

22 May 2009

Water Health and livelihoods Programme (WHELL) - Accompanying document for Masibambane Coordinating Committee Presentation

1. Brief background and conceptual framework

WHELL is an acronym for CARE-SA Programme, which stands for water, health and livelihoods. In partnership with the Mvula Trust, CARE-SA introduced programme in 2005 with the aim of exploring the linkages between gender inequality, HIV/Aids, and the lack of water and sanitation. Within the nexus water is viewed as a basic human right in which women play a major role. Water is also viewed as essential for food security (accessing and supplying food through establishment of food gardens) and activity which is often performed by women. Often these women fall into categories: i) where they are infected by HIV/Aids, and or ii) affected by the pandemic and hence caring for the ill or orphaned children as a result of parents killed by HIV/Aids. *(For more on Conceptual framework refer to an attached document)*

2. Key findings from Gender and HIV/Aids Mainstreaming process by WHELL

- **Partnership with the local governments and other relevant departments is critical to ensure the success of gender and HIV/Aids mainstreaming projects. Such will in turn lead to:-**
 - High representation of a project community and community's voice during IDP processes. In Tzaneen and Bushbuckridge Municipalities, a process of involving the home-based care groups was initiated through constant facilitation of discussions between the two parties. The aim of such a process is to link the existing structures to the IDP processes and to assist municipalities to possibly identify funding gaps (equitable share) through sharing the information with the National Treasury.
 - Through identifying local government as the partner in the programme, the Bushbuckridge local municipality has made commitments to providing a solution incase water supply challenges are experienced by the home-based care group,



aimed at food production for vulnerable households. *(This is an example of stimulation of the local government to intervene and close the identified gaps in the service delivery).*

- **The holistic nature of the WHELL nexus (based on SL) has a high potential to lead to the improvement of livelihoods which includes the building of social capital and creation of social networks that are critical for the sustainability of the project (affected) communities:-**
 - Individual skills acquired in the projects are shared amongst community members. For instance, although one person had been trained in the operation of pump and proving of basic plumbing function most people in the village water committee (about eight women and two men) can now all perform these technical tasks. This in turn has ensured sustainable operation and maintenance of water supply service.
 - Food production and integration of nutritious eating habits, aimed at improving health of the vulnerable individuals (for instance, in the case of Mawa and Justicia)

- **Women are featuring at the top in the struggle to understanding the interwoven nature of water, gender and HIV/Aids.** Supporting such initiatives makes it relatively easy to:
 - Tackle issues of women representation and any gender imbalances in a specific community (offers statistical evidence for the local government).
 - Identify the trends in the application of water rights at local level (whether rights do benefit the community and women or not)

- **In a learning democratic society, community is the key to success of the own environment (active participation).**
 - Technology choices should be made together with the affected community. The technologies for Tshiungani Job Creation Sanitation and

Mawa Rainwater Harvesting projects were chosen by DWAF and this led to project failure (i.e. community not taking up or adapting to the technology). This strongly indicates the need for active community participation in the selection of a relevant technology. Parallel to this is the need for projects to be community-driven rather than imposed from above

- The community is capable of monitoring their own change (need to train people in community-based monitoring systems). The Justicia home-base care and Tshiungani village water committee have indicated the community's capability to monitor progress, as well as ensuring that critical areas such as gender, HIV/Aids are continuously addressed in the projects. Over the years more women have participated in the Tshiungani Water Committee (amid its existence in patriarchal society). On the other hand Justicia home base care group has continuously provided nutritious food to more than 50 vulnerable children and adults.