

The Water Dialogues-South Africa Water Sector Leadership Group

Mary Galvin, 18 June 2009



Members of the WD-SA Working Group

Members are representative of:

- *national government*
 - *local government*
 - *private sector*
 - *civil society*
 - *trade unions*
 - *water boards and*
 - *academic/ research organisations.*
- Bloem Water
 - Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
 - Environmental Monitoring Group
 - eThekweni Municipality
 - Johannesburg Water Management
 - South African Local Government Association
 - South African Municipal Workers Union
 - South African Water Caucus
 - The Mvula Trust
 - Water Research Commission
 - Water and Sanitation Services South Africa
 - Westonaria Municipality

Confrontative Dialogue

“a transformative oriented method for improved understanding between partners whose relationship is asymmetric and characterised by important conceptual gaps and strong mistrust.” *(Abrahamsson, 2004)*

This requires that all parties are aware of the aim of the dialogue: to make diverging values and interests visible and understandable, and to illuminate political alternatives.

Institutional Approaches

Institutional Approach	Section 78 Mechanism and WSA-WSP Contract Type	Water Services Authority Capacity (based on operating income)		
		High	Medium	Low
Public Private Partnerships	Private sector with concession		Illembe	
	Private sector with lease			
Community Based & Small Scale Provision	Community Based Organisation with service contract	City of Cape Town	Chris Hani	
Public – Public	Public – Public – Private	City of Joburg	Maluti (2)	
	National entity (water board) with management contract		Maluti (1)	
	Multi-jurisdictional with lease		uThukela	
	Another municipality (nature of contract unclear)			BBR (1)
Public Internal	Internal	Ugu		BBR (2)

What have we found? Still in progress but...

- Ideological polarisation or “agnostic”... will undermine service delivery unless attend to governance issues: accountability between state and citizens
- Values/ ethos that need to infuse all providers...

Governance Values and Principles

- transparency, openness and honesty
- Shared purpose and commitment
- Plurality of perspectives and inclusivity, valuing diversity and each other
- Mutual respect
- Commitment to problem solving and mutual accountability
- Learning and sharing

1. Need for “enhanced accountability”:

a. shared expectations/ commitments

b. values and principles that apply to ALL providers



2. Excessive emphasis on rounds of institutional reform...Need to address nuts and bolts issues and more away from preoccupation with institutional change:

a. accurate awareness of actual costs, then financing through sustainable cost recovery above FBW, cross subsidies, and national subsidies

b. greater sensitivity to users diverse needs in terms of service levels

c. building and strengthening municipalities human resource/ skills base

d. decentralisation issues

Service levels, financing, and affordability

- Operations and maintenance were found to be a problem in almost all cases
- Municipalities find it difficult to progressively improve service levels , especially once basic service levels are reached
- Whatever you call it– costs must be covered. Not through users alone, but also through grants, transfers and subsidies.
- All stakeholders agree on the principle of FBW but debate the amount and how it should be implemented

Regulation and Water Service Authority-Provider Relationship

- Improve process of selecting providers (section 78) so that holds to legislative intention- greater rigour, independent and public review
- Need to ensure division between authority and provider is pragmatic (achievable responsibilities)- lack of WSA capacity to oversee/ direct can undermine WSP performance
- Reconsider decentralisation of regulation
- Define performance objectives and goals for providers

Public Participation and Politics

- Need space to ensure rights and responsibilities of users receive greater attention
- Need education around service provision and processes
- Need to build trust at local level and leverage participation for change

Benefits of Dialogue as a Basis for Informed Decision Making

- Informed decision making not only requires reliable data, competent financial analysis, technical know-how, but also meaningful and real participation, understanding & commitment of all the stakeholders in order for solutions to be workable & sustainable
- Open & honest dialogue and debate has to be central to the approach and process of determining institutional arrangements and service delivery options and sustainable provision– a lesson learned in the WD process itself!