

Families in water scarce communities are struggling to make their income stretch to pay for bottled water, food, gas & other expenses.



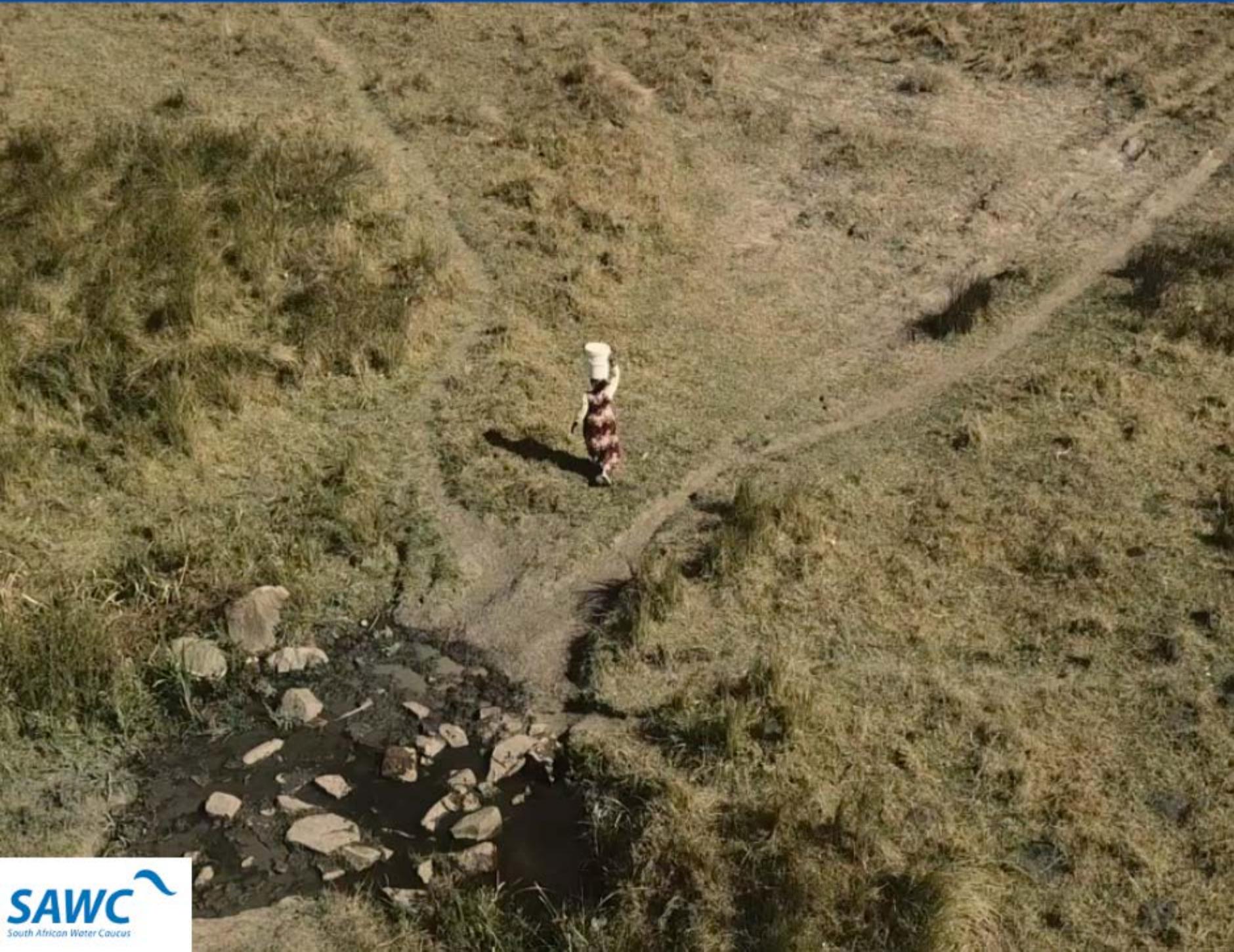
26 years have passed since the promises of clean, running water for all. But communities across SA are still without water.



Regular washing of hands, sanitising surfaces and general good hygiene practices become almost impossible in water-scarce communities.



In many water-scarce communities, women are forced to collect water from nearby areas. The GBV crisis makes these journeys incredibly dangerous.



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Community Resilience in Cape Town (CoReCT)

A transdisciplinary research project on water-related issues in low-income areas

As part of an AXA-funded research project on urban water governance, researchers from University of Cape Town's African Climate & Development Initiative (ACDI) have been engaging with Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG) to identify and support community activities focused on water-related urban issues. Through this process, it became clear that the Western Cape Water Caucus (WCWC), a community organization based in several informal settlements and townships in Cape Town – which EMG supports and helps co-ordinate – could be a suitable partner.

WCWC expressed a wish to learn how to conduct a study to collect data that can support their work on water-related issues in low-income areas. This led to the creation of the CoReCT project, that uses a transdisciplinary approach to co-design and execute research. In doing so, the WCWC has been able to both build internal capacity and gain research experience among several members, as well as produce new knowledge about its core issues based on fieldwork in the communities where its members live. The project aims to build knowledge about the lived experiences of water access, water services and water issues at a household level. This is done using a tool called Sense-Maker, which allows respondents to share their experience in a narrative form and also indicate the meaning of their story. SenseMaker software tools makes it possible to compile and present insights from large numbers of stories.

Methodology

Ziervogel and Enqvist approached Sense-Maker experts, John van Breda and Luke Metelerkamp from the Centre for Complex Systems in Transition (CST) at Stellenbosch University to help run the study. WCWC appointed twelve members (referred to here as "citizen scientists") with support and facilitation from the EMG staff. The study has included two phases, both supported by 4-day workshops, namely: 1) design and story collection, and 2) story sense-making and return.

In the first workshop, held in July 2019, WCWC and researchers worked jointly to develop a

questionnaire and interview technique to capture qualitative and quantitative information. Simply put, this involves asking respondents to share an experience of when they tried to address a water-related issue, and then fill in a standardised set of multiple-choice questions. The second step lets the respondent "signify" or give meaning to the story they have shared. This includes information about the story in terms of what has driven their actions, where they turn to for help, the role of government versus citizens, etc. The goal is to understand people's experiences and subjective opinions on the topic, rather than just collecting evidence on the performance of water services. After the first workshop, the twelve story collectors were given three months to collect stories from their neighbourhoods, using paper questionnaires or a SenseMaker app on their smartphones. In total, 311 stories were collected from Mitchells Plain, Du Noon, Makhaza, Joe Slovo, Green Park, and several other areas (Figure 1). All stories were uploaded for processing in the SenseMaker software by ACDI and CST researchers.

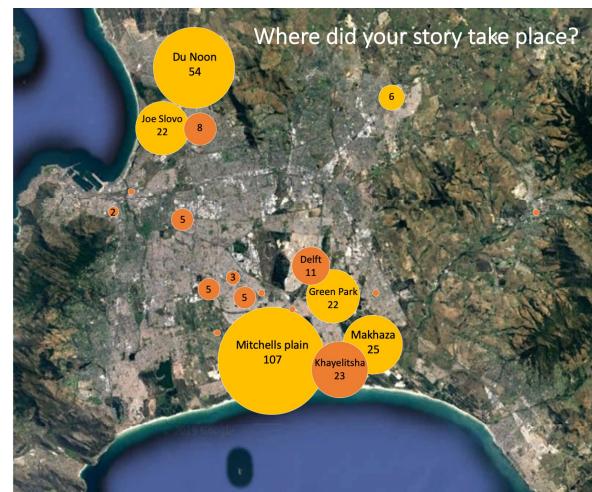


Figure 1. The project collected 311 stories from six primary study sites and several additional communities in and around Cape Town.

In the second workshop, held in October 2019, WCWC members and the researchers analysed the data and identified key findings with relevance for WCWC's work. A close reading of collected stories helped participants identify

narratives to be used as part of a strategy for communicating finding back to the studied communities. The workshop also included discussions with invited City of Cape Town representatives on how to best share the study in order to improve how the City operates.

After the second workshop, in November, WCWC members organised and hosted story return sessions in Du Noon, Mitchells Plain and Makhaza. The findings were shared with invited community members through role-playing typical stories, and by using posters with the quantitative findings. This was followed by lively discussions. This served as an additional important learning step and opportunity to reflect on the emerging results.

The nature of this project meant that the study has been conducted primarily by WCWC members. Stories were collected and returned to communities in English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans, depending on the neighbourhood. ACDI and CST researchers provided support and expertise. Moving forward and with permission from WCWC, the the collected data as well as observations from the collaborative process will be used for scientific publications.

Transdisciplinary research, reaching across not only academic disciplines but also the boundary between academia and society, is difficult and messy. Challenges have included developing research questions and approaches for data collection that meet scientific rigour while also being appropriate for story collectors and respondents, and meet norms for ethical conduct. This project included ample time during two 4-day workshops in order to prepare participants for their tasks; it also made room for needs-based “care days” during fieldwork in order to resolve emerging issues and debrief around fieldwork experiences.

Findings

Of all the stories shared, 45% were about bills and pricing, 35% about water management devices (WMDs), and 32% about leakages. By comparison, problems with water restrictions (16%) and pressure (14%) are relatively uncommon – which is remarkable considering the city’s recent drought and related efforts to minimise water use through restrictions and pressure management. Further analysis of the qualitative and quantitative information shared by respondents reveals several themes:

Frustration

The most prevailing message is that people are frustrated from not being able to resolve problems. As one respondent explains:

My water bill comes sky high even though I have a water device. I’m sick and tired of going to the City and getting no solution. ... Sometimes we sit without water for days, but our bill still comes out high. Where can we go for help?

A clear majority of respondents (64%) state that their problem is still ongoing. Only 14% of respondents said that they usually get help when they try to address service delivery problems (Figure 2). People’s frustration is mostly directed towards the City of Cape Town, which is ultimately responsible for water services, or the local Ward Councillor, who is supposed to represent the community. In some cases, stories express frustration with community members who misuse water or cause other problems.



Figure 2. Very few respondents are usually able to resolve problems with service delivery.

Success stories

Only about 13% of respondents reported that their story resulted in a solution (Figure 3). While rare, their stories are important for understanding how the type of problems that people report are usually resolved. Of the 25 respondents that both shared a positive story, and coded it as such in the follow-up questions, the most common reason why the problem was solved was help from community members (9 stories). After this, the stories described help from municipality (7), self-help or hired help (5) and unclear reasons (4) for the solution.



Figure 3. Most respondents saw no improvement in the issue they described, and some only found a temporary fix.

This reliance on local capacity can be problematic. While the problem is addressed, it can lead to sub-standard quality of services and put strain on residents. One respondent exemplifies:

I have a problem with a drain that [keeps] blocking, and ... the smell comes straight into the house. No one has ever come from City of Cape Town [to help]. I end up [relying on] people from the community to come and help, even though they are not trained.

In other cases, collaborating with neighbours to make one's voice heard can be empowering and can help build local capacity to hold authorities accountable:

Living in an informal settlement, we once as a community, asked municipality to put up a tap closer to our houses. The results were positive; we were asked to write a letter to the municipal office and have everyone affected to sign.

Water management devices

The City of Cape Town introduced WMDs to detect unreported leaks, reduce household debt, facilitate demand management and guarantee access to basic water needs. However, in many stories, the outcomes seem to have been the opposite. Respondents with WMD issues were more likely than others to also have problems with bills as well as water restrictions (Figure 4). This is not evidence that WMDs *cause* those problems; it could be that devices are installed primarily in areas where these problems are more common. However, given that the devices intend to cut off daily water supply at 350 litres,

it is unclear why many of these households are still receiving high bills when they have a device installed.

I am a single mother of two kids. I chose to have the water [management device installed] cause I couldn't afford to pay water bills. But nothing has changed for the better, it has gotten worse: there are days when there's no water. The water bills are sky high and I don't understand why. I have gone to the council to report but for two years no one has come to help.

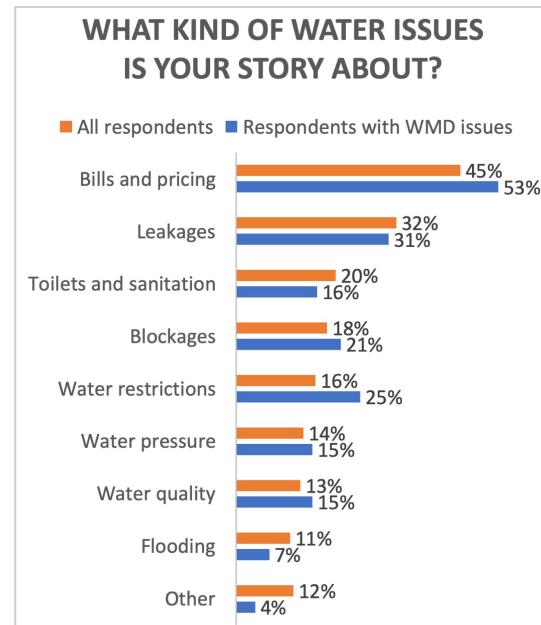


Figure 4. Compared to most respondents, those with WMD problems are more likely to have other water issues as well.

Citizens and the City

As shown in the findings above, the communication between local residents and municipal authorities often fails. This ranges from the frustration when people are not able to find someone to hear their grievances, to resorting to the local community for problem solving, to the perceived violation of disruptive WMDs. Many object to devices being installed without their approval:

I'm very, very angry. I have a WMD which was installed without my consent. Now I'm facing a huge water bill and leakages. I have no one to talk to.

Others even doubt that the City is sincere about improving the lot of the least privileged:

I have no faith in the Council as my complaints fall on deaf ears. ... I have reported [my broken WMD] many times and was promised that it will be seen to. It kept leaking water and my water [allocation] would run out quickly. My husband asked a plumber in our area who charged us R200 to fix ... it so we can have water.

These alternative solutions are notably common, even when they require bypassing the law. Fewer than 2 out of 5 respondents state that water problems can normally be solved by working within the law.

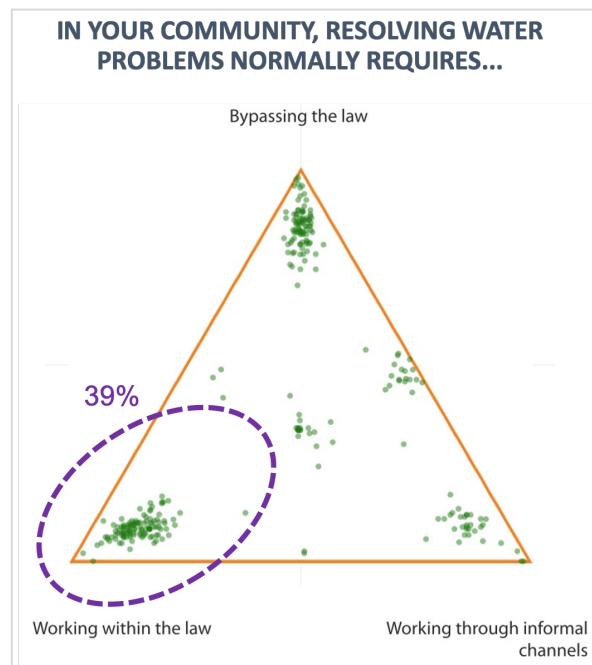


Figure 5. Out of 285 respondents, 112 (39%) think that working within the law normally suffices to solve water problems.

This lack of trust in the formal system can be seen as a serious threat to gaining support for efforts to improve service delivery. However, a majority of respondents still hope that the municipal government will hear their story (Figure 6). People generally want the local government to take more responsibility for improving water service delivery, not less.

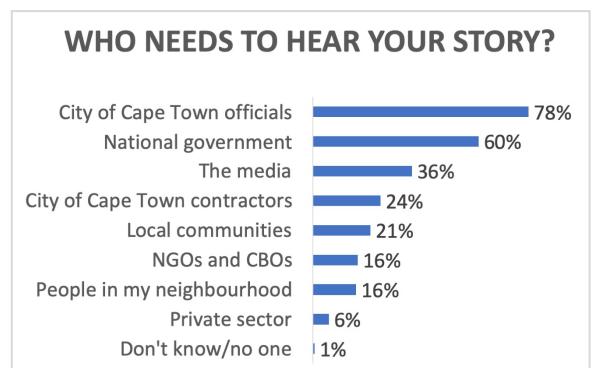


Figure 6. Respondents primarily shared stories that the city and national governments need to hear.

Informality

Many respondents are trying to navigate a system that is partly formal, partly informal. When settlements grow organically without central planning, problems can emerge that formal authorities are unable or unwilling to address.

My problem is a drain leaking inside my yard. My house has been built on top of a pipe, so I have to demolish my house in order to solve the problem. ... The Housing Department and they told me that it's not their problem: ... "The owner is supposed to hire a planner before extending the house." I can't afford all [this]; that's why I took short cuts.

Two of three respondents see their water problem as linked to issues of housing and planning. It seems as if the structural limitations of their environments, paired with poverty and inability to reach public services, forces people to resort to informal and sometimes illegal alternatives to cope with their daily challenges.

Project outcomes and benefits

The findings of this project as well as the process itself speak to several needs. First, the WCWC benefits by acquiring data around the issues it works on to inform their action and advocacy. The process has also helped to build internal capacity and experience in how to collect and present evidence. WCWC's ties to the national South African Water Caucus as well as to other community-based organisations also provides potential for knowledge sharing.

Second, this approach allows community members to make their voices heard and acknowledged. Ensuring that a broad set of experiences are recorded and made part of the collective narrative is particularly important in a city with extreme inequality and traumas from ongoing stresses to service delivery and recent shocks from the drought. Third, the project showcases a tool for the City of Cape Town to better understand residents' lived experiences, and thereby improve service delivery.

Fourth, this project adds invaluable research insights about the city's most vulnerable communities. It pilots a co-design approach to Sensemaker that serves to inform and complement the AXA project's research on urban resilience and water governance.

THE KUILS RIVER CATCHMENT

The Ways the City of Cape Town Neglects Working Class Black Communities



The Kuils River Catchment Case Study

Introduction

In this case study, the Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG) looked at water access and quality, service delivery and management in communities near and around the Kuils River catchment area. Through engagement with the Western Cape Water Caucus (WCWC) – a network of community activists and civil society organisations dealing with water problems - reading and reviewing scholarship on pollution and water management, and conducting our own research into the state of the Kuils River and water management more generally, we were able to get a fuller sense of the problems afflicting communities.

Gathering the research - EMG and the WCWC have, over the past year, been engaged in a process of understanding the depth of pollution of the Kuils River and the impact this is having on communities when it comes to engaging around water more broadly. We used three processes as a means of gathering information and spurring activism – firstly, we researched the state of the Kuils River Catchment area, learning about a river in Cape Town that is overflowing with pollution and endangering the health of those communities who live alongside it. Secondly, through the Community Resilience in Cape Town (CoReCT) project in collaboration with University of Cape Town (UCT)'s African Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI) and the Centre for Complex Systems in Transition (CST) at Stellenbosch University and the WCWC, we were able to gather stories and collate data about problems with water access, delivery and management from the communities organised by the WCWC members. Thirdly, the Action 24 funded process assisted in building the capacity of community members to understand and engage with government at provincial level to advance public participatory justice. Concurrently, the WCWC members conducted research in their communities using the SenseMaker tool.

The impact of results - The combined processes yielded powerful results through the collation of evidence about what is happening regarding water service delivery, but also, it presented an opportunity to engage actively with the local government – the City of Cape Town (CoCT) in the Western Cape province. This process empowered the participants to better understand their water issues and circumstances and engage the CoCT head on with facts and evidence. Although this happened mainly at a local governance level, the elements of capacity building and public participation, which are at the core of the Action 24 funded process, were key drivers in the work.

The state of the Kuils River Catchment represents a pressing and urgent microcosm of the state of water access and quality, service delivery and management in South Africa. The harsh reality is that the CoCT has systemically neglected the water delivery management of communities that are overwhelmingly working class, poor and black.

The Kuils River Catchment Case Study

What follows is our findings from this case study, the activism that we undertook, and the questions that we continue to seek answers to as a result of our research, and engagement with the communities in question.



WCWC group monitoring different points of the Kuils River

Part 1: The CoReCT Project

Background & Methodology - The WCWC expressed interest in collecting data on their experiences with water management that could assist their activism in communities and support their engagement with government. In response, EMG and UCT's ACDI partnered to create the CoReCT project, an initiative to collect data about the experiences of water-related issues in working class poor areas through narrative research. To do so researchers used SenseMaker, a tool that allows respondents tell their stories and the meanings thereof; and allows researchers to make sense, draw connections and extrapolate statistical data from the multitude of stories collected through interviews.

Twelve (12) participants from the WCWC group were nominated for the role of citizen-scientists, responsible for going into their communities and gathering stories. This happened in two phases: in the first phase the citizen scientists worked with academics in a 4 day workshop to design questions and interview techniques, and then did the interviews with members of communities who agreed to be respondents. In the second

The Kuils River Catchment Case Study

phase, the follow-up 4 day workshop saw participants analyzing the data gathered through conducting what is called story sense-making out of the data gathered.

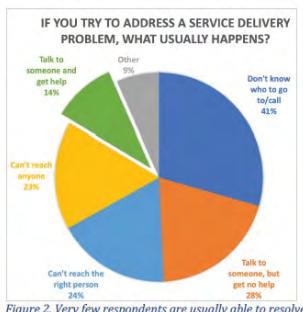


Figure 2. Very few respondents are usually able to resolve problems with service delivery.

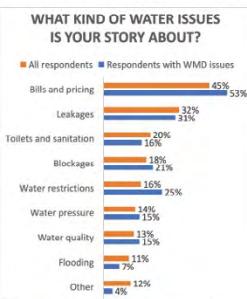


Figure 4. Compared to most respondents, those with WMD problems are more likely to have other water issues as well.

Examples of the CoRect project data findings - courtesy of ACDI - UCT

On the last day of this workshop CoCT officials attended, and the citizen scientists presented the findings of the data. Later on, the findings of the stories collected were shared back to community members in Du Noon, Mitchells Plain and Makhaza. This was an important part of this phase as often when research is done in marginalised communities, the results and findings are rarely shared with community members who have participated. For the study to make sense, it was important that the results be shared with those who contributed their experiences. The aim being to present them with a complete picture of how differently communities are serviced (or not) by the CoCT, towards a shared understanding of the knowledge, to foster solidarity between communities and inspire shared solutions for activism on water issues.

Sensemaking Results – A total of 311 interviews took place as part of this process, and data captured contained the individual respondent's stories of their experiences of water access and management problems, and how they attempted to solve them. The dominant theme in all of the stories was of frustration with the water system and the CoCT's operations:

- Often households with water management devices would still get high bills, and they experienced various difficulties trying to fix their water management problems, including knowing where to go and finding the right person to get help.
- Less than 15% of the interviewees were able to get their water problem fixed – and when there was a solution, it usually came from fellow community members or from them fixing the problem themselves.
- Only 8 stories out of the 311 interviews related that the CoCT stepped in and addressed the problems in a satisfactory way.

The Kuils River Catchment Case Study

One respondent said:

"My water bill comes sky high even though I have a water management device.

I'm sick and tired of going to the City and getting no solution ...

Sometimes we sit without water for days, but our bill still comes out high. Where can we go for help?"¹

The data echoes the words above, showing a severe disconnect between the CoCT and the communities they are meant to be delivering services to. Water management devices are often installed without consent from households, and if there are issues with the devices, the CoCT is not viewed as helpful in fixing them.

Another respondent shared:

*"I have no faith in the Council as my complaints fall on deaf ears. ... I have reported [my broken water management device] many times and was promised that it will be seen to. It kept leaking water and my water [allocation] ran out quickly. My husband asked a plumber in our area who charged us R200 to fix it so we can have water."*²

In turn, the disconnect between the CoCT and its constituents build up feelings of distrust, resentment, and scorn from community members. Maybe this is why when respondents were asked who they want to hear their stories most of them (77%) said CoCT.

From another respondent:

*"I'm very, very angry. I have a water management device which was installed without my consent. Now I'm facing a huge water bill and leakages. I have no one to talk to."*³

The benefit of the CoReCT project may be self-evident – the fact that the workshops included CoCT officials means that community members were finally beginning to be heard. The simple act of community members telling their stories to members of the water caucus is an empowering process, as more people got to tell their stories and to understand that their experiences are common, and they are not alone in facing water issues. In the future, WCWC members will be able to use the stories and data to push for more effective change in systems at the local, provincial and national levels of government.

Part 2: Kuils River Catchment project

Geography and background - the Kuils River starts in the northern part of Cape Town in Durbanville hills, and flows southeast downward through the Cape Flats to Macassar. The southern part of the river has some wetlands, and it eventually joins with the Eerste River, and flows in a southwestern direction into the sea at False Bay. In total the Kuils River is 23 km long, and runs through a multitude of communities,

^{1,2,3} "Beyond the Day Zero Drought: Community Perspectives on Water Justice and Informality in Cape Town's Low Income Neighbourhoods." Enqvist, J. et al, International Journal of Water Resources Development (in review)

The Kuils River Catchment Case Study

including Brackenfell, Bellville, Mfuleni, Sandvlei and Macassar. The river's flow has changed from historically drying up during summer and flowing during winter, to flowing all year round as it was transformed by canalisation and the addition of effluent due to industrialisation of the area.



Water Quality - research on the Kuils River, as well as first person accounts, have found that the river is extremely polluted. Part of this has to do with the effluent i.e. treated sewage that is being dumped into the river by the Zandvlei Wastewater Treatment Plant. This effluent has been found to contain high levels of steroid hormones⁴ – which interferes with wildlife and the natural ecosystem. Downstream of the plant, residents at Sandvlei are left to deal with the consequences of living next to a river rife with sewage that contaminates their water, exposes them to waterborne diseases, disrupts the ecosystem and degrades the recreational green areas. Added to this, the river also receives chemical waste from industrial drains, for example from the Somchem Munitions Plant in Macassar.

The river has recorded unacceptably high levels of E-Coli bacteria, as well as high levels of pollution related to urbanisation: the sources of pollution include residential waste being thrown into the river, and it being used as a toilet – because of a lack of delivery of waste management and sanitation facilities. Another source of pollution is attributed to fertiliser and pesticide run off from agriculture in the catchment area, and other miscellaneous debris blown into the river.⁵

⁴ "Rapid detection of selected steroid hormones from sewage effluents using an ELISA in the Kuils River water catchment area, South Africa." Swart N, Pool E. Journal of Immunoassay & Immunochemistry, 01 Jan 2007, 28(4):395-408

⁵ Mwangi, F.N. "Land use practices and their impact on the water quality of the upper Kuils River" University of Western Cape, 2014

The Kuils River Catchment Case Study



Kuils River, Durbanville



Kuils River, Mfuleni

Health Outcomes and the Gendered Impact - the toxicity of the Kuils River is a major impairment to the health and wellbeing of the residents of the catchment area. Even if residents do not drink the water, they still use it for a multitude of reasons – for sanitation, for hygiene, for cleaning, for laundry, and for a place of recreation for children to play, or youth to gather. Whenever residents use the polluted river for any of these activities, they are at high risk of exposure to waterborne life-threatening diseases which when contracted cause long term harm to health such as dysentery, E-Coli and Covid-19.



Kuils River, Burundi - children at play

Because the use of the river as a toilet is their only choice, it presents a danger to girls and women because of overcrowding and lack of services in informal settlements. To preserve their dignity, they go to the river at night, often reserving eating and drinking for most of the day. Gendered cultural taboos about women's ablutions mean men do not accompany women or children, and alone they become vulnerable to robbery and sexual assault, as explained below.⁶

⁶ "Hydropolitics in South Africa" Mdunyelwa, A. Environmental Monitoring Group, 2020 pg 24

The Kuils River Catchment Case Study

A woman resident living near the Kuils River said:

"We are not yet close to civilized time we fought for in South Africa because some of us still have to fetch water far from our places of stay. This requires us (mothers) and our daughters to do the job as it is treated as if it is our responsibility. When we ask our husbands or any male figure in the house to accompany us when in need of relieving ourselves we are seen as people who do not respect them as men."

The river also threatens the residents' food supply system as there is small scale farming of cows, goats, pigs and sheep. The animals drink the toxic water of the Kuils River, which means the milk and meat from cows for example becomes contaminated, and is sold and consumed by residents.



Livestock along the river

Environmental Racism - the most polluted parts of the river are around working class poor communities that were displaced during apartheid – like the Burundi and Sandvlei communities. These communities tend to be largely ignored by the CoCT, even when residents lodge complaints - there is often no response, or the CoCT denies that the river is polluted altogether. The fact that the local government of the City of Cape Town, and the provincial and national government departments so willingly to turn a blind eye to the basic water service delivery needs of working class poor black communities, that they ignore research pointing to toxic pollution and environmental health impacts, that they are unmoved to act urgently in response to the daily suffering of residents that are suffering – is a clear sign of the environmental classism and racism of the government.

Hearing First Person Accounts - In research conducted by EMG's Apiwe Mdunyelwa, she was able to collect first person accounts of residents affected by living next to the polluted Kuils River.

The Kuils River Catchment Case Study

For instance, an elder of the Burundi community who has been fighting for environmental justice said:

"I have been in Mfuleni for the past 20 years now but there hasn't been any progress with regards to the filthiness of this area and I doubt there will be any change anytime soon and I guess I will die and leave behind my children in this chaos. I have been complaining to the subcommittee about the condition of the area but they do not seem to care about a decent living area, as if nobody is affected by this condition. People were tired of complaining to the committee and decided to take it up to the City of Cape Town offices in town but still there was no progress. Last year the members of the community got me arrested because they did not understand why I chased their children away when they are playing in this channel, and all I was doing was to protect them from the unknown diseases that may rise because of the polluted water. Later after they got me arrested, a number of children were sent to the clinic by their parents and report back from the clinic was that the sickness they have is caused by water. The doctors and nurses from Mfuleni local clinic investigated the cause of the similar sickness found in children staying in the area, and it was concluded that they have what we call dysentery which is a combination of nausea, abdominal cramps coupled with severe diarrhoea which is caused by polluted water."⁷

Community Response - in response to the pollution of the Kuils River and the affect it is having on community members, EMG and the WCWC set out to try and enact change by creating a *Kuils River Infographic* that distills the information gathered into ten facts to spread environmental knowledge about the catchment area.

EMG and the WCWC have also launched a petition that demands "City of Cape Town: Step Up and Serve All Communities - Clean Up the Kuils River Now!" on [Change.Org](https://www.change.org/p/city-of-cape-town-step-up-and-serve-all-communities-clean-up-the-kuils-river-now). We believe it is important to hold government accountable for clean and safe water access, sanitation facilities and waste management services.

In the process of making the petition, EMG researched the relevant sub-councils, departments and officials responsible in local and provincial government to direct and target the petition, and make specific demands including:

- making the Kuils River Catchment a priority area in the 2020/2021 proposed amendments to the Integrated Development Plan,
- doing regular assessments and maintenance of water services,
- begin regular upkeep of the catchment, including consistently removing waste monitoring the catchment,
- regular educational programmes for the people residing in the catchment.

⁷ "Hydropolitics in South Africa" Mdunyelwa, A. Environmental Monitoring Group, 2020 pg 25

The Kuils River Catchment Case Study

- recognise the Kuils River's toxicity as an ongoing disaster, and treat it as such in all future proceedings, with adequate health services in affected communities.

Our hope is that the knowledge of Kuils River will spread awareness about water issues in the catchment area, and put pressure on the CoCT to clean up their act and begin urgent service delivery to disadvantaged areas who need an urgent improvement of environmental health.

In Conclusion

Water is a human right - When considering the outputs and knowledge learned from both the Kuils River Catchment project and the CoReCT project, it becomes clear that what is most important is making sure that the residents are seen and heard by the CoCT, and afforded the service and assistance that every person has constitutional right to receive from government.

Who gets service delivery? - the research and activism on the projects also bring up pressing questions about who is being serviced by the government. In both instances, community members are being sidelined by the government, who is failing to clean up the polluted rivers, as well as fix water management problems in working class poor black communities. The Kuils River presents a stark contrast to another river in Cape Town, the Liesbeek River which originates in Table Mountain and flows south through the Kirstenbosch Gardens – popular Cape Town tourist destination – and high-income suburban areas. The Liesbeeck River is well managed with no water management treatment plant or industrial factories causing pollution – a clear prioritisation of water and environmental health management by CoCT.

So the central question for water activists and community members remains – how do we get the government to pay attention and deliver services to disenfranchised communities? And, perhaps more importantly, why isn't the government listening to the disenfranchised in the first place? What is the root cause of the fact that the Kuils River is overflowing with pollution, but the Liesbeek River is not? These are the questions that came up during the drafting of the Kuils River petition, and from the CoReCT process. And they are questions that will continue to be examined, thoroughly and answered as activism and community participation continues in our fight to make sure all residents of Cape Town have access to clean and safe water, sanitation and waste management, and improved environmental health.

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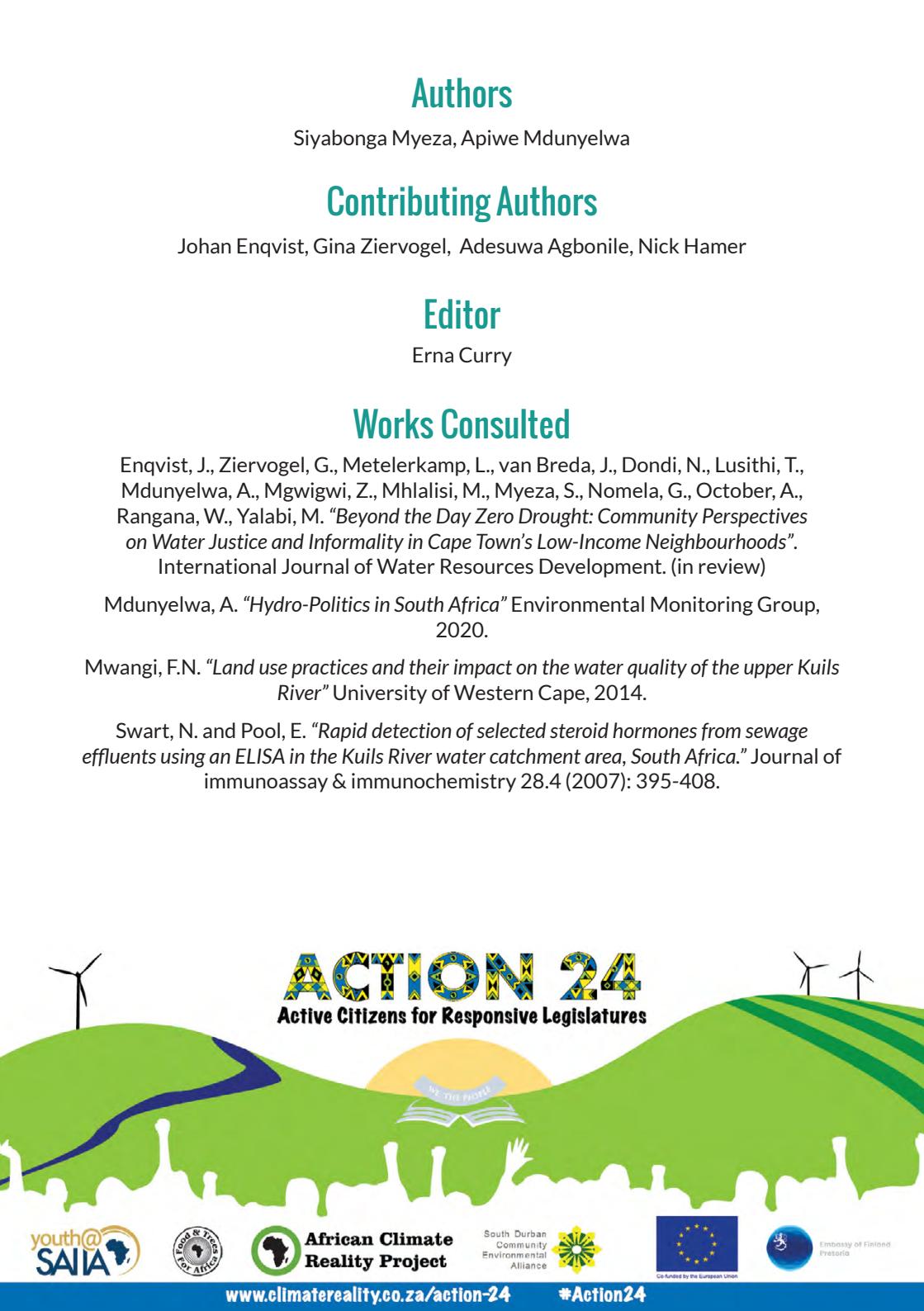
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ACTION 24

Active Citizens for Responsive Legislatures



**African Climate
Reality Project**

South Durban
Community
Environmental
Alliance



Co-funded by the European Union



Embassy of Finland
Johannesburg



WATER ACCESS NOW!

"EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO HAVE ACCESS TO ... SUFFICIENT FOOD AND WATER."
- CONSTITUTION OF SOUTH AFRICA

With the National State of Disaster Lockdown happening now, water access is even more essential.

BUT WHY
DON'T
I HAVE
WATER?



EMERGENCY WATER ACCESS DURING LOCKDOWN:

- No water cut-offs – your water service cannot be cut for non-payment.
- Reconnections – if your water has been stopped, it must be restored.
- You have a right to adequate access to water.
- Government regards the trickle-flow of water as enough to fulfil your right to water – we know this often means no water or too little flow.
- This is not enough flow to fulfil the household water needs for drinking, washing, cooking, cleaning and gardening.
- You may also experience problems with water delivery in your area like faulty or leaking standpipe taps and water management devices, disconnections, low water pressure or a lack of water access points.

**EMG BELIEVES IN THE RIGHT TO FULL FLOW WATER
ACCESS, ESPECIALLY DURING THE LOCKDOWN.
WATER IS CENTRAL TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE
CORONAVIRUS IN SOUTH AFRICA.**

Using water we can:

- Keep our immune systems strong by drinking water to keep the body functioning and hydrated.
- Practice personal, household and work hygiene daily through regular handwashing, cleaning of surfaces in the home and workplaces.

WHO IS
RESPONSIBLE
FOR WATER
DELIVERY?

WHAT CAN
I DO IF I
AM HAVING
PROBLEMS
ACCESSING
WATER?

- The National Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is responsible for managing our water supply through infrastructure and governance, and the local municipality is responsible for distribution to households and settlements.
- During the lockdown, DWS is working with the Departments of Health and Human Settlements to co-ordinate and provide water trucks and tanks to communities with no infrastructure.
- If you are living in an informal settlement – local, provincial and national government should work together to provide water access – for the nearest water access point in your area call the national hotline at 0800 200 200.

**IF YOU GET WATER FROM AN INSIDE AND/OR OUTSIDE TAP AT YOUR HOME
AND HAVE A FAULT, YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY/WARD
COUNCILLOR.**

IF YOU ARE IN CAPE TOWN CONTACT:

- **General Cut-off and access problems:**
City of Cape Town Disaster & Risk Management 0809114357 or 021597 6000

- **Water-related faults:**
WhatsApp 0634073699 or call 0860 103 089 – toll free number (from your landline) choose option 2 or SMS 31373 (free SMSes do not apply)

Honourable Minister Lindiwe Sisulu

Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation

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30 April 2020

Dear Minister Sisulu

URGENT REQUEST FOR PROVISION OF WATER TANKS, RELIABLE WATER SUPPLY, AND SANITATION PACKS TO COMMUNITIES WITHOUT ACCESS TO WATER

1. We refer to our [letter](#) of 22 April 2020 (attached hereto) requesting urgent intervention in respect of a number of communities without access to water and basic sanitation.
2. We are writing to provide you with an update in respect of the dire situation in previously listed communities, as well as additional communities which require urgent access to water and sanitation. A list of these communities is attached as **Annexure “A”**, with the updates and additional information highlighted in yellow. SAWC requests that the Department and the National Disaster Water Command Centre prioritise the provision of water tanks and/or tankers and sanitation packs to these affected communities as a matter of urgency.

3. Please take note that the list of affected communities in Annexure “A” is a non-exhaustive list, and that SAWC may receive updates from time to time regarding additional affected communities. **As such, SAWC reiterates its request that the Department kindly indicate a contact person with whom SAWC can liaise regarding any updates and additional information.**
4. We note your [statement](#) on 29 April 2020, in which you heeded a “*call on the communities and municipalities that are struggling with water to make use of our call centre number 0800 200 200.*” As you say, “*this is the only way that we get made aware of our communities in need.*” We would like to point out that our members have indicated that the hotline established by the Department for all water queries is:
 - a. not functioning as calls are either unanswered or referred to other departments/municipalities which are in turn, unable or unwilling to assist; and
 - b. not effective for rural communities as many of them are not aware of this hotline and don’t have access to a telephone and/or network service.
5. We ask that the National Disaster Water Command Centre kindly provide us with weekly public updates on the communities it is providing assistance to and provide us with an accessible mechanism to allow us, and other interested and affected parties, to lodge emergency water and sanitary service requests.

Yours faithfully

SOUTH AFRICAN WATER CAUCUS MEMBERS AND AFFILIATES:

1. Western Cape: Zinzi Mgwigwi and Khaya Mateta
2. Mpumalanga: Thelma Nkosi and Bafana Hlatshwayo
3. Gauteng: Samson Mokwena
4. Eastern Cape: Ntska Mteta and Nokuzola Bulana
5. Limpopo: Mashile Phalane and Gilbert Moela
6. Free State: Ephraime Mosibi and Thetso Mokonyane
7. KwaZulu-Natal: Caroline Ntaopane
8. Centre for Environmental Rights: Leanne Govindsamy and Zahra Omar
9. Environmental Monitoring Group: Thabo Lusithi, Nick Hamer, Siyabonga Myeza, Apiwe Mdunyelwa and Erna Curry
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11. WoMin: Caroline Ntaopane
12. Cooperative and Policy Alternative Centre (COPAC): Courtney Morgan
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16. African Water Commons Collective: Faeza Meyer and Ebrahim Fourie

17. Middelburg Environmental Justice Network: Bafana Hlatshwayo
18. Each One Teach One Covid19 Learning Network: Monde Ntshudu and Taryn Pereira
19. Mary Galvin
20. Victor Munnik

ANNEXURE A

LIST OF COMMUNITIES IN URGENT NEED OF WATER AND/OR SANITATION PRODUCTS

WESTERN CAPE

1. **Shukushukuma, Esibheshe and Bhekela Communities (Mfuleni)**

The community of Shukushukuma in Mfuleni has faced issues with access to water since the lockdown. There are approximately 200 people who are using just two taps and there are persistent water outages, particularly during the day. Soap is not provided.

The informal houses in Shukushukuma, Esibheshe and Bhekela are without proper access to water and toilets. Community members wait on CCT trucks to deliver water daily to no avail. They utilize public toilets from the taxi rank which is far from their homes, and when it's dark it is difficult to get there, so they opt for relieving themselves in the nearest wetland and in the Kuilsriver catchment. Due to no rainfall in the region for some time, the faeces in the catchment are not transported elsewhere or discharged to the next channel, and therefore gives off a bad smell, making it unpleasant to even walk along the channel to fetch water from standpipes which are placed near the channel.

2. **Joe Slovo Community**

People living in this community do not have access to water or soap and are unable to afford either.

3. **Khayelitsha Community**

In this community the water trucks arrive once a day at 10:00 and provide water in one location and no soap is provided. Elderly people are unable to walk long distances and shouldn't be doing so given that they are at a higher risk from fatally contracting Covid-19.

4. **Makhaza Community, Khayelitsha**

Water supply is continuously interrupted and there are regular sewer bursts which pose a health risk to the community.

5. **Silvertown Informal Settlement**

Existing water infrastructure is ageing and does not extend far enough to reach all homes making water access very difficult. Soap is not provided.

6. **Greenpark Township (next to Delft and Mfuleni)**

In this community, the water pressure is very low, making access difficult and time consuming. The existing taps are very far apart and far from informal houses. Most taps also do not have caps, which were stolen a long time ago. The bucket toilet system is not cleaned or drained posing a health hazard. Soap is not provided.

7. **Eastridge, Westridge, Tafelsig, Beacon Valley (Mitchell's Plain), Lavender Hill and Retreat**
Backyard dwellers of formal houses do not have water due to cut-offs and water management devices (WMDs) that limit water to 350 litres per day. Soap is not provided.
8. **Nduli township (two informal settlements), Tulbagh (four informal settlements) and Wolseley (two informal settlements) (Witzenburg Municipality)**
Nduli, Tulbagh and Wolseley (with a total of 8 informal settlements) have no water tanks or improved sanitation facilities, a problem they have endured for 6-7 years. Nduli Township has confirmed COVID 19 cases, so water access is critical.
9. **Various farms, Robertson (Langeberg Municipality)**
Farm dwellers have not received water for three weeks. The canal water is dirty as the water is coming from the mountain. And there has been no rain. At least two farms are affected. The farm dwellers receive 200 litres of water every second day which is not enough to meet even basic needs. There is a growing crisis on the farms.

LIMPOPO

10. **Ga-Madiba Village (N11), Mokopane community (Mogalakwena Local Municipality)**
Some areas have no water tanks. Other areas have water tanks but they are empty. There is a burst sewerage pipe close to the community which poses a health risk. No soap is provided. There is a reservoir on the higher level/veld of the village, which fails to supply water to the community members who reside in the middle level/veld of the village, since all the water goes to the lower level/veld of the village. Taps were installed in a few sections of the village but due to poor water pressure, the water is unable to run from the taps. Community members have resorted to digging down next to those taps to reach the water source.
11. **Steenbokpan and Shongoane Communities, Lephalale**
Water tanks in the area have been dry for five years and the remaining water point, far from the settlement, women wait for an entire day to fill a 20-litre bucket.

In Shongoane, to obtain access to water, community members (mainly women) walk kilometres or stand in long queues for a day when there is water available. Households can buy water for R500 (2500 litres) or R4 (20 litres). This is unaffordable for most households.
12. **Mabuela Village, Mokopane**
The community, and this falls to women, collect water from nearby streams. During the lockdown they are confronting police harassment when they walk to collect water. Households can buy water from private water vendors but the price per drum has now increased to R100.00, which is unaffordable.

13. **Sekutlong Village (Fetakgomo Tubatse local municipality)**

Communities used to collect water from Motsi River, polluted by mining since 2017. Some families continue to fetch water from the river as they cannot afford to buy water. Since the lockdown the water tanker has only visited on 6 April. It was supposed to come every Sunday. The community leaders called on 12 April and were told there was a shortage of diesel. On 15 April, the municipality advised after a second follow up call by the community that the next tanker would only come on 26 April.

14. **Elandskraal, Morarela, Mbuzini, Dichoeng and Tsansabela Villages (Sekhukhune District Municipality)**

Communities in these five villages are currently receiving reticulated water only once a week, which is simply insufficient. Water is trucked in to fill the villages' water tanks, but this source remains insufficient and unreliable.

EASTERN CAPE

15. **Nombanjane, Nxarxo and Ngcizele, Mazepa, Gcina and Cebe Villages (Centane region, Mnquma Local Municipality, Amathole District Municipality)**

Communities in this area comprise approximately 600 households and have faced a lack of water access for many years. Despite repeatedly bringing this to the attention of the Mayor of their municipality, little has been done. No soap is provided in this area as well. In the Nombanjana and Narxo villages, there is no water in the taps.

The SAWC finds it particularly concerning that on, Tuesday 14 April, 10 leaders from the three areas were arrested for contravening the COVID-19 Emergency Regulations and charged. They will appear in Court on the 13 May 2020.

Update: The District Municipality was contacted and promised to send out officials to investigate the situation last Thursday (23 April) and then send emergency water supplies. Community members received the following response from the Municipality:

- a. A Technical Team will be sent to the village to do assessment on the existing infrastructure. According to the municipality, water tanks should not be a priority as they have water taps installed already in the village and the technical team should work around the clock to fix the problem of dry taps.*
- b. The municipality doesn't have enough trucks to deliver water to the current areas depending on water tanks and hence for the village at hand, is better to fix the problem of dry taps.*
- c. For a truck to fill one tank it takes them hours due to the distance and bad roads between water collection point to the water tanks.*
- d. Water tanks should be last resort if it happens that the Technical Team is unable to fix the problem.*

Until today, no one has arrived despite numerous follow-ups by the communities.

16. **Mendwana Community, Ward 21 (Mbhlashe Local Municipality, Amathole District Municipality)**

The community of Mendwana comprises approximately 480 households and has no water and is relying on a natural spring which is located far away from community members, making it particularly difficult for the elderly. No soap is provided.

Community leaders have followed up with the municipality who promised to address the problem, but to date no relief has been provided. It is understood that there are emergency tanks at the Disaster Management Centre yard in Idutywa that have been there since last Thursday; however, it is not clear why these tanks were not used for the purposes of this emergency.

17. **Ndondo Square (Sakhisizwe Municipality)**

Residents usually depend on trucked water, which is unreliable, inconsistent and inadequate. This has greatly impacted elderly people. Ndondo Square currently does not have access to water.

18. **Rodana, EMalahleni (Chris Hani District Municipality)**

Residents of Rhodana have no access to water. Although a reservoir has been built, certain sections of the village do not have access. People resort to springs, also used by animals, which are unhygienic and unsafe.

19. **Elundini Community, Ward 4 (Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality)**

This community has no water due to no infrastructure: the unavailability of diesel to pump water to stand pipes during this crisis.

20. **Mkhubiso Village (Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality, Amathole District Municipality)**

This village has no running water.

21. **Tyefu and Hlosini Villages (Ngqushwa Local Municipality, Amathole District Municipality)**

These villages have been without water for years now. Earlier this year, a letter was sent to the MEC requesting an urgent meeting regarding this issue, but this meeting was postponed by the Spokesperson due to the coronavirus crisis.

22. **Ndakeni (comprising Ndakeni, Malanda and Maqgabasi), Dinda and Bhukuva Villages (Mbizana Local Municipality)**

Communities in these villages have never been provided with any sort of water infrastructure, and at best they rely on pit latrines. Their only water source remains a few muddy puddles located some distance from each village. Since last week, only two villages have each received

one water tanker, and the tanker has not been refilled since the date of delivery. They are therefore again without any water source or infrastructure.

23. **eNkanini, Mayfield Farm, Makhanda (Makana Local Municipality)**

There has been no water yesterday nor today. When there is no water, residents have to share water with the cows residing on the farm.

24. **Lessyton, Queenstown**

Most households have water only when there is rainfall; otherwise when they are forced to go without water for months on end.

25. Residents of **the following areas, villages and farms** have indicated that for years they have been struggling to access water in their communities:

- a) Ngxutyan, Ciko, Gushuphondo, Nakazana and Qhora Villages, Willowvale
- b) Ward 9: Kolomana Village, Ngqikana Village, Votyiwe Village, Grafton Farm, Cains Farm (Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality)
- c) Villages in Upper Blinkwater, Balfour, Phillipston, Readsdale, Jurieshoek, Ekuphumleni, Emakhaleni, Buxton (Greater Balfour)
- d) Ward 18: Mbandana Location (Mbizana Local Municipality)
- e) Ward 25: Nenga Location, Mqanduli (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- f) Ward 20: Qumbu Location, Khalankomo (Mhlontlo Local Municipality)
- g) Ward 17: Gqaqhala Location, Ugie (Elundini Local Municipality)
- h) Ward 5 (New Khuleka): Ntlaza Location, Libode (Nyandeni Local Municipality)
- i) Ward 20: Mthentu Location, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- j) Ward 23: Balasi Location, Qumbu, Zwelitsha (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality)
- k) Ward 21: Greenville Location (Mbizana Local Municipality)
- l) Ward 31: Qina Location, Centane (Amathole District Municipality)
- m) Ward 22: Mancam Location, Mqanduli (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- n) Ward 12: Slovo Location, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- o) Ward 35: Pendu Location, Jixini Agricultural Authority, Mqanduli (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- p) Ward 18: Pinglili Location Bityi Agricultural Authority, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- q) Ward 11: Mamdela Park, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- r) Ward 13: Mpindweni Agricultural Authority, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- s) Ward 6: Bongweni (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- t) Ward 36: Mnqanda, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- u) Ward 16: Malangeni Location, Lusikisiki (Ingquza Hill Local Municipality)

- v) **Ward 18: Tshazi Fama Location, Phumlo Agricultural Authority, Lusikisiki (Ingquza Hill Local Municipality)**
- w) **Ward 22: Lucwecwe Agricultural Authority, Kaula, Mqanduli (OR Tambo District Municipality)**
- x) **Ward 32: Ngqwala A/A, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)**
- y) **Ward 6: Nkolosane village, Ngcele Down, Ngcele, Upper Ntywenka, Lower Ntywenka, Sommerville, Qurhana, Siqhunqwini, Qulungashe, Lower Sinxako, Upper Sinxako, Govane, Majwarheni, Mqokolweni, Mpokane, Skansini (sophinia east and west), Sihlabeni, Ngxotho, Lower Tsitsana, Hlankomo, (ELundini municipality)**
- z) **Laphum'ikhwezi Senior Primary School Ward: Marhambeni and Ngorozi, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)**

MPUMALANGA

26. **Silobela township, Carolina (Albert Luthuli Local Municipality, Gert Sibande District Municipality)**

There is a shortage of clean water in the Silobela township.

27. **Clewer and Vosman townships, eMalahleni (Nkangala District Municipality)**

There is a need for JoJo water tanks in these townships.

28. **Arnot farm, Middelburg**

The community residing on this farm obtains water from a river stream which is a long distance away. They require reliable access to water supply.

29. **Phola/Ogies (Nkangala District Municipality)**

Informal settlement of Iraq does not have access to water. Women are walking about 2 kilometres every day to collect water. Since the lockdown which has restricted women's movements, they have been turned away by police when they try to collect water. Now some of the women wait until it gets dark for them to collect water so that they won't be seen by police. This has put a lot strain on the women.

KWAZULU NATAL

30. **Somkhele (Mtubatuba Municipality)**

The community in Somkhele has not had adequate water access for years. A water tanker only passes through on Wednesdays carrying 2 500 litres of water to be shared amongst a population estimated at 5 791 (in 2011 national census).

GAUTENG

31. Tjovitjo squatter camp, Orange Farm

There is a lack of sanitation in his community. While government has brought them some water tanks, there has been no sanitation of their portable toilets since the start of lockdown (or before). About 5 families share 1 toilet and making it very difficult for them to maintain hygiene standards without any sanitation products or sanitation of the toilets. A call has been logged with the municipality but nothing has come of this.

FREE STATE

32. Vetkop Farm and Barrage Informal Settlement, Kopanong (Xhariep District Municipality)

No access to water and sanitation products.

33. Botshabelo Formal Settlements (Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality)

The communities throughout the formal settlements of Botshabelo have no proper toilets and rely on pit and/or bucket toilets.

Honourable Minister Lindiwe Sisulu
Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation
By email: Francois.hugo@dhs.gov.za

Copied to:

Honourable Cyril Ramaphosa
President of the Republic of South Africa
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Chairperson, Member of Parliament
Portfolio Committee, Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation
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1 June 2020

Dear Minister Sisulu

URGENT REQUEST FOR PROVISION OF WATER TANKS, RELIABLE WATER SUPPLY, AND SANITATION PACKS TO COMMUNITIES WITHOUT ACCESS TO WATER

1. We refer to our letter of [22 April 2020](#) and our follow-up letter of [30 April 2020](#) (attached hereto), in which we requested urgent intervention on behalf of a number of communities without access to water and basic sanitation. Despite having sent the above correspondence, we have not received a response.
2. Our previously stated requests included urgent intervention in relation to:

- 2.1. The provision of water and adequate sanitation, including sanitation packs for those highlighted in the annexure to our letter;
- 2.2. Concerns about the proper functioning of the hotline established by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), which related to:
 - 2.2.1. The accessibility of the hotline to rural communities who may not know about its existence or who may not have telephones or necessary network coverage in order to report issues of water access and sanitation;
 - 2.2.2. The advice provided to those that do call into the hotline, including them being referred back to municipal and provincial departments for assistance, to no avail;
- 2.3. Allocating a liaison within the DWS or the National Disaster Water Command Centre (Water Command Centre), so that we may efficiently and effectively process our queries and community requests for water and sanitation packs.

3. We confirm that towards the end of April, we were invited to attend a meeting with a committee of your advisors in order to discuss the COVID-19 related interventions of the DWS. We attended this meeting on 30 April 2020 and immediately thereafter, at the request of your committee of advisors, included them in a follow up letter which we sent to you and the Water Command Centre, and which included an updated list of communities without access to water and proper sanitation.
4. Having sent urgent correspondence to you, the coordinator of the Water Command Centre and your committee of advisors, without having received a substantive response, we are concerned about the seriousness with which our urgent requests for intervention, are being taken.
5. The health and safety of hundreds, if not thousands of people in more than 60 communities across the country are being placed at risk by your departments failure to fulfil its constitutional obligations. Despite a number of commitments made by [yourself](#), as well as [President Ramaphosa](#), to protecting the interests of those who are most vulnerable, particularly in relation to access to water and sanitation during the Covid-19 pandemic, communities remain without water and proper sanitation.
6. We acknowledge that your department is under significant pressure due to the ongoing [investigations into corruption and maladministration](#), and indeed, we commend the long overdue actions which are being taken. However, our understanding was that the establishment of the Water Command Centre would enable the [centralisation](#) of water distribution. This would imply the allocation of specific financial resources to the Water Command Centre in order to enable the efficient distribution of water and sanitation packs across the country. We therefore hope that that the investigation into corruption and maladministration at the DWS has not in any way impacted on the ability of the Water Command Centre to respond to urgent requests.
7. In this regard, we had hoped that with the assistance of your committee of advisors and the Water Command Centre, our requests would be responded to more urgently. We confirm that subsequent to our second letter and update, additional communities have approached SAWC for assistance. We have updated our previous list to include these communities. Therefore, a full and updated list of communities without access to water and sanitation packs, is attached as [Annexure A](#) with additional information highlighted in yellow.

8. We note that other coalitions and organisations have written to you in order to seek assistance with access to water for affected communities. These include the [C19 Women's Solidarity Forum](#) as well as the [South African Food Sovereignty Campaign](#). Collectively, and inclusive of information provided by the SAWC, over 200 communities have been identified as being without access to water. This is surely a cause of immense concern and we demand that urgent action be taken to protect the health and wellbeing of those affected.
9. In our previous letters, we requested that the Department kindly provide us with a contact person with whom we can liaise regarding any updates and additional information. We reiterate this urgent request.
10. Kindly provide us with a response by no later than close of business on **Wednesday, 3 June 2020**, failing which we will have no option but to escalate this issue, including considering legal options.

Yours faithfully

SOUTH AFRICAN WATER CAUCUS MEMBERS AND AFFILIATES:

1. Western Cape: Zinzi Mgwigwi and Khaya Mateta
2. Mpumalanga: Thelma Nkosi and Bafana Hlatshwayo
3. Gauteng: Samson Mokwena
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ANNEXURE A

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1.2. **Joe Slovo Community**

People living in this community do not have access to water or soap and are unable to afford either.

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In this community the water trucks arrive once a day at 10:00 and provide water in one location and no soap is provided. Elderly people are unable to walk long distances and shouldn't be doing so given that they are at a higher risk from fatally contracting Covid-19.

1.4. **Makhaza Community, Khayelitsha**

Water supply is continuously interrupted and there are regular sewer bursts which pose a health risk to the community.

1.5. **Silvertown Informal Settlement**

Existing water infrastructure is ageing and does not extend far enough to reach all homes making water access very difficult. Soap is not provided.

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In this community, the water pressure is very low, making access difficult and time consuming. The existing taps are very far apart and far from informal houses. Most taps also do not have caps, which were stolen a long time ago. The bucket toilet system is not cleaned or drained posing a health hazard. Soap is not provided.

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Backyard dwellers of formal houses do not have water due to cut-offs and water management devices (WMDs) that limit water to 350 litres per day. Soap is not provided.

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Nduli, Tulbagh and Wolseley (with a total of 8 informal settlements) have no water tanks or improved sanitation facilities, a problem they have endured for 6-7 years. Nduli Township has confirmed COVID 19 cases, so water access is critical.

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LIMPOPO

1.10. **Ga-Madiba Village (N11), Mokopane community (Mogalakwena Local Municipality)**

Some areas have no water tanks. Other areas have water tanks but they are empty. There is a burst sewerage pipe close to the community which poses a health risk. No soap is provided. There is a reservoir on the higher level/veld of the village, which fails to supply water to the community members who reside in the middle level/veld of the village, since all the water goes to the lower level/veld of the village. Taps were installed in a few sections of the village but due to poor water pressure, the water is unable to run from the taps. Community members have resorted to digging down next to those taps to reach the water source.

1.11. **Steenbokpan and Shongoane Communities, Lephalale**

Water tanks in the area have been dry for five years and the remaining water point, far from the settlement, women wait for an entire day to fill a 20-litre bucket.

In Shongoane, to obtain access to water, community members (mainly women) walk kilometres or stand in long queues for a day when there is water available. Households can buy water for R500 (2500 litres) or R4 (20 litres). This is unaffordable for most households.

1.12. **Mabuela Village, Mokopane**

The community, and this falls to women, collect water from nearby streams. During the lockdown they are confronting police harassment when they walk to collect water. Households can buy water from private water vendors but the price per drum has now increased to R100.00, which is unaffordable.

1.13. **Sekutlong Village (Fetakgomo Tubatse local municipality)**

Communities used to collect water from Motsi River, polluted by mining since 2017. Some families continue to fetch water from the river as they cannot afford to buy water. Since the lockdown the water tanker has only visited on 6 April. It was supposed to come every Sunday. The community leaders called on 12 April and were told there was a shortage of diesel. On 15 April, the municipality advised after a second follow up call by the community that the next tanker would only come on 26 April.

1.14. **Elandskraal, Morarela, Mbuzini, Dichoeng and Tsansabela Villages (Sekhukhune District Municipality)**

Communities in these five villages are currently receiving reticulated water only once a week, which is simply insufficient. Water is trucked in to fill the villages' water tanks, but this source remains insufficient and unreliable.

1.15. **Tshamahansi Village, Mokopane (Mogalakwena Local Municipality, Waterberg District Municipality)**

Most villages in the Mogalakwena Local Municipality don't have reliable water supply; they depend on water tankers from the municipality. One family was forced to buy water from other members of the village to use during their funeral preparations after the ward councilor of Ward 21 failed to supply them with water as promised. Usually the municipality provides water for use during funerals, but this time the family was left stranded without any water as they could not get hold of the municipality in time.

1.16. **Sekuruwe Village, Mapela (Mogalakwena Local Municipality, Waterberg District Municipality)**

Community members have been without water long before the lockdown began. They have now resorted to creating a small dam, as animals were entering the dam they were previously using to get water.

EASTERN CAPE

1.17. **Nombanjane, Nxarxo and Ngcizele, Mazeppa, Gcina and Cebe Villages (Centane region, Mnquma Local Municipality, Amathole District Municipality)**

Communities in this area comprise approximately 600 households and have faced a lack of water access for many years. Despite repeatedly bringing this to the attention of the Mayor of their municipality, little has been done. No soap is provided in this area as well. In the Nombanjana and Narxo villages, there is no water in the taps.

The SAWC finds it particularly concerning that on, Tuesday 14 April, 10 leaders from the three areas were arrested for contravening the COVID-19 Emergency Regulations and charged. They will appear in Court on the 13 May 2020.

The District Municipality was contacted and promised to send out officials to investigate the situation last Thursday (23 April) and then send emergency water supplies. Community members received the following response from the Municipality:

- a. A Technical Team will be sent to the village to do assessment on the existing infrastructure. According to the municipality, water tanks should not be a priority as they have water taps installed already in the village and the technical team should work around the clock to fix the problem of dry taps.*
- b. The municipality doesn't have enough trucks to deliver water to the current areas depending on water tanks and hence for the village at hand, is better to fix the problem of dry taps.*
- c. For a truck to fill one tank it takes them hours due to the distance and bad roads between water collection point to the water tanks.*
- d. Water tanks should be last resort if it happens that the Technical Team is unable to fix the problem.*

Until today, no one has arrived despite numerous follow-ups by the communities.

Update: Last week, the charges against the 10 community leaders were withdrawn. However, the community remains without access to water.

1.18. Mendwana Community, Ward 21, and Ngoma Village, Willowvale (Mbhashe Local Municipality, Amathole District Municipality)

The community of Mendwana comprises approximately 480 households and has no water and is relying on a natural spring which is located far away from community members, making it particularly difficult for the elderly. No soap is provided. Community leaders have followed up with the municipality who promised to address the problem, but to date no relief has been provided. It is understood that there are emergency tanks at the Disaster Management Centre yard in Idutywa that have been there since last Thursday; however, it is not clear why these tanks were not used for the purposes of this emergency.

1.19. Ndondo Square (Sakhisizwe Municipality)

Residents usually depend on trucked water, which is unreliable, inconsistent and inadequate. This has greatly impacted elderly people. Ndondo Square currently does not have access to water.

1.20. Rodana, EMalahleni (Chris Hani District Municipality)

Residents of Rhodana have no access to water. Although a reservoir has been built, certain sections of the village do not have access. People resort to springs, also used by animals, which are unhygienic and unsafe.

1.21. Elundini Community, Ward 4 (Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality, Amathole District Municipality)

This community has no water due to no infrastructure: the unavailability of diesel to pump water to stand pipes during this crisis. Small-scale farmers are struggling to get water for irrigation due to improper water infrastructure. The current water supply is dependent on diesel and is not sustainable or reliable, as most of the time diesel is unavailable to pump water from the engine.

1.22. Mkhubiso Village (Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality, Amathole District Municipality)

This village has no running water.

1.23. Tyefu and Hlosini Villages (Ngqushwa Local Municipality, Amathole District Municipality)

These villages have been without water for years now. Earlier this year, a letter was sent to the MEC requesting an urgent meeting regarding this issue, but this meeting was postponed by the Spokesperson due to the coronavirus crisis.

1.24. Ndakeni (comprising Ndakeni, Malanda and Maqqabasi), Dinda and Bhukuva Villages (Mbizana Local Municipality)

Communities in these villages have never been provided with any sort of water infrastructure, and at best they rely on pit latrines. Their only water source remains a few muddy puddles located some distance from each village. Since last week, only two villages have each received one water tanker, and the tanker has not been refilled since the date of delivery. They are therefore again without any water source or infrastructure.

1.25. eNkanini, Mayfield Farm, Makhanda (Makana Local Municipality)

There has been no water yesterday nor today. When there is no water, residents have to share water with the cows residing on the farm.

1.26. Lessyton, Queenstown

Most households have water only when there is rainfall; otherwise when they are forced to go without water for months on end.

1.27. Residents of the following areas, villages and farms have indicated that for years they have been struggling to access water in their communities:

- a) Ngxutyan, Ciko, Gushuphondo, Nakazana and Qhora Villages, Willowvale
- b) Ward 9: Kolomana Village, Ngqikana Village, Votyiwe Village, Grafton Farm, Cains Farm (Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality)
- c) Villages in Upper Blinkwater, Balfour, Phillipston, Readsdale, Jurieshoek, Ekuphumleni, Emakhaleni, Buxton (Greater Balfour)
- d) Ward 18: Mbandana Location (Mbizana Local Municipality)

- e) Ward 25: Nenga Location, Mqanduli (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- f) Ward 20: Qumbu Location, Khalankomo (Mhlontlo Local Municipality)
- g) Ward 17: Gqaqhala Location, Ugie (Elundini Local Municipality)
- h) Ward 5 (New Khuleka): Ntlaza Location, Libode (Nyandeni Local Municipality)
- i) Ward 20: Mthentu Location, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- j) Ward 23: Balasi Location, Qumbu, Zwelitsha (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality)
- k) Ward 21: Greenville Location (Mbizana Local Municipality)
- l) Ward 31: Qina Location, Centane (Amathole District Municipality)
- m) Ward 22: Mancam Location, Mqanduli (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- n) Ward 12: Slovo Location, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- o) Ward 35: Pendu Location, Jixini Agricultural Authority, Mqanduli (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- p) Ward 18: Pinglili Location Bityi Agricultural Authority, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- q) Ward 11: Mamdela Park, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- r) Ward 13: Mpindweni Agricultural Authority, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- s) Ward 6: Bongweni (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- t) Ward 36: Mnqanda, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- u) Ward 16: Malangeni Location, Lusikisiki (Ingquza Hill Local Municipality)
- v) Ward 18: Tshazi Fama Location, Phumlo Agricultural Authority, Lusikisiki (Ingquza Hill Local Municipality)
- w) Ward 22: Lucwecwe Agricultural Authority, Kaula, Mqanduli (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- x) Ward 32: Ngqwala A/A, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)
- y) Ward 6: Nkolosane village, Ngcele Down, Ngcele, Upper Ntywenka, Lower Ntywenka, Sommerville, Qurhana, Siqhunqwini, Qulungashe, Lower Sinxako, Upper Sinxako, Govane, Majwarheni, Mqokolweni, Mpukane, Skansini (sophinia east and west), Sihlabeni, Ngxotho, Lower Tsitsana, Hlankomo, (ELundini municipality)
- z) Laphum'ikhwezi Senior Primary School Ward: Marhambeni and Ngojini, Mthatha (OR Tambo District Municipality)

MPUMALANGA

1.28. Silobela township, Carolina (Albert Luthuli Local Municipality, Gert Sibande District Municipality)

There is a shortage of clean water in the Silobela township.

1.29. Clewer and Vosman townships, eMalahleni (Nkangala District Municipality)

There is a need for JoJo water tanks in these townships.

1.30. Arnot farm, Middelburg

The community residing on this farm obtains water from a river stream which is a long distance away. They require reliable access to water supply.

1.31. Phola/Ogies (Nkangala District Municipality)

Informal settlement of Iraq does not have access to water. Women are walking about 2 kilometres every day to collect water. Since the lockdown which has restricted women's movements, they have been turned away by police when they try to collect water. Now some of the women wait until it gets dark for them to collect water so that they won't be seen by police. This has put a lot strain on the women.

1.32. Ward 16, Madadeni and Sikhwahlane (Nkomazi Local Municipality, Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Mpumalanga)

Water tanks have not reached the area. People are gathering to fetch water at the nearby public taps of more than 500 meters away, depending on the households. There is no social distancing. People wake up early to do laundry at the public taps which serves both communities of Madadeni and Sikhwahlane.

1.33. Kromhoek, Vaalbank and surrounding farms, Wakkerstroom (Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality, Gert Sibande District Municipality)

A water truck has been assisting the communities on these farms since 28 March 2020. Since most families do not have JoJo tanks, they can only store the water from the truck in small buckets. The truck only comes every two weeks and the water from these buckets does not last the communities very long. As a result, they have to fetch water from the river. Community members wish to be provided with JoJo tanks so that the water they receive can last up until the truck returns.

KWAZULU NATAL

1.34. Somkhele (Mtubatuba Municipality)

The community in Somkhele has not had adequate water access for years. A water tanker only passes through on Wednesdays carrying 2 500 litres of water to be shared amongst a population estimated at 5 791 (in 2011 national census).

GAUTENG

1.35. Tjovitjo Informal Settlement camp, Orange Farm

There is a lack of sanitation in his community. While government has brought them some water tanks, there has been no sanitation of their portable toilets since the start of lockdown (or before). About 5 families share 1 toilet and making it very difficult for them to maintain hygiene standards without any sanitation products or sanitation of the toilets. A call has been logged with the municipality but nothing has come of this.

1.36. Soweto Community

Effluent runs into the Booysens River in Russellspruit (Riverlea), which feeds into the Vaal River. The downstream community in Soweto which includes the African Independent Churches, use this water for baptisms. Their livestock also drink from this polluted water. This issue has been ongoing for years.

FREE STATE

1.37. Vetkop Farm and Barrage Informal Settlement, Kopanong (Xhariep District Municipality)

No access to water and sanitation products.

1.38. Botshabelo Formal Settlements (Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality)

The communities throughout the formal settlements of Botshabelo have no proper toilets and rely on pit and/or bucket toilets.

Honourable Minister Lindiwe Sisulu

Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation

By email: Francois.hugo@dhs.gov.za

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22 April 2020

Dear Minister Sisulu

URGENT REQUEST FOR PROVISION OF WATER TANKS, RELIABLE WATER SUPPLY, AND SANITATION PACKS TO COMMUNITIES WITHOUT ACCESS TO WATER

1. We refer to the above and confirm that the South African Water Caucus (SAWC) requests urgent intervention in respect of a number of communities without access to water and basic sanitation.
2. The SAWC is a network of more than twenty community-based organisations and non-government organisations active in promoting the wise, equitable and just use, protection and provision of water. SAWC was formed in the lead up to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and has active members across the country, some of whom have organised provincial water caucuses in order to facilitate co-ordination and outreach to water-stressed communities.
3. Our outreach efforts over the last while have revealed that a number of communities are still unable to access water despite the urgent need for water and adequate sanitation in order to combat COVID-19. Handwashing with soap and water has been consistently highlighted as a key

preventative measure against the COVID-19 pandemic,¹ and those without access to clean water and reliable supply, face increased risks of contracting the coronavirus.

4. Since President Ramaphosa [announced](#) the national lockdown to reduce the spread of COVID-19, on 23 March 2020, we have witnessed a positive shift in service delivery, with a number of our communities being provided with water. We are therefore grateful to you Minister Sisulu and your team, for facilitating such access. However, a number of communities remain without access to water and require urgent assistance from government to address their water and sanitation needs, among other basic services. We draw your attention to such communities in **Annexure A**, attached hereto, and we remain committed to working with your team in order to provide updated information as it becomes available.
5. We refer to the **Water and Sanitation Emergency Procurement COVID-19 Disaster Response Directions, 2020 (“the Directions”)**, issued in terms of Regulation 10(8) of the regulations pursuant to section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002, published in the Government Gazette² on 15 April 2020.
6. The directions provide for the establishment and regulation of the administration of the National Disaster Water Command Centre for the purpose of the centralisation of emergency procurement and provision of water and sanitation equipment. Importantly, we note Directive 7 of the Directions which states that:

“in fulfilling its constitutional obligations of providing access to basic water supply and to basic sanitation necessary to secure sufficient water and an environment not harmful to human health or well-being, and, specifically to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 epidemic, the Department may employ emergency procurement measures for the procurement of the following goods and services:

- (a) Water;
- (b) water tankers;
- (c) water tanks;
- (d) installation of water tanks and stands;
- (e) taps and communal stand pipes; and
- (f) sanitation packs consisting of
 - (i) hand soap;
 - (ii) sanitisers;
 - (iii) rubber gloves; and
 - (iv) masks; and
- (g) ablution blocks and toilets.”

¹ South African Medical Research Council ‘Yes, washing our hands really can help curb the spread of coronavirus’ (<https://www.samrc.ac.za/news/yes-washing-our-hands-really-can-help-curb-spread-coronavirus>).

² Government Gazette, No. 43231, Notice 464, 15 April 2020.

7. We also refer to the media statement issued by the Department of Water and Sanitation (the “Department”) on 8 April 2020, titled “[Minister Lindiwe Sisulu directs officials to increase pace in provision of water during Coronavirus COVID-19 lockdown](#)”. This media statement provides an update on progress made by the Department to provide water tanks and tankers to affected communities, especially in rural areas and informal settlements, in response to your directive issued in March 2020.
8. On 9 April 2020, the Centre for Environmental Rights [wrote](#) to the Department, on behalf of Vukani Environmental Justice Movement in Action, to request the urgent provision of reliable water supply to various communities in eMalahleni. We commend the Department’s swift intervention to deliver water to those communities the following day. However, as you rightly state, the fact that the Department, provincial authorities and water entities are yet to reach some of our people, is an ongoing cause for concern. Furthermore, the [hotline](#) established by the Department for all water queries is not effective for rural communities as many of them are not aware of this hotline and don’t have access to a telephone or network.
9. **In this regard, we would like to draw your attention to several communities that do not have access to reliable water supply and/or sanitation products. As indicated, a list of these communities is attached hereto as Annexure A.**
10. The residents in these communities continue to experience a daily violation of their guaranteed rights enshrined in sections 24 and 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The communities living in these areas are in desperate need of urgent government intervention for the protection and fulfilment of their basic constitutional rights, not only to address the current COVID-19 crisis, but also to provide sustainable access to water beyond the crisis. During this time there is also a need to acknowledge the lifelong effects that environmental factors have on children, and that there arises a heightened duty on government to protect children in these distressed communities, since the consequences of the pandemic exacerbates their vulnerability.³
11. SAWC therefore hereby requests that government – led by you and your Department and the National Disaster Water Command Centre – prioritise the provision of water tanks and/or tankers and sanitation packs to the abovementioned communities with the greatest of urgency. Furthermore, SAWC emphasises the importance of social distancing during the distribution of the water from these tanks or tankers in order to reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus, in accordance with directive 7(3) in the Directions

³ Section 28(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. See also: United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council Report, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: *Realizing the rights of the child through a healthy environment* (Available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/43/30>).

12. Please take note that the list of affected communities in paragraph 9 above is a non-exhaustive list,⁴ and that SAWC may receive updates from time to time regarding additional affected communities. As such, SAWC requests that the Department kindly indicate a contact person with whom SAWC can liaise regarding any updates and additional information, within this week.
13. We also ask that the National Disaster Water Command Centre kindly provide us with weekly public updates on its activities and the communities it is assisting, starting from this week, and provide us with an accessible mechanism, such as a WhatsApp group, to allow us, and other interested and affected parties, to lodge emergency water and sanitary service requests.

Yours faithfully

SOUTH AFRICAN WATER CAUCUS MEMBERS AND AFFILIATES:

1. Western Cape: Zinzi Mgwigwi and Khaya Mateta
2. Mpumalanga: Thelma Nkosi and Bafana Hlatshwayo
3. Gauteng: Samson Mokwena
4. Eastern Cape: Aaron Ranayeke and Phumla Mbulawa
5. Limpopo: Mashile Phalane and Gilbert Moela
6. Free State: Ephraime Mosibi and Thetso Mokonyane
7. KwaZulu-Natal: Caroline Ntaopane
8. Centre for Environmental Rights: Leanne Govindsamy and Zahra Omar
9. Environmental Monitoring Group: Thabo Lusithi, Nick Hamer, Siyabonga Myeza, Apiwe Mdunyelwa and Erna Curry
10. Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance: Samson Mokwena
11. WoMin: Caroline Ntaopane
12. Cooperative and Policy Alternative Centre (COPAC): Courtney Morgan
13. South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (SAFSC): Courtney Morgan
14. C-19 People's Coalition South Africa: Nicole Naidoo
15. C-19 People's Coalition Eastern Cape: Mthobeli Mabaso
16. African Water Commons Collective: Faeza Meyer and Ebrahim Fourie
17. Mary Galvin
18. Victor Munnik

⁴ We also bring to your attention a map of water-stressed communities compiled by the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (SAFSC). See: <https://www.safsc.org.za/water-stressed-communities-map/>.

ANNEXURE A:
LIST OF COMMUNITIES IN URGENT NEED OF WATER AND/OR SANITATION PRODUCTS

WESTERN CAPE

1. Shukushukuma Community (Mfuleni)

The community of Shukushukuma in Mfuleni has faced issues with access to water since the lockdown. There are approximately 200 people who are using just two taps and there are persistent water outages, particularly during the day. Soap is not provided.

2. Joe Slovo Community

People living in this community do not have access to water or soap and are unable to afford either.

3. Khayelitsha Community

In this community the water trucks arrive once a day at 10:00 and provide water in one location and no soap is provided. Elderly people are unable to walk long distances and shouldn't be doing so given that they are at a higher risk from fatally contracting Covid-19.

4. Makhaza Community, Khayelitsha

Water supply is continuously interrupted and there are regular sewer bursts which pose a health risk to the community.

5. Silvertown Informal Settlement

Existing water infrastructure is ageing and does not extend far enough to reach all homes making water access very difficult. Soap is not provided.

6. Greenpark Township (next to Delft and Mfuleni)

In this community, the water pressure is very low, making access difficult and time consuming. The existing taps are very far apart and far from informal houses. Most taps also do not have caps, which were stolen a long time ago. The bucket toilet system is not cleaned or drained posing a health hazard. Soap is not provided.

7. Eastridge, Westridge, Tafelsig, Beacon Valley (Mitchell's Plain), Lavender Hill and Retreat

Backyard dwellers of formal houses do not have water due to cut-offs and water management devices (WMDs) that limit water to 350 litres per day. Soap is not provided.

8. Nduli township (two informal settlements), Tulbagh (four informal settlements) and Wolseley (two informal settlements) (Witzenburg Municipality)

Nduli, Tulbagh and Wolseley (with a total of 8 informal settlements) have no water tanks or improved sanitation facilities, a problem they have endured for 6-7 years. Nduli Township has confirmed COVID 19 cases, so water access is critical.

9. **Various farms, Robertson (Langeberg Municipality)**

Farm dwellers have not received water for three weeks. The canal water is dirty as the water is coming from the mountain. And there has been no rain. At least two farms are affected. The farm dwellers receive 200 litres of water every second day which is not enough to meet even basic needs. There is a growing crisis on the farms.

LIMPOPO

10. **Ga-Madiba Village (N11), Mokopane community (Mogalakwena Local Municipality)**

Some areas have no water tanks. Other areas have water tanks but they are empty. There is a burst sewerage pipe close to the community which poses a health risk. No soap is provided.

11. **Steenbokpan and Shongoane Communities, Lephalale**

Water tanks in the area have been dry for five years and the remaining water point, far from the settlement, women wait for an entire day to fill a 20-litre bucket.

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The community, and this falls to women, collect water from nearby streams. During the lockdown they are confronting police harassment when they walk to collect water. Households can buy water from private water vendors but the price per drum has now increased to R100.00, which is unaffordable.

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EASTERN CAPE

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Communities in this area comprise approximately 600 households and have faced a lack of water access for many years. Despite repeatedly bringing this to the attention of the Mayor of their municipality, little has been done. No soap is provided in this area as well.

The SAWC finds it particularly concerning that on, Tuesday 14 April, 10 leaders from the three areas were arrested for contravening the COVID-19 Emergency Regulations and charged. They will appear in Court on the 13 May 2020.

15. **Mendwana Community, Ward 21 (Mbhlashe Local Municipality, Amathole District Municipality)**

The community of Mendwana comprises approximately 480 households and has no water and is relying on a natural spring which is located far away from community members, making it particularly difficult for the elderly. No soap is provided.

16. **Ndondo Square (Sakhisizwe Municipality)**

Residents usually depend on trucked water, which is unreliable, inconsistent and inadequate. This has greatly impacted elderly people. Ndondo Square currently does not have access to water.

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Residents of Rhodana have no access to water. Although a reservoir has been built, certain sections of the village do not have access. People resort to springs, also used by animals, which are unhygienic and unsafe.

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This community has no water due to no infrastructure: the unavailability of diesel to pump water to stand pipes during this crisis.

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This village has no running water.

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These villages have been without water for years now. Earlier this year, a letter was sent to the MEC requesting an urgent meeting regarding this issue, but this meeting was postponed by the Spokesperson due to the coronavirus crisis.

MPUMALANGA

21. **Silobela township, Carolina (Albert Luthuli Local Municipality, Gert Sibande District Municipality)**

There is a shortage of clean water in the Silobela township.

22. **Clewer and Vosman townships, eMalahleni (Nkangala District Municipality)**

There is a need for JoJo water tanks in these townships.

23. **Arnot farm, Middelburg**

The community residing on this farm obtains water from a river stream which is a long distance away. They require reliable access to water supply.

24. **Phola/Ogies (Nkangala District Municipality)**

The informal settlement of Iraq does not have access to water. Women are walking about 2 kilometres every day to collect water. Since the lockdown which has restricted women's movements, they have been turned away by police when they try to collect water. Now some of the women wait until it gets dark for them to collect water so that they won't be seen by police. This has put a lot strain on the women.

KWAZULU NATAL

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