspapers, and mass-meetings were also suggested. The strategy acknowledged that community participation was key to the success of the campaign. Development priorities must be decided upon with input from communities, people must be continuously informed and municipalities need to make an effort to involve communities in the governing process. Communities also need to be part of the budgetary process so that they get to understand the limitations that Government faces on financial resources. It was also acknowledged that people who do not pay must understand that they hamper development in their own areas. They must realise that if they do not contribute towards provision and maintenance of the basic infrastructure, it will be very difficult for any

institution to invest in such a community. Educational programmes must be developed to encourage citizens to take the responsibility of promoting new ways of thinking and taking ownership of the development process. It was assumed that people would like to pay if they can see some improvement in their immediate problems. They must also understand that they themselves and not the council are responsible for cleanliness in the townships.

During the three months of the campaign 17 local facilitators, who had previously been trained, carried out a survey and conducted a large number of workshops. The campaign also included the dropping of awareness flyers, posters, adverts on Radio Xhosa and a weekly half hour programme on Radio Grahamstown. A magazine was produced with the title 'Building Grahamstown for a Brighter Future'. Through comic strips it explained why people must pay, who the Municipality is, that the Municipality can only work when they have the money. People cannot demand better services before they pay. The magazine attempts to convey the message to its readers that if people work together and pay they can build Grahamstown into a place where they will be happy to live, and that people who do not pay harm everybody in town. The text is fairly moralistic and does not discuss the issue of poverty in relation to payment.

At the end of the campaign one of the consultants involved appealed to the Grahamstown TLC to create long-term jobs for some of the facilitators and urged the Council to make use of the data collected during the campaign. The data showed that though many people were willing to pay they were not receiving accounts for service charges, and others would only pay on the condition that the municipality improved the community's social conditions.

At some of the workshops held during the campaign participants were furious about being asked to pay rapidly increasing service charges while they continued to live in 'shantytowns' with inadequate sanitation and poor or nonexistent roads. This attitude was supported by a researcher at Rhodes University, who found that the Masakhane campaign was misconceived because it was based on the idea that blacks don't pay because of their supposed 'culture of non-payment'. According to her the truth is that many black people are poor and don't get proper services. She thought that people would start paying when they started getting decent services. What they needed were services, not messages.

The campaign has unfortunately not been independently evaluated but it seems that it did not promote sustainability. One of the failings of the campaign seems to have been the apparent lack of support from the councillors but also that the campaign despite its good intentions was not sufficiently rooted in the local authorities and in the communities. Obviously the campaign was neither very successful nor visible. It was difficult to get any information on the Campaign in Grahamstown itself, the data of the survey were not available and people generally knew very little of the campaign when asked during the Dense Settlement Study. Those who carried out the campaign concluded that the campaign was successful as it educated and informed the public of what a Municipality was, what services they provided, why they should pay for these services etc. but that it was unsuccessful due to the high unemployment rate which made it difficult for people to pay the rates and also to unresolved political conflict within the town. Seen from the rear the main shortcoming of the campaign was that it was carried out by a private company from outside and not through and by local structures.

### **Information, Education and Community Participation**

The Dense Settlement Study did not succeed in getting exact information on the extent to which awareness campaigns are carried out on a regular basis. It does not seem so. However, the volunteers working in the local health clinics seem to do a good job in educating people on health matters. People are generally aware of how to treat and prevent basic diseases. Many schools also have some education on health and hygiene. Some clean up campaigns are organised by for example unions and schools. The Council sometimes arranges meetings in the communities and a number of workshops took place during the Masakhane campaign. At the central level there is little

information about campaigns being carried out. They seem to be rather scattered and not integrated into an overall policy.

The organisational structures within the communities are relatively weak. The formerly very strong street and area committees under SANGO have lost much of their impetus and have in many cases ceased to exist. Women's associations do not seem to be well rooted within the grassroots. There's a relatively large number of NGOs, most of them welfare organisations, who attend to the poor, the disabled, the old etc. One of these NGOs, GADRA (Grahamstown Area Distress Relief Association), confirmed that poverty is the most immediate problem in the townships. Many families do not even have money to buy food and have to be helped out with food and clothes parcels from GADRA. It is a problem that most of the volunteers working in the organisations do not come from the townships. Because people are poor they do not want to do volunteer work unless they are paid for it. Though people mostly have a good sense of neighbourhood they do not seem to have a strong feeling of community. When they do something they want to see immediate benefits for themselves rather than indirect benefits by improving the living conditions for the whole community. This may, according to GADRA, also be one reason for the relative weakness of women's organisations. People are not used to come together and take responsibility for their own lives. There is an apparent lack of co-operation and co-ordination of activities for example under an umbrella organisation and too little co-operation between the organisations and the authorities.

The system of elected councillors has not contributed to community participation. On the whole the black communities do not have a strong voice to represent them (or the diversities within the communities). The political structure is considered to be too involved with party politics to be really involved in the socio-economic and other problems of the people, nor do they contribute to a feeling of empowerment within the communities.

### **Tackling Non-payment**

The ability of South African municipalities to render essential services is increasingly being placed under pressure due to non-payment for services. Some local authorities have realised that the failure of traditional municipal credit control necessitates the introduction of a new approach of a well-structured system of revenue management.

Due to the politicisation of municipal services many municipal councils have resisted punitive actions against non-payers, and municipal officials have been threatened with violence or mass actions when trying to enforce payment. The resistance to payment has continued after 1994 possibly due to a lack of community involvement.

In Middelburg the payment rate rose dramatically as the Municipality began to tackle the non-payment issue in partly innovative, partly punitive ways. The successful approach was based on the principle that the consumer of services is a client who has the right to receive essential services but also has the duty to pay for services consumed. Effective communication with consumers together with transparency in all decision making processes were essential to the approach. It was acknowledged that councillors, officials and consumers must understand that non-payment of services creates a negative cash flow, which will eventually result in the collapse of essential services. In order to find appropriate solutions reasons for non-payment need to be identified through community meetings and interviews with defaulters. The community must be regarded as the most important element in the service provision cycle as no municipality can survive without paying clients. The support of the community is therefore all important to the success of debt collection. Councillors must carry out their role as elected representatives by being in continuous contact with their constituents in order to ascertain their needs, aspirations and problems. Without the support of the Council and individual councillors it is impossible for the municipality to implement the revenue management policies. The community and civic organisations must be fully involved in the process of revenue management and feed back must be provided to the grass roots levels at regular intervals. A formal policy on revenue management

must be adopted in consultation with the community and civic organisations, and action plans must be implemented without deviation.

The Council and officials must also ensure that services are of an acceptable quality at all times as customers rightly expect value for their money. Complaints and breakdowns must be taken care of immediately.

Efficient debt collection is not possible if the consumer data are inaccurate or not up to date. Immediate and uncompromising action must be taken against consumers who make illegal connections. Where monthly bills are not paid by due date punitive actions must be taken in the form of cutting off services. Failure to do so will result in debt accumulation, which the consumer may not be able to pay. Tariffs must provide enough income to cover the costs of providing services and maintenance and they must at the same time be affordable. The consumers must be presented with understandable accounts. The due date for payment must be highlighted, and the account must make clear that services will be discontinued if not paid for on that date. In addition a clear and understandable policy must be determined for indigent support. Measures must be taken to improve the revenue system including the installation of all meters inside houses, the introduction of rewards and reconnecting fees, auditing of meters twice a year and the attendance to all complaints within 24 hours.

The initiators of the 'Middelburg model' admit that initially their credit control managers were extremely unpopular but eventually people began to realise that increased payment was the only way the town could survive. The initiators linked the Masakhane Campaign with the Reconstruction and Development Programme and ensured that all new projects created jobs for community members. They started by educating the community about the advantages of increased payment coupled with education in schools, churches and other public places. They ensured that their message was practical, community driven and social rather than political. At the beginning of each financial year the Council informed the community how much money the TLC had, they listened to the requests for improvements from each ward and consulted with politicians, priests, business people, civil servants and other stakeholders. Before finalising the budget the community was informed about what to expect in the following year. The poorest households were subsidised, and squatters were moved to one specific area, where they were provided with basic facilities at a minimum rate.

Do not be afraid to take unpopular decisions if they are correct

The success of Middelburg can largely be ascribed to community participation and good policy making by the TLC. As a result of the vastly improved payment rate all roads were tarred and the operation and maintenance of all services are excellent.

In Midrand the payment rate rose from 3% to 80% over a period of 14 months as a result of the Masakhane campaign, which was developed by the Council and elected zone leaders from the community. The money raised was translated directly into the community with the creation and maintenance of facilities. It was recognised that there was a need not only to increase payment but also to get people involved in the development of the area where they lived. The improvement was based on a 10 point plan<sup>4</sup>:

Apparently the Midrand experiment has not been evaluated. Payment is, however, said to have gone down again maybe because the consequent implementation of the 10 point plan has not been continuous.

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<sup>4</sup> See Annex I



In Kakamas in the Northern Cape payment was raised to 110% by strict enforcement. Payment for waste was included in the pre-paid electricity bill. If people did not pay their electricity would be cut off. Even though residents are poor they managed to pay their bills once they had experienced the consequences of non-payment.

Unfortunately Grahamstown has not tried to learn from the successes achieved in Middelburg and other towns nor have their methods of improvement been tried out, though the Mayor of Middelburg visited Grahamstown with the purpose to advise the Council.

## FINDINGS FROM THE COMMUNITY STUDY

The Study looked into the following issues:

- Why so many people do not pay for services. Is it only because they cannot afford to pay or do they have other reasons;
- What do they expect from the Municipality if they do pay? How do they think that the Municipality should react if they do not pay;
- The level of understanding of the customers' need to contribute to the improvement of their situation by paying and by changing behaviour;
- How do people think that the situation could be changed so that more people would pay and services improved;
- Do people think that they would be more willing to pay if they were better informed about why they need to pay, and what they pay for, had more awareness of the problems related to a dirty environment and inadequate services, were more actively involved in the decisions of the municipality, were more actively involved in keeping their environment clean;
- How do people think that the attitude towards paying for services could be changed? How do they think that people could learn to take more care of their environment and try to improve their neighbourhood;
- To what extent are residents satisfied with the level of quality of services provided to them;
- Are residents convinced that the service providers are aware of their service-related problems and do they perceive that the Council stands sympathetically towards their problems;
- How is the level of residents' understanding of how the municipal account is calculated, to what extent is the message 'pay as you use' accepted and the costs and complexities involved in the provision of municipal services understood;
- How are the attitudes of people towards those who resort to malpractices by bypassing official routes like littering in the street or tapping water illegally;
- What do people think with regard to the enforcement of a stricter credit-control by the Council, for example cut off or legal actions;
- Is the system compatible with the social structure of the household with regard to family size, cultural mores, income etc;
- Is the community sufficiently involved;
- Could civic organisations play a role in improving payment;
- What would make people change their behaviour.

The survey was conducted in five different areas of Rini by volunteer health workers, who were responsible for the area in which they usually work. This had the advantage that the interviewers were familiar with the area and known to many of the residents. The interviewers undertook surveys in 40 households in addition to 4 in-debt interviews each. The respondents were usually head of the household. Both female and male headed households, households with varying incomes and informal as well as formal households were deliberately included in the otherwise random sample. A large portion of the households were headed by elderly pensioners. Many

households only had a female head, and almost all households had at least 4 members. Most of them were larger.

The interviewers were asked to not only ask questions but also to make observations on standards of living and the environment. The general impression was that the majority of the houses were clean and had tidy yards but the immediate surroundings were often very dirty. Many houses had problems with water running into their yards, overflowing toilets during rains, blocked or broken drains and littering in their yards from outside. The informal houses were generally of a very poor quality, cold, small and lacking in basic amenities. In many houses the poverty was obvious and most houses were crowded. Some people showed considerable energy in improving their surroundings, for example by growing vegetables and having nice gardens. Others seemed to have given up and were totally dependent on outside help often from relatives. A number of houses were well furnished and seemed to be much more wealthy than the residents claimed to be.

### Questionnaires

#### Six people in a household and no income

A large number of households were headed by elderly people (60-78). The average number of people living in each household varied a little from area to area with a mean of just under 6 persons. In most households all inhabitants were related. Very few households had a non-related lodger in the household itself or in the case of one man, a girlfriend living with him.

In most cases respondents had lived in Grahamstown and even in the same house for many years, but this varied in the individual areas from a mean of 3.5 to more than 10 years. On an average the number of years people had lived in informal houses was considerably lower. Those people who lived in, and mostly claimed to own, a formal house all wanted to continue to live there 'forever', while many people in shacks hoped to move into better houses in a formal area with infrastructure. The majority of the respondents lived in Grahamstown before moving into their present lodgings (if they were not born there), and the majority had been born in Grahamstown. This also varied according to area. App. one third had moved to Grahamstown from a farm or – more seldom – from homelands, some of them many years ago. This indicates a relatively high degree of stability. People don't seem to move around a lot, and the majority of women who had moved to their husband's household after marriages were born in the vicinity. It could not be confirmed that the majority of squatters comes from outside Grahamstown.

In most households the male/female head of the family was responsible for sustaining the family, though it was not uncommon, that a married couple or in some cases a mother and her daughter or a pensioner and a daughter or son shared the responsibility. In app. 80% of the households respondents said that only person had an income though it was also relatively common that two people had an income. More than two household members rarely contributed to the household income. There was, however, some confusion over this questions, as some respondents defined pensions as income and others didn't. The income was distributed on salary, pension, other kinds of grants, and casual jobs or self-employment. In at least 50% of the households at least one person received a pension, mostly old age. The head of the family normally decides how to spend money but in households where the head was male respondents often claimed that the wife decides. All areas taken together the mean income of the households was a little under 800 Rand. In the coloured area the mean income was 1200 Rand. Given the small number of households interviewed this average cannot be anything but an indicator. In addition the income stated by respondents does not necessarily reflect reality. In some cases respondents indicated that they had income from casual/self employment in addition to receiving a pension but when asked about the actual income they only included the pension. In other households the interviewers observed that the household had a business (for example selling alcohol) but the income from that business was not included in the household income. Sometimes the observable living conditions exceeded

what the family could have afforded with the 'official' income. In many households living conditions were observed to be extremely poor, and the interviewers had no reason to doubt that respondents told the truth concerning their income, which was below the average of 800 Rand, most often a pension of 520 Rand. In a few cases respondents received help from relatives (son, daughter, sister, brother) not living in the household. Almost all respondents said that they sometimes lacked money for basic amenities (food, school, rates etc.). Only a little minority never lacked money. When a household did not have money for basic needs they would either 'sacrifice' (app. 20%), take a loan often from a private money lender or get support from relatives. It was equally common to take loans and to get support from relatives. Many respondents said that they do both.

The main monthly expenditures were distributed on food, water and rates, electricity, clothes, school, medicine, repayment of loans, accounts, and policies. Food, electricity and school fees were the main expenditures in most households. In some accounts and repayment of loans were among the largest expenditures. When money is short respondents most commonly prioritise food, electricity, school, medicine, and rates/water/service charges. For some respondents policies and accounts were equally important.

Very few households had made any major investments during the last 12 months. The answer to this question varied between different areas, probably as a consequence of different translations of the question. In some areas respondents regarded a child's admittance to school/high school as an investment, while in other areas this was not the case. Other investments mentioned by a minority included the improvement of houses, furniture or membership of a burial society.

#### Buckets stink

More than 50% of the respondents had a tap in the yard while the rest were dependent on a communal tap. Toilet facilities naturally varied considerably between areas. On an average a little more than one third of the households had flush toilets while the rest had pit toilets, bucket or a 'hole in the ground'. Those who did not have a flush toilet, the majority on a bucket system, complained about smell, flies and the irregular bucket removal services. All respondents regarded flush toilets as the best and in many cases only acceptable option. Flush toilets were unanimously perceived as clean and healthy, though a relatively large number of respondents had problems with their flush toilets, mainly because of broken drains.

The level of satisfaction with services was almost evenly distributed between yes and no. Satisfied respondents gave the regularity of services (especially waste removal) as a reason for their satisfaction. Those who were dissatisfied often mentioned the irregular removal of buckets or waste or the level of services generally as the reason. In many cases respondents were satisfied with the waste removal but not with the bucket removal.

App. half of the respondents said that the bags provided for waste were sufficient for the amount of waste while the other half said that they were not. Additional waste was said to be either burned, put in a container, dumped at the municipal waste site or in the veldt, stream or street. Some said that they bought additional plastic bags. Respondents complained about the lack of sufficient containers in many areas and that some of the containers were placed in an inconvenient spot. A number of respondents did not know how to get rid of their garden refuse.

More than 75% of the respondents had never complained about services (though dissatisfied), while the rest said that they had. The majority of the respondents said that it did not help to complain as it did not change anything, while many said that it sometimes helped. Several respondents said that they did not know where to complain.

When asked about what kind of improvement of services the community wanted flush toilets, drains, tarred roads, waste containers, and better housing were prioritised. A minority did not think that the services need to be improved. When asked how the system could be improved most respondents repeated the improvements listed above. A minority added cleaning of streets/environment and/or education.

Almost all respondents said that they were willing to pay for an improvement of services, but the vast majority could not afford to pay more than now. When asked how much they could afford to pay for improvement the average amount given was 65 Rand. Many respondents mentioned the amount they were supposed to but did not pay, perhaps indicating that they might be willing to pay if the services were improved.

The majority of the respondents knew that the municipality provides the services. Most of the respondents did not know whether the current tariffs correspond to the level of services provided. App. two third of those who answered said that the tariffs were too high compared to the quality of services. Most knew how the payment was collected and were satisfied with the payment system, but many of those who did not pay did not know. This indicates that they have never paid. Some said that they did not receive accounts or that the accounts were faulty. When asked whether they pay regularly app. 75% answered no, though some of them said that they pay sometimes. The reasons for not paying were primarily dissatisfaction with the services provided/not provided, lack of money, that others did not pay or that they did not know they had to pay.

App. half of the respondents did not know what the payment for services covered. Those who said they knew often gave very limited answers for example reparation of damaged taps, reparation of trucks, maintenance, salaries for employees or, more generally, services. It is obvious that the majority do not really know what they are paying for. Quite a large number of people did not know what would happen if they stopped paying for services, though the majority answered that there would be no services or that there would be no money to pay the employees. A few answered that life would be bad and one, that it would be bad for the nation. The vast majority did not think that services should be cut when people don't pay. Reasons given were that people don't pay because they don't have the money, that there would be chaos, that people cannot live without water, and that it would be very unhealthy. Those who were in favour of cutting off services said that everybody has to pay their share or that the Municipality needs money in order to provide services.

The majority of the respondents believed that people would be more willing to pay if services were better and/or if they had work. Many respondents believed that the people in their area could not afford to pay because they were pensioners or unemployed.

The vast majority were not satisfied with their neighbourhood, primarily because of the lack of closed drains and litter, though dust and unpaved roads were also perceived as negative. App. half of the respondents answered that they knew someone who throw waste into the street and some of them said that they did so themselves. It was, however, perceived as a bad thing to do. The lack of alternatives was often stated as a reason. A large number of respondents did not answer this question, though littering was perceived as a problem by almost everybody. When asked why the majority answered that it is bad for your health, while some thought it influenced the image of the community negatively. Major problems in the dense settlements included pollution and dirt, poor toilets, lack of drainage, lack of containers and unpaved roads.

Not more than 10% had participated in an environmental campaign, most of them May Day Street Cleaning Campaign. A very large number of the respondents had never heard of or participated in any environmental campaigns. All thought that it was important to teach children not to litter, to have clean surroundings and adequate services mainly because of their relation to health. The majority also said that they were worried about pollution and again mentioned its effect on health as the main reason. Not one gave an environmental/ecological explanation.

**People get sick because of the dirty environment**

The majority of the respondents said that residents in the community were often ill. The most common diseases were perceived to be TB, Asthma, Diarrhoea, Flu, High Blood Pressure, Diabetes, mental sickness and aids. TB was perceived as being the most common disease.

Approximately half of the household had had a least one person ill in the last 6 months. Elderly females and children were most often sick. Pollution, bad water, bad air and cold houses were the reasons most commonly given for disease. Almost everybody knew how to prevent and treat diarrhoea and knew about the relationship between water, food and diarrhoea. The majority said they had got the knowledge from the health clinics and that was where they went when they were ill. Only very few said that they visited a traditional doctor instead. Respondents generally believed that the health situation could be improved through regular services, better toilets, cleaning of the environment, education, more health workers and campaigns.

**We must all work together**

A relatively large number thought that the Government, the health clinics or the Municipality was responsible for improving the situation, while more than 50% said that residents or residents together with the Municipality were responsible. The vast majority thought that they could contribute to an improvement themselves mainly by cleaning their yard and streets. Some believed that education, campaigns and co-operation were important for improvement, while app. 10% said that they could do nothing or did not know what to do. A few respondents believed that recycling would help.

**When we are employed we can achieve all the rest**

When asked about their priorities most respondents prioritised employment but better food, good health, educating children, better services and improving their houses also had a high priority.

The reasons given for these prioritisations were that if people were employed and had money they could solve all their problems, children needed a good education for a better future, good health was vital for being able to work and have a good life, and clean streets and water were important for health.

**Interviews**

The objective of the 16 in-depth interviews was to get a deeper insight into **why** people do not pay for services and **how** this can be changed. The interviews were a more qualitative supplement to the questionnaires and generally confirmed the findings of these.

**If people pay the area could be improved and we could live in a healthy environment**

The interviews indicated that people (respondents and 'other people') are generally willing to pay but those who are unemployed or pensioners cannot always afford to pay. Non-employment is often used as an excuse for not paying. If people had proper employment the majority of them would pay. Those who do work but don't want to pay should pay, and the Municipality should take strict measures against them if they don't. One respondent said that if some people with a low income could pay, others could and should as well.

There was no agreement on whether services should be cut off or not. The view was expressed that it would not be right to cut people's services, especially water, since the Freedom Charter assures people of such basic rights, and because most people don't pay due to poverty. Many

people have debts to repay (for example accounts) and can only pay for services when they don't repay debts. One respondent said that it is no solution to cut off services. It would be a nuisance to the neighbours of those who do not receive water, which nobody can live without, and everybody would be punished, including those who pay regularly. Water should rather be prepaid like electricity.

Those in favour of strict enforcement recommended that the Municipality before cutting off services should send employees out to negotiate with the household and find out why they do not pay. Another view was that the Municipality should not take strict action against those who don't pay because many have no alternatives. They should instead make campaigns and initiate projects. In any case people must be informed very early of increasing rates or other changes. One respondent said that people should stop boycotting payment because they now had their own government.

#### Release us of our debts

Several respondents said that the municipal debt accounts are often wrong. They knew about cases where people had paid an amount of money towards relieving their debts but their ensuing debt accounts did not show it. Also people did not understand how they could accumulate such high debts as some of them had within a few years. They did not think that it was right to penalize them financially if they did not pay in time. It should be assured that the employees do their work properly and don't make mistakes. One respondent said that more people and more responsible people should be employed.

Several of the respondents expressed the wish that the Municipality would release everyone from their debts, as the Government had promised that they would. Many people can't afford to pay their debt and seem to be forever stuck. Respondents want a simple account where they can see what they owe. If these things were rectified people would react by paying. They would also pay if the water was cut off but it is not right. The Council should give people a standard rate they can afford to pay, and people should know exactly what they pay for. Many people do not understand that they have a responsibility to pay for the general improvement of town. Some of those who are aware that the Municipality cannot deliver better services, if people don't pay, say that the Municipality should create employment, even through projects for the unemployed. If people don't pay the Municipality should implement measures of change. The community and the Municipality should work together. Then things would be easier. One respondent (a priest) suggested that wealthier people in town should be asked to pay a little amount of money into a fund for an employment project. The project could support the improvement of services.

Some people do not know what exactly they are paying for. They would like to have a more detailed breakdown on their accounts, and they would like to know how their money is spent. Some did not understand the difference between rates and rent. The individual items (water, sanitation etc.) should be stated separately and according to actual use. Some people said that they pay but they do not know for what.

#### Nobody blows the whistle

Respondents generally agreed that the councillors should be more accessible. They should call ward meetings on a regular basis so that residents could be informed on everything happening in the Municipality. They also wanted to be informed about what happens to people who don't pay and how the living conditions can best be improved. More information would make more people pay. Many people feel they have voted for people to represent them in the TLC decision making processes but that they not do their job properly. When this is the case, the authorities should highlight the problem so that people could deal with it. They would like to have better councillors.

Some respondents said that politicians only care about catching votes when elections are close. The communities are not informed about TLC's discussions and plans. People need representation as it is not possible for everybody to have a say at municipal meetings. Some complained that they have no representation. There is no one to tell people that they should pay. People don't listen to the party because it is not there for them but for itself.

Most respondents said that if people don't pay they will get bad services, and those who do pay will be affected too. Most agreed that all are responsible for improving the situation together. The community is not involved but should be.

Several respondents thought that people would take more care of their environment if the streets were nicer and cleaner and had trees and flowers. They agreed that even poor people can take care. One respondent (an elderly woman) said that it would be wonderful if things would finally change despite the lack of money and the shebeens.

Respondents were not sure how the TLC could best address the consumers. There was, however, agreement that more community involvement is needed, and that the authorities should consult the communities before taking decisions. If the communities were more involved in the decisions people would be more willing to pay. Involvement would change the situation. People should also be more involved in keeping their immediate surroundings clean, for example through clean up campaigns or specific cleaning up days every month. One respondent said that they needed someone to 'blow the whistle' and tell people what to do and to start doing things like cleaning and beautifying their street. The civic organisations and the local politicians have no power in the communities. The gist of the problems is unemployment. Nevertheless, it would be important to make people have faith in something or someone because it seems that they have lost hope.

It would be wonderful with flowers and trees
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Respondents agreed that the community is responsible for keeping their environment clean together with the Municipality. People are often careless and litter everywhere. Several asked for environmental and clean up campaigns, where people could volunteer. Several respondents thought it would be a good idea to engage more health workers to educate people, arrange workshops and environmental campaigns. Clean up campaigns should be implemented and the street committees should be responsible for people in their area. Many said that there's a need for education, for example workshops to educate people about littering. Several respondents said that the most serious problem is the cows and other straying animals. They should be kept in a separate place and not be allowed to roam. They need better services and everybody must work together to improve the situation. One respondent said that the municipal employees are not happy when people try to beautify places outside their own yard by for example planting flowers. They are told that the area does not belong to them. In some areas the poor could help with cleaning up and repair work in their communities and be paid with food vouchers or welfare grants, which would make people happy to participate. They would also pay if they see some improvements. One woman said that if she got more information on what to do she would be glad to pass that information on to others.

Most respondents agreed that it is possible to improve your surroundings even if you are poor and that poor people also want nice and clean surroundings. People must help each other and talk with each other. Then there will be improvement. People need to take responsibility. They are adults and if they have more knowledge they will. Many people don't know about problems related to health and environment.

One woman said that it is disgraceful that even the main streets are not cleaned properly. There should be trees, flowers, well cut grass and shelters at taxi stands. Things should look nice and clean. Another respondent thought that there is a need for a committee, which looks after the area

and makes sure that it is kept clean. Then things would improve. People must be made aware of the need for a cleaner environment through meetings and information material. People must be told about their responsibilities.

Several respondents believed that people would be more interested in keeping their environment clean if they had better roads, closed drains and reliable services. If the area was more beautiful people would take more care. Several respondents agreed that if they see that someone is destroying something or littering, they should talk to him and explain that it can harm people and their health. People generally know that they should not litter but they do it because they don't know about the problems littering causes.

Nobody wants to live in a pigsty
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Respondents hope that in 5 years everything will be improved. There will be factories for the unemployed, better roads, water born sewerage and trees and flowers in the streets. If everybody pays they hope that this wish will become reality.

Some households do not pay for services because they do not have money and also because the services are not good. Respondents complain that the containers are not moved regularly and their area is dirty with no drains. The politicians promised good services but they did not hold their promise. They would pay if the Municipality provided better services and if they would employ more people to do the work properly. People generally think that the surroundings are too dirty especially because of rubbish, open drains and straying animals.

One respondent living in an informal area said that they do not pay because they don't get any services and they have not been asked to pay. He does not understand the whole system. The area is so dirty. The most serious problem is lack of food and work, but a cleaner environment would be healthier and better to live there.

Unless Grahamstown opens up job opportunities there is no hope for its citizens
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Lack of work was considered the most serious obstacle to improving the town. One elderly man said that even during the boycotts some people paid though they were told to boycott. He thought that this shows that people don't want to boycott but can't pay. The work situation has gotten worse. Six big employers have closed down since 1994, and no new jobs have been created. The gist of the problems here is unemployment. Before 1990 there were more jobs. Work must be created soon if Grahamstown shall have any hope for progress. Most of the unemployed are in the black areas where most people don't pay for services. The Government must understand the situation here. The councillors are only interested in the local ANC line. The people must have work and those who do not pay must be penalized

Some people don't pay because they can't afford to. They have no work and no money to start their own businesses. It would help if they could get a loan. People also need education so that they understand that services cost money. Some think that water costs nothings.



## **ANNEX IV Recommendations for Activities to Improve Payment**

This chapter presents recommendations in the form of proposed primary activities. All activities are listed under headlines parallel to those in the chapter 4 of the Technical Report and should be regarded as a complement to these. The study concluded that the specific character of actual activities seems to be less important for the success of an approach than the way that approach is rooted in the local community and political structure. Activities can therefore not stand alone but must be integrated in the specific context. Some of the activities are listed more than once under different headlines, as all 'headlines' are interlinked and support an integral approach. In some cases several alternative activities have been recommended. All recommended activities have proven successful in other contexts, many of them in Middelburg and Midrand.

### **Why don't people pay, poverty and unemployment**

When deciding tariffs and punitive actions it is vital that the essential questions of affordability are asked. In order to rule out poverty as a major reason for non-payment the following measures could be taken:

- Revise the indigent policy so that it takes account of the actual living standard of a household and readjust the support so that households do not pay more than max. 5% of their income **or**
- Introduce a low flat rate for lower-income households, which all households can afford to pay and which allow them to use a limited amount of water.
- Assess non-paying households in terms of affordability by house-to-house visits;
- Explain to low-income households that they must register for the indigent policy;
- Make sure that registration for the indigent policy is easy and straight forward;
- Explain to people exactly what they can have for the money they spend on water and services and provide them with exact information on various alternatives (low/high levels of services);
- Identify opportunities for linking employment to the payment scheme (for example through employing more staff in the service sector, increasing the number of health volunteers, recycling/composting schemes, tree planting and vegetable growing initiatives).

### **Education, communication and information**

Education, communication and information are essential to changing people's attitude towards paying. Suggested measures and activities include:

- Ensure continuous communication between authorities and community;
- Ensure that correct information from the authorities to the community are provided without delay on all aspects concerning services, rates etc.;
- Educate people through meetings, workshops, campaigns and media on the role they play in improving their own living conditions, on pollution and health, on how to read bills and meters, on how to correctly use and maintain the various sanitary installations etc.
- Use local organisations and institutions (for example churches, schools and health clinics) for education and information;
- Organise campaigns, for example cleaning and greening your environment campaigns. Link these campaigns to an education programme or a continuation of campaign activities (for example a 'clean up day' every month);
- Provide health clinics with more volunteers. These volunteers could in addition to their health work act as environmental volunteers, help spearhead campaigns etc.;
- Assess the potentials of local media for communicating relevant information;

- Develop a communication policy possibly with the assistance of local media organisations and the Media Department of Rhodes University;
- Use local mass media (if proven to be effective channels of communication) for information and education on a continuous basis, for example half an hour each week on local radios on issues related to non-payment, services, pollution, gardening etc. Ensure that the programmes are a mixture of information and, for example, popular music, quizzes or competitions in order to attract listeners. Consider engaging a couple of young people as volunteers in the programme;
- Distribute a newsletter together with the accounts providing people with relevant information.

### **Participation and Representation**

- Consult communities and individual non-paying households on their reasons for non-payment, their solution to the problem of insufficient finances of the TLC, punitive actions, complaints and wishes with regard to services, the billing systems, tariffs etc.;
- Invite community representatives to participate in relevant meetings and listen to their opinions. Provide them with insight into budgetary processes;
- Use local organisations and institutions to 'educate' and consult the community and to act as representatives for their neighbourhood;
- Demand that councillors live up to their obligations as elected representatives and that they inform and consult the community on a regular basis;
- Incite residents to participate in campaigns and to play leading roles in their implementation.

### **Incitements**

- Let people feel that things are improving when they pay regularly by for example providing services which that specific ward has asked for (more containers, a playground or something else), ensuring regular services, attention to complaints and more staff;
- Consult community on its specific desires and needs. Make people understand which desires and demands are realistic and which are not. Let them know which preconditions they must fulfil in order to achieve improvements;
- Reward those neighbourhoods, streets or even individuals who pay on a regular basis;
- Make successes visible through the media, bill boards at official places, and public events;
- Provide individuals/committees with incitements to become active volunteers (for example free installation of demonstration VIPs, or connection to the flush system or, if resources allow, a minimum wage parallel to the payment health volunteers receive).

### **Enforcement**

- Inform people on every account that their water will be cut off if they don't pay;
- Consult non-paying households before cutting off services and verify actual socio-economic status of the household;
- Cut off services immediately if people can afford to pay or abuse the system;
- Make people understand that services will promptly be cut off if they do not pay;
- Make the process of cutting off services more efficient;
- Link payment for waste services to water;
- Introduce fees for reinstalling facilities;

## Management

- Be more visible. Interact more closely with the community;
- Split up wards in manageable areas of a specific number of households and make sure that one person is elected to be responsible for that area;
- Start out small;
- Introduce system of community based house to house collection of rates;
- Make sure that accounts are delivered at the right time. If people do not receive accounts they cannot pay;
- Introduce prepaid meter systems for water;
- Introduce self-reading of meters with bi-annual controls;
- Introduce flat rates for low-income households;
- Introduce easily understandable accounts with a breakdown of all services;
- Link waste services to water;
- Introduce a system of house visits to regular non-paying households;
- React promptly to complaints;
- Avoid giving promises which cannot be kept;
- Avoid mistakes on bills;
- Control that employees at all levels do their work properly;
- Ensure that councillors fulfil their role as elected representatives;
- Ensure closer co-operation with other stakeholders and potential players (for example NGOs, civic organisations, institutions and Rhodes University);
- Arrange workshop with actual and potential actors (as listed above);
- Learn from others;
- Co-operate and co-ordinate at all levels.

## Learning from others

- Analyse successes and failures of the Masakhane and similar campaigns especially in terms of stakeholder involvement;
- Invite or visit representatives from involved parties and the community from a 'successful' town (possibly Middelburg) for discussion and training on how to improve payment. The workshop should include representatives from Rini (not only the councillors), who could act as ambassadors in their communities. Representatives from the 'paying communities' could also be invited to talk at public meetings in Rini.

## Start small

In consideration of the limited resources of the TLC it is recommended to start small in a pilot area in Rini and during a limited period of time, for example one year. It is suggested that the area, possibly a ward, is a formal settlement with a high rate of non-payment. Following a meeting between authorities and NGOs, CBOs and other potential stakeholders it is recommended to:

- Conduct house-to-house interviews in non-paying households in order to identify their exact reasons for non payment;
- Inform people about the indigent policy and make people understand that they must apply for support if they cannot pay the full rates;
- Hold public meetings about the pilot project;

- Identify local representatives (street committees, churches, health clinics and others) to support the project;
- Establish committees responsible for a specific number of households;
- Arrange a clean up campaign in the whole area, which together with the public meetings will mark the beginning of the pilot project period;
- Assess the usefulness of recommended activities and modify them according to the local situation and experiences 'along the way';
- Identify steering committee from the TLC/municipality, community and other involved parties to be responsible for implementation and monitoring of the pilot project;
- Evaluate project on a regular basis, for example every 2 months;
- Evaluate the project immediately after the pilot phase has ended and make recommendations for implementation in the whole of Rini.