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ROLE OF WOMEN IN COMMUNITY WATER AND SANITATION SUPPLY PROJECTS

COMMUNITY QUANTITATIVE REPORT

A DRA - DEVELOPMENT REPORT 98/40

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The following document contains the quantitative findings of 806 questionnaires undertaken with community members across 16 case studies of water and sanitation projects.

SYNTHESIS REPORT

COMMITTEE
QUALITATIVE
REPORT

COMMITTEE
QUANTITATIVE
REPORT

COMMUNITY
QUANTITATIVE
REPORT

APPENDICES

Appendix 1
Gundani
NP

Appendix 2
Mphego
NP

Appendix 3
Mothobeki-
Polaseng
NP

Appendix 4
Chebeng
NP

Appendix 5
Silindini
EC

Appendix 6
Nsekeni
EC

Appendix 7
Mdlankomo
EC

Appendix 8
Mlakalaka
EC

Appendix 9
Ezingwenya
KZN

Appendix 10
Ezinqeni-
Empini
KZN

Appendix 11
KwaDlamini
KZN

Appendix 12
Woodford
Farm
KZN

Appendix 13
Belfast
MP

Appendix 10
Leeufontein
MP

Appendix 15
Paarden-
fontein
MP

Appendix 16
Makopungu
MP

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The following report considers the quantitative findings of 806 interviews administered across four provinces in South Africa. The survey was undertaken as a component of a project commissioned by Mvula Trust on the *Role of Women in Rural Water and Sanitation Project*. The research aimed at discovering how women interact in their communities: with men and other women in the community in general and also in community structures and positions of leadership. Specifically investigated were those structures set up for the purpose of administering the water project, namely the water committee, as well as other influential community structures. This was undertaken to provide a comparative basis on which to examine how the role of women changed within Mvula and non-Mvula committees, so as to provide a benchmark against which to extract lessons on empowerment.

Issues that were highlighted were the general role of water within rural societies, both within the minds of the women themselves and the men in the communities across all the age groups. Specifically, the water committees and other community structures were examined, compared and contrasted as agents of female empowerment, while investigating the problems surrounding and potential solutions involved in empowerment in general.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this report is to present the main findings of the quantitative interviews undertaken in the fieldwork and to analyse the data in terms of the implications for empowerment in rural communities. Specific attention is given to the role of women during the inception of the project as well as their contribution during the project: financially, through the provision of labour and on the water committee. In addition to this, the community perceptions about the water committee and more specifically the role of women on this structure in terms of project delivery and the operation and maintenance of the system are duly examined.

Throughout this report the perceptions held of women, both by themselves and by their male counterparts will be analysed to identify whether there is a gender bias

within rural communities. And where evidence arises, the obstacles to empowerment and how best to address these will be given.

- The first section of the report will give an overview of the sample and household demographic of the rural communities in which the fieldwork was undertaken. In this manner a context will be provided in which to locate the analysis.
- The second section of the report will consider the inception of the project, specifically understanding the role that women had therein. It will also consider the level of involvement of the community's women within the water project. From this the obstacles to the meaningful involvement of women (as identified by themselves) will be identified. Refer to chapter 3.
- The third section of the report will consider the perceptions held about the water committee's performance, the role of women within the water committee and the obstacles which hinder the more effective functioning of the water committee. The analysis will be made from the perspective of the community. Refer to chapter 4.
- The fourth section will consider the evaluation of the delivery process and the reliability of the water project. Refer to chapter 5.
- The final section draws the report to a close, summarising the main issues which need to be taken into account for empowerment.

2 METHODOLOGY

In the sample, 16 case study communities were investigated. Within each case study, 50 interviews were completed in a random, stratified manner, using gender and age as selection variables. The questionnaire took approximately 40 minutes to administer.

In order to ensure that the sample was representative of the broader community and that the findings were not biased, the fieldworkers were given instruction that only one questionnaire may be completed per household, and no adjoining households may be interviewed. In addition to this, no more than two respondents may be interviewed from any specific public place within the community. Given this criteria, a smaller sample of 33 questionnaires was undertaken in the community of Silindini where in total there were only 48 households.

After the questionnaires are completed in-field they undergo a series of checks to ensure that they are authentically representative of the opinions of the respondents. In this validation process, the questionnaires undergo a series of quality controls by the team manager in field and in the Durban office by the coding team. During this process certain questionnaires are rejected. Out of a total sample of 812 respondents, 6 questionnaires were rejected.

The coded questionnaires are captured into the database using an in-house DOS-based program called PUNCH. In preparation for the statistical analysis, the database file of capture data is validated to remove any errors which may arise in the data capture process. From this, the frequency tables are generated.

The statistical findings are work-shopped with the team of fieldworkers, in order to address points of clarity and provide a contextual background to the data. This procedure ensures that the data provided is an accurate reflection of the perceptions and opinions of the respondents.

2.1 THE SAMPLE

The final sample comprised 806 respondents. Broadly speaking, the sample constituted 49% male and 51% female respondents. This provided the cornerstone of the gender analysis, as the different attitudes, perceptions and opinions of the male and female respondents were analysed.

In addition to this, a third of the sample comprised non-Mvula Trust communities, while two-thirds were from Mvula Trust communities. The research utilizes the non-Mvula case studies as a benchmark from which to draw comparative information about the role of women in community water and sanitation projects, and lessons for empowerment, and not as a basis for comparing Mvula Trust to other water delivery agencies.

Table 1 Outline of the sample demographics

Community	Gender	Mvula Trust	Non-Mvula Agency	Total
Gundani	Male	22		47
	Female	25		
Mphego	Male	25		48
	Female	23		
Mothobeki-Polaseng	Male		24	50
	Female		26	
Chebeng	Male	34		67
	Female	33		
Silindini	Male	16		33
	Female	17		
Nsekeni	Male	24		49
	Female	25		
Makopung	Male	27		52
	Female	25		
Arwekwaneng	Male	26		51
	Female	25		
Belfast	Male	25		50
	Female	25		
Leeufontein	Male		31	52
	Female		21	
KwaDlamini	Male	22		53
	Female	31		
Woodfordfarm	Male		24	50
	Female		26	
Empini-Ezingweni	Male	25		50
	Female	25		
Ezingwenya	Male		27	50
	Female		23	
Mdlankomo	Male	21		51
	Female	30		
Gundani	Male		22	53
	Female		31	
Sub-total	Male	267	128	395
	Female	284	127	411
Total		551	255	806

2.2 PROFILE OF THE COMMUNITY RESPONDENT

The following section gives a profile of the respondents interviewed in the survey. As predetermined, half the sample comprises male respondents, and the other half, female respondents, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2 Gender profile of respondents

	%
Male	49.0
Female	51.0
Total	100.0

(n=806)

In order to ensure that the sample was not biased in any manner, respondents were selected from within four age categories, as indicated in Table 3. In the sample, 27% of the respondents were between the ages of 18-25 years. This category captured the opinions of the young adults, which in the deep rural context were largely considered as youth. A further 21% of the respondents were between 26-35 years in age, while 36% were between the age of 36-60 years and 17% were over the age of 60 years.

Table 3 Age profile of respondents

	%
18-25yrs	26.9
26-35yrs	20.7
36-60yrs	35.9
60+yrs	16.5
Total	100.0

(n=806)

In the sample, there was a uniform distribution of respondents across household status positions (refer to Table 4). This indicated that the sample was not biased towards any specific category of respondent. Amongst the sample, 29% of the respondents held the position as the head of the household., while 27% were spouses of the household head and 35% were children of the household head. There were a number of other positions held such as parents of head and other relatives which included cousins, siblings and nephews of household heads.

Table 4 Household status profile of respondents

	%
Head	29.4
Spouse of head	27.3
Child of head	35.3
Parent of head	4.0
Other relative	4.0
Total	100.0

(n=806)

There were two main types of dwelling structures in which the respondents resided. The first type were traditional houses which were constructed of mud and wood: structured walls with dung floors, in which 49% of the sample lived. The second type of house were the more modern-design homesteads, constructed of brick and mortar, in which 45% of the sample resided. The remainder of the respondents interviewed resided in structures classified as other (6% of the sample) which included shacks, single flats and rondavels.

Table 5 Type of dwelling of respondents

	%
Traditional house	48.7
Brick & mortar house	45.2
Other	6.1
Total	100.0

(n=806)

Respondents were questioned about their vocational status (as indicated in Table 6). The majority of those interviewed were unemployed (31% of the sample) which reflects the lack of income-generating opportunities in rural areas. A further 17% of the sample were over the age of 18, yet still studying either in a full-time or a part-time capacity. Most of this category of people were still completing their high school qualifications which is a reflection of the disruptions to the education system in the late 1970s to the early 1990s. In recent years school attendance has started to normalize and many older students have returned to places of secondary education in order to complete their studies.

In the sample, 17% of the respondents were retired and 14% of the sample were home workers that were not paid for their work, colloquially called housewives. There were also 2% disabled respondents who as a result were not working.

The employed respondents accounted for 19% of the sample. This percentage constituted those people in part-time or seasonal employment (6%), employed in the informal sector (5%) as well as the formal sector (8%).

Table 6 Vocational status of respondent

	%
Unemployed	30.7
Over 18 years, still studying	17.4
Retired	16.9
Housewife / home worker unpaid	13.9
Employed part-time / seasonal	5.9
Employed informal sector	5.4
Employed formal sector	7.9
Disabled	2.0
Total	100.0

(n=783)

On the whole, male respondents held a higher level of education than female respondents and a greater proportion of female than male respondents had no schooling. Amongst the female respondents, 22% had received no formal schooling, while a lower percentage (15%) of the male respondents had no formal education. Of those respondents who had no education, over 50% were above the age of 60 years. This reflected that in the past educational facilities in rural areas were either non-existent or extremely rare. In addition to this, it was considered culturally inappropriate for a woman to receive education, as her priorities were seen to be in a domestic capacity.

There was no significant difference between the male and female respondents in their levels of education ranging from primary to high school, as indicated in Table 7. However, more male respondents had completed matric successfully (26% of the male sample, as opposed to 18% of the female sample). Many female respondents left school before they completed matric due to the cultural legacy that the education of women was deemed to be less necessary than their male counterparts.

Table 7 Level of education of respondent

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
No schooling	15.4	21.7	18.6
Some primary school	15.7	13.9	14.8
Primary school completed	12.7	13.6	13.2
Some high school	29.9	31.4	30.6
Matric	25.6	18.2	21.8
Artisan's certificate	0.8	1.2	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=806)

In the sample, 8% held post-matric qualifications. These qualifications included technikon diplomas, university degrees, professional, technical and artisan's certificates. Of the post-matric qualifications 55% were held by male respondents, and 45% by female respondents. Just under half of these qualifications were held by people between the ages of 26-35 years.

Table 8 Household size of sample

	No. of people per household (excluding migrant workers)	No. of Migrant workers per household
Mean	6.3	1.9
Medium	6.0	1.0

(n=796)

(n=452)

The average household size within the sample was 6.3 people, with a medium of 6. Each household on average included 1.9 migrant worker, with a medium of 1 (as indicated in Table 8). It is important to bear in mind when comprehending the significance of the water project delivery, that prior to the water project's existence the female household members were responsible for carrying water across great distances. The water consumption of the household would naturally increase when the migrant workers were at home. In addition to this, it can be assumed that the migrant workers are predominantly male.

Table 9 Amount of livestock owned by household

Type of Live Stock	Percentage of households who own livestock	Average number of livestock per household
Poultry	60.3	8
Cattle	48.5	4
Goats	38.3	3
Sheep	13.6	1
Pigs	13.9	0.4
Horses / donkeys	8.1	0.2

(n=806)

In terms of additional water consumption needs, it was shown that approximately 60% of all households held poultry, while 49% of all households owned cattle and 38% owned goats. On average, each household owned 8 fowl, 4 cattle and 3 goats. Other livestock owned included pigs, sheep and horses or donkeys, however, these were relatively rare by comparison with poultry, cattle and goats. In addition to this, 55% of the sample claimed to have access to land to farm crops and this land was either owned, accessible as tribal land or rented privately.

3 INCEPTION OF THE WATER AND SANITATION PROJECT

The vast majority of the community first heard about the water project in a public meeting¹. From the quantitative findings, the role of women in the community appeared to be limited in the inception of the project. It appears that the inception of the project is run by a few select individuals who are usually elected to the water committee as a result. In the report on the water committee it was shown that 68% of all water committee members are male². And given the relatively low participation of women within the water project in community meetings where the water committee transfer and receive information, and make decisions, it is felt that women have a very low level of involvement and a small role in the initial stages of the project.

3.1 WATER SOURCES AND CONSUMPTION

Despite the introduction of a water supply project, there is strong evidence that communities still continue to utilize other water sources such as rivers, unprotected springs, water runoff from the roof etc. A significant 41% of the sample utilized these alternative sources, which would possibly suggest that although water projects were in operation within their community, there are still problems associated with delivery.

In addition to this, the qualitative evidence showed that many households utilize alternative water sources for those purposes where filtered water can be substituted. According to the respondents, on average each household is utilizing 90 litres of water per day, from both the alternative water sources and the water supply project. This water is utilized for cooking, hygiene, personal cleaning and drinking. This does not include water utilization for clothing washing, gardening and livestock.

3.2 LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT BY THE COMMUNITY IN THE INITIAL STAGES

In the sample, 80% of the respondents first heard about the water project through a community meeting. It is interesting to note that this did not differ between male and female respondents³ although meeting attendance usually shows more men attending

¹ For more information on the project inception, refer to the relevant section in appendix 1-16.

² For more information on the water committee and its composition, refer to the report on the water committee.

³ Refer to question 2.1.

community meetings than women. A further 17% of the respondents heard about the project through neighbours and friends, as opposed to through community meeting attendance. The remaining 3% learned about the project via direct involvement in community development structures such as being a member of the water committee or development committee.

Although the female respondents attend community meetings, this is not reflective of their level of participation. In many instances, female respondents do not speak in these meetings, which militates against the possibility of them making suggestions and giving their opinions (even though they know more about the issue of water since they take primary responsibility for the collection thereof). Only 33% of the female respondents ever spoke in community meetings; compared with the 58% of the male respondents⁴. This clearly suggests that men occupy a more dominant role in community affairs.

The reasons for not speaking in the meeting were similar in many respects between the male and female respondents. On the whole, 48% of the sample only spoke in meeting if they had a reasonable suggestion to make. The women, however, indicated that they were more shy and inexperienced than their male counterparts (30% of the female respondents, as opposed to 13% of the male respondents), and for these reasons would often not speak even though they may have wanted to. Qualitatively this was a significant factor hindering the empowerment of women: no faith in their own abilities.

It should be held in mind that male respondents attended community meetings on a more regular basis than female respondents. This is indicated in Table 10, where 34% of the male respondents always attend meetings, as opposed to 23% of the female respondents. The main limitation was the constraint on women's time. The female respondents felt that if they were men they would have time to attend as many community meetings as necessary.

⁴ Refer to question 2.11 and 2.11.1.

Table 10 Comparison between the regularity of attending community meetings by male and female respondents

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Always	33.8	23.2	28.4
Usually	13.5	14.4	13.9
Sometimes	17.8	20.0	18.9
Not very often	7.9	13.4	10.7
Never	27.2	28.9	28.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=803)

The female respondents were asked about whether they would participate more in the community meetings if they were men. Amongst the female respondents, 59% felt that they would participate more in meetings if they were men, while 23% felt that they would not and 17% felt that they did not know⁵. The first reason cited as to why the female respondents felt that as men they would participate more (as indicated in Table 11), was the fact that men were perceived to have the necessary time available in which to attend relevant meetings. Women felt that they had too many other commitments such as household and family obligations which prevented them from attending these meetings on a more regular basis, (47% of the female respondents). The women were of the opinion that their male counterparts represented the interests of the community at these meetings, and thus in light of their household commitments it was unnecessary to duplicate a function being competently carried out by men.

Secondly, 22% of the female respondents felt that men held a higher status than women within the community, thus, when men spoke they were naturally listened to with a greater deal more attentiveness, as a sign of respect. And for this reason men were prepared to participate more since they were taken seriously. Thirdly, men were perceived to be skilled as good public speakers (20% of the female respondents who felt that they would speak more in meetings if they were men cited this reason). This was necessary for making good decisions quickly, as was required in community meetings. A further 11% of this sample felt that when men spoke they were respected for their insight and knowledge, as opposed to women who lacked this intuition. And

⁵ Refer to question 3.3.

on the whole, women felt that men had a more worthwhile input into these meetings than women.

In terms of empowerment, it is more difficult to address the issue of time available to women than it is to address the problem associated with the women's claim that they are poor public speakers. The latter are skills which can be transferred through a training agent and with practice, and hence can be gained as opposed to redressing time availability: this is more difficult to assist women with because of the cultural role of women as primarily responsible for child-rearing and domestic responsibilities. On the issue of women lacking confidence in their own abilities, women should realise that they know as much about water as men (if not more) since they deal with it on a more intimate level. This information would be best transferred through an empowerment workshop. However, in the qualitative research it became evident that one important reason preventing women from overcoming their fear of being involved (reinforced by their fear of public speaking), was their fear that they would be unable to learn the technical requirements of operating and maintaining a water supply system⁶.

Table 11 Reasons why women feel they would speak more in meetings if they were men

	%
Physical time availability - Men have time to attend meetings / men act in the interest of the community	47.2
Respected for status - Men respected for their knowledge/listened to/strong	21.7
Skilled as good public speakers - Men are good at speaking/making decisions	20.0
Knowledge about issues - Men have more worthwhile input than women	11.1
Total	100.0

(n=180)

An overwhelming 93% of the sample felt very good when they first heard about the water project (as indicated in Table 12). There was no significant difference between male and female respondents. However, the respondents tended to have a relatively

⁶ Loosely referred to as technical mysticism.

low opinion of the project since its implementation. This was reflected by the fact that only 70% of the respondents felt the water project was a very good idea now.

Table 12 Comparison between feelings before and after project delivery

	Before (%)	After (%)
Very good	93.1	70.1
Good	5.1	8.0
Average	1.2	7.5
Poor	0.5	5.6
Very poor	0.1	8.9
Total	100.0	100.0

(n=777) (n=765)

The main reason why respondents were in favour of the delivery of the water project was given as the provision of a clean and healthier water source (36% of sample)⁷. This was followed by the fact that the water source was now located more conveniently and was far more accessible to the community (28% of the sample). The female respondents placed slightly greater emphasis on the issue of accessibility of water than their male counterparts as it is generally a female responsibility within the community to fetch the household water.

The respondents were asked about whether they felt they were given a choice over the type of water supply system which was implemented. 65% of both male and female respondents held the opinion that they were given a choice regarding this. This claim is difficult to comprehend since women claimed that they often found it difficult to attend meetings regularly, and in addition to this women seldom spoke in meetings. Thus, even if the female respondents felt that they were given a choice over the type of water project, by all accounts their involvement in this decision had to be in a limited capacity⁸.

⁷ Refer to question 2.7.1.

⁸ Refer to question 2.8.

4 EVALUATION OF THE WATER COMMITTEE

The following section of the report considers the perceptions held about the water committee as made from the community's perspective. Issues which will be focused on include the representativity of the water committee and what percentage of the community voted for the water committee;

4.1 REPRESENTATIVITY OF THE PROJECT COMMITTEE

Throughout the report, female respondents have been indicating that men in the community attend meetings on a more regular basis and participate more freely than women. Yet, when it comes to the question of voting for the project committee, 52% of the women voted for the project committee as opposed to 49% of the men (as indicated in Table 13. There are two factors which arose in the qualitative findings which would hold a bearing on this. Firstly, the relative number of migrant workers in a community often necessitates that the female functional head attend community meetings on behalf of the absent male household head. Secondly, many men in the community would not attend a meeting about water provision since this is deemed to be a domestic matter which is regarded as being a female concern.

Table 13 Did you vote for the project committee?

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Yes	48.5	52.3	50.5
No	51.5	47.7	49.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=757)

Given fact that only 50% of the sample voted for the water committee, problems should be expected in tariff collection of the project, and subsequently operation and maintenance of the project, since half the community could claim that they were not involved in electing the water committee, and hence not prepared to pay for the project. It is recommended that more proactive measures are taken to involve more community members in the election of the water committee.

4.2 PERFORMANCE OF THE WATER COMMITTEE

Overall the evaluation of the performance of the water committee was not only made based on the delivery of the physical product, but on the regularity of the system's functioning and the level of approachability of the committee, as well as their internal functioning and the distribution of work within. Criticism of the project committee was focused on its internal functioning and leadership, as opposed to the product itself.

The sample was asked to rate the performance of the water committee: this was generally felt to be very good (67% of the respondents); with 19% of the sample judging the performance to be good and 7% considering it to be of an average standard. In addition to this, 8% felt that the water committee was operating below average⁹. The main reason cited for the level of performance of the committee was the fact that they ensured the physical product delivery of water (31% of the sample), as indicated in Table 14. Another 19% of the sample felt that the water committee must be doing a good job since they had never had any reason to complain about their activities. The level of approachability of the water committee also influenced the rating of their performance, with 12% of the respondents giving this as the reason for their satisfaction. The last positive reason cited for the water committee's performance was that both men and women representatives of the water committee worked in an equal capacity on the water committee (9% of the sample).

The water committee was perceived to perform poorly because all the members on the committee did not work equally hard and the lack of commitment by certain members jeopardised the entire project (11% of sample). And in addition to this, the water project did not always function as a result the community often ran out of water (7% of the sample). And lastly, the water committee were accused of being biased (7% of the sample) and poor leaders to the community, which could not control their constituency (5%). This extended to allegations that the water committee allocated the taps nearer to the member's homesteads, did not collect water tariffs from all households in the community and that the water committee could not enforce simple rules about water utilization on people who abused the system.

⁹ Refer to question 4.2.

Table 14 Reasons for the level of performance in the project committee?

		%
Positive	Helped us get water	30.6
	Never had complaints	19.3
	Listen to our concerns/complaints	12.3
	All work equally	8.6
Negative	Poor leadership (biased / no control of community)	11.6
	Let one person work	10.5
	Stay without water sometimes	7.2
Total		100.0

(n=725)

4.2.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND GENDER

The sample was asked who they would vote for if they were given the opportunity to repeat the process. On the whole, 42% of the sample felt that the gender of the committee member would not make a difference to the performance of the water committee. An overall 33% felt they would vote for a male candidate, as opposed to the 24% who would vote for a female candidate, as indicated in table 15 which outlines which respondents would vote for by gender. Relatively speaking, the male respondents are more confident in the claim that gender does not affect the performance of a water committee member, as shown by the 47% male opinion compared to the 38% female opinion that gender does not make a difference. Comparatively speaking, 30% of the female respondents supported a female committee member, as opposed to the 19% of the male respondents. However at the same time, 49% of the sample felt that it was more appropriate that a male member be the chairperson of the water committee, even if both a male and female candidate were equally capable of chairing. This was because of cultural reasons which denote that males are the leaders in a community.

Table 15 If you had to vote for a new water committee and had a choice between voting mainly for men or women members, who would you vote for?

	Water committee member			Chairperson		
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Men	33.9	32.3	33.1	49.9	47.5	48.7
Women	19.2	29.8	24.6	14.8	21.9	18.4
No difference	47.0	37.9	42.3	35.4	30.6	32.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=777)

(n=781)

Both the male and female respondents (with 30% and 27% respectively) felt that men had characteristics which made them better committee members. These included dedication, trustworthiness, patience and respect (refer to Table 16). This was followed by those respondents who felt that gender was not important since both male and female committee members worked as equal partners (18% of the male sample as opposed to 14% of the female sample).

Table 16 Reasons for why you would vote for a new water committee by gender of the respondent

Gender of candidate	Reasons	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Both	Work as an equal team/no gender difference	18.2	13.9	16.0
Men	Men are dedicated/trustworthy/patient/ respected	30.4	26.8	28.5
	Men have good suggestions good leaders	11.6	11.3	11.5
	Men are faster/more active	10.2	9.2	9.7
	Men have more time	4.8	6.8	5.9
	Men good for the community	1.4	3.1	2.3
	Women as less educated/illiterate/ need to be home		0.8	0.4
Women	Women as the main water users/ understand water issues	9.1	12.3	10.8
	Women have perseverance/ time to listen/ available/ work well	9.9	9.4	9.7
	Women should be given a chance to prove themselves	2.8	2.4	2.6
	Women are lazy/ gossip too much/ less committed	1.4	1.3	1.4
	Men respect men/ women respect women better		2.6	1.4
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=733)

Similar reasons were cited as to why men were best to chair water committee, as to why the respondent would vote for a male candidate. These included the individual leadership ability of men to make quick and intelligent decisions (35% of sample) and men having more time to serve on a committee (19% of sample)¹⁰.

On the whole, 45% of the sample felt that the water committee would not be more effective if there were more female members present, while 30% favoured the increase in female members and 25% remained undecided¹¹. There was no distinction between the male and female respondents' opinions.

The main reason cited for why women thought the amount of women on the water committee should increase was as follows: women suffer the most through not having convenient access to water as they are the most directly involved in water provision (54% of sample in favour of more women on the committee). Also people felt women should share their ideas more in the committee and encourage each other to participate more widely (10% of sample in favour of more women on the committee). Lastly an increase of women on the committee would give women a chance to prove their ability to the remainder of the community¹².

On the other hand, the reasons given as to why more women should not be placed on the committee included the fact that women were perceived to gossip and fight amongst themselves which decreased productivity and the ability to get things done. (30% of the respondents). Women also have no time in which to attend the meetings (according to 16% of the sample).

4.3 LEVEL OF CONSULTATION

On the whole 84% of the sample were of the opinion that the water committee consulted sufficiently with the community¹³. There was no difference in opinion between the gender of the respondent, nor whether the project was administered by Mvula or other agencies.

¹⁰ Refer to question 4.4.1.

¹¹ Refer to question 4.5.

¹² Refer to question 4.5.1.

¹³ Refer to question 4.6.

What should be borne in mind, is the fact that presently 60% of all community liaisons are undertaken by male community members, only 11% by female members and 29% by both¹⁴. Since this responsibility should be equally shared both genders need to participate in community affairs. Qualitatively, the women indicate that this severely hinders the willingness of women to fulfill positions of leadership since they are seen to be a spectacle acting in an improper manner for a woman. Quantitatively, amongst those respondents who felt men liaise more often than women, 35% felt that it was a male duty to liaise with the community and that men have more authority and respect, as well as having the necessary skills to for public speaking (as indicated in Table 16). Qualitative findings suggested that in many communities male water committee members liaised more with the community since there were no females members on the committee¹⁵.

Although only 11% of the sample felt that women liaise more than men in their community, it was interesting to note the reasons. Firstly, women showed the potential to lead the water project because they knew more about water than men did. Thus, within their community men were perceived as the more appropriate project leaders with the necessary authority (refer to table 17). Secondly, there were greater numbers of women in the community, specifically given the high incidence of migrancy and because unemployed men often left the community to go seek work. Thus women were perceived to be democratically the more favoured people to take up the responsibility to liaise (23% of the sample who said that presently women liaised more than men in their community). Thirdly, women had characteristics which made them better at liaising with people than men, such as being more patient, honest and approachable (19% of this sample).

¹⁴ Refer to question 4.8.

¹⁵ Refer to the chapter on the profile of the water committee, where 4 of 16 committees only had male members.

Table 17 Reasons for why different committee members liaise more with the community

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Both (%)	Total (%)
Equal shared responsibility to liaise/both participate	2.7	6.3	90.7	30.5
Male duty to liaise with the community	35.3	1.6	2.2	21.3
Men have more respect/have authority	21.4			12.3
Men are good communicators/listeners/speakers in meetings	10.7	1.6		6.3
Men more flexible/relied upon/do more work	8.6	1.6	0.5	5.3
Women have the potential to lead/know more	0.3	35.9	0.5	4.3
Men are quick-thinkers/educated/effective	5.3	1.6	0.5	3.4
Men are more available & have time	5.9			3.4
Women as shy to speak	4.7	3.1	0.5	3.3
Women are patient/honest/available/approachable	0.3	18.8	1.1	2.6
Women are in the community more		23.4		2.6
Equal as guided by the committee constitution		3.1	3.8	1.5
Women do not attend meetings	2.4			1.4
Women are more respected	0.9	1.6		0.7
Cultural reasons	1.2			0.7
Women have time		1.6		0.2
Men know what they are doing/have skills	0.3			0.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=583)

It was interesting that when community members experienced problems within the water or sanitation project, in 58% of the cases they would approach a male member and in 13% they would approach a female member. The main reason for this was that men tended to hold the positions of authority in the committees and men were able to solve problems quickly, as opposed to women who were considered slower and more contemplative¹⁶. Of the respondents, 30% felt that it made no difference whom they approached – accepting whomever was available¹⁷.

The water committee members were perceived as being good listeners since 83% of the sample felt their suggestions, ideas or complaints were listened to by the committee and only 17% felt that the committee did not listen to them¹⁸. The main indicators that the water committee listened to the community included: the respondents felt that their input was welcomed by the water committee; the committee

¹⁶ Refer to question 3.3.1.

¹⁷ Refer to question 3.3.

held regular report backs to the community at which all suggestions were responded to; the committee has a good track record and depends on the suggestions being made¹⁹.

4.4 LEVEL OF WILLINGNESS TO TAKE UP A POSITION ON THE WATER COMMITTEE

The sample was questioned about their willingness to take up a position on the water committee. This provided insight into what the main obstacles were for the community in general, and women specifically.

Respondents were asked whether or not they would contemplate taking up a position of authority on the water committee if they were voted for. The results indicated a clear willingness amongst male respondents to undertake such a position (68%). Women on the other hand were rather reluctant to fulfill a leadership position (46%).

Table 18 Whether respondents would take up a position on the water committee if voted for

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	67.8	45.8	56.5
No	32.2	54.2	43.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=759)

The main reasons given for being on the water committee were the opportunity to serve the community (93% of the male respondents and 87% of the female respondents) and to participate more in community structures (6% of the male and 7% of the female respondents).

¹⁸ Refer to question 3.2.

¹⁹ Refer to question 3.2.1.

Table 19 Reasons for being on the water committee

	Male Respondents (%)	Female Respondents (%)
To serve the community	93.4	88.6
Would like to participate more	5.7	7.4
Share ideas/be informed/trained	1.8	1.4
I use more/need water		1.4
To be an example to other women		1.4
Total	100.0	100.0
	(n=211)	(n=131)

In table 20, there were a number of obstacles preventing respondents from taking up the position on the water committee. The first was that this position took a great deal of time and energy. Interestingly, 47% of the male, as compared to 39% of the female respondents cited this as a reason. The second obstacle was the issue of the respondents health' inadequacies, such as old age and physical ailments (as indicated by 47% of the male respondents and 39% of the female respondent).

The third obstacle (identified only by female respondents) was that women were not good public speakers. However, it is a very understandable assumption as most community members only interact with the water committee when it addresses the community in public meetings. This was supported by the fact that the female respondents had only a narrow understanding of what the members of the water committee do.

Table 20 Reasons for not being on the water committee

	Male Respondents (%)	Female Respondents (%)
I don't have time/energy	46.7	38.6
I am too old/health reasons	46.7	39.2
Not patient enough/not interested	4.4	4.1
Not educated	2.2	
Women are not good speakers		11.7
Short-tempered/cannot work with people/lazy		2.3
Women are not respected		1.8
Too many problems for the committee members:		1.2
Cannot work with the opposite sex		1.2
	100.0	100.0
	(n=90)	(n=171)

The prevalence of a gender bias within the community was clearly evident. Women were treated differently on the basis that they were women, regardless of their ability. Half the female sample felt that they would be listened to more if they were able to change their gender, as opposed to 23% of the male respondents. However, there was a large component of the sample who were uncertain about this (45% of the male respondents and 33% of the female respondents).

Table 21 Do you feel that if you could change your gender you would be listened to more?

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Uncertain	44.6	33.0	38.6
Yes	23.4	50.0	37.3
No	32.0	17.0	24.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=664)

The main reason why men felt that it would make a difference if their gender was switched was because the committee did not listen to women since women were undermined and not respected on the basis that they gossiped to much (as indicated in table 23). Overall 60% of the female respondents felt that a gender change would result in the committee listening to them more since men were more respected in the community and were good public speakers which made the committee listen to them. Also, the respondents indicated that they always approached the water committee in community meetings, never in their individual capacity. At the same time, 63% of those women who felt that gender would not affect the amount they were listened to, were of the opinion that the water committee listens to everyone equally.

Table 22 Reasons why the respondents felt that a change in gender would affect the amount they were listened to by the committee

	Opinion of male respondents (%)		Opinion of female respondents (%)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Men respected/creative/good speakers	29.2	4.8	59.9	2.0
Committee listens to everybody equally	18.5	27.7	12.5	63.3
Depends on what individuals have to say	27.7	9.6	11.8	12.2
Men listen more than women	7.7	2.4	3.3	4.1
Women undermined/not respected as they gossip	4.6	34.9	3.3	8.2
Decisions would be reached easier because men are used to making decisions			3.3	
Women more attentive listeners	12.3	1.2	2.0	
Cultural divides eg low status of women		2.4	2.0	4.1
Women afraid to speak since too shy		1.2	1.3	
Women do not speak at meetings		15.7	0.7	6.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=483)

4.5 COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROJECT

Mvula Trust policy ensures that communities make a contribution to the capital costs of the project. This contribution amounts to 8% of the total value of the project. Certain communities elect to pay this amount in cash, or through a value contributed through the donation of a proportion of the labourer's fee. In the sample, 67% of the respondents made a financial contribution to the project. This varied between Mvula Trust communities where 73% of the sample made a contribution, and non-Mvula Trust communities where only 56% of the sample made a financial contribution to the capital costs²⁰. However, in both Mvula and non-Mvula communities, a similar 56% of the sample had to make a contribution to the operation and maintenance of the project (referred to as the emergency fund in Mvula communities)²¹. There was no difference between the gender of the respondent as both the capital contribution and the operation and maintenance contribution was on a household, not an individual basis.

²⁰ Refer to question 6.1.

²¹ Refer to question 6.2.

4.5.1 WILLINGNESS TO PAY OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE PROJECT

On the whole, female respondents were more willing than male respondents to pay this contribution, since they more directly impacted upon through the provision of a portable water source. Surprisingly a greater proportion of male respondents were willing to contribute to this money than the women were (with 65% of the male respondents, as opposed to 55% of the female respondents being very willing to contribute, as indicated in Table 23). Qualitatively, this was explained by the fact that the women had a great deal of other household expenses to worry about, and cash was more scarce a resource than time and labour. Also, women seldom had access to their own source of income. The provision of money for the functioning of the water system had to be provided by the male household head. This was thus, predominantly left to his discretion.

Table 23 Willingness to make the contribution to the operation and maintenance of the project

	Male	Female	Total
Very willing	65.2	55.4	59.9
Fairly willing	9.1	11.2	10.2
Willing	7.6	8.7	8.2
Unwilling	12.9	19.6	16.5
Very unwilling	5.3	5.1	5.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=576)

There was a perception within the community that 44% of the community made this contribution, while 56% of the community did not²². The female respondents felt marginally more people made the contribution at 46%, than the male respondents at 41%. For qualitative reasons, it would be assumed that the female respondents had a more accurate perception since they dealt with water on a daily basis and since they spoke about this issue more than the male respondents (who felt that water was a domestic matter thus left to the women in the community).

²² Refer to question 6.4.

Table 24 Reasons for not paying for the maintenance of the project

	Male	Female	Total
Complain about the lack of money & affordability	39.3	37.7	38.5
Do not feel they have to pay for water	32.7	42.3	37.7
Committee knows & informs about non-payment issues	13.1	6.9	9.9
No running water/irregular water supply	9.0	6.2	7.5
Community do not use water equally	2.5	2.3	2.4
Water too far away	0.8	3.1	2.0
Other	3.2	1.5	2.4
	100.6	100.0	100.4

(n=252)

The main reasons affecting payment are outlined in Table 24: the most important of these being the lack of money and the inability to afford the payment of water. Secondly, the sample felt that water was a free resource for which they did not have to pay - more specifically the female respondents at 42% and the male respondents at 33%. Again the issue arose that women felt the shortages of money more severely than the men did, since they has less potential to earn than the men. Thirdly, the sample felt that they took a lead about payment from the water committee, whom informs them of issues of payment and non-payment. In this instance, 13% of the male sample were not paying for these reasons and only 7% of the female sample. Other reasons for not paying included the lack of running water, inaccessibility to the water stand pipes and the unfairness that certain people use more water than others, yet the community are expected to pay a flat rate.

4.5.2 LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION

Increasing the number of women on the water committee would not significantly affect the level of contribution made by the community to the water project. This was predominantly because men regulated how much money was made available for household expenditures, even though women had a significant influence over how this money was spent. In the sample, only 11% of the respondents felt that an increase in the number of women on the committee would result in improved contribution collections. Overall, 68% of the sample felt that the gender distribution would not affect the willingness to pay since a person's willingness to pay was not linked to gender but to a persons ability to pay (i.e. their level of project satisfaction and financial status). Of the male sample who felt that this would not increase the

willingness to contribute, 40% attributed this to the fact that women were not respected in the community (similar to the 39% of the women) and

Table 25 Do you feel that if there were more women on the water committee, more households would pay their contributions?

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Yes	12.6	9.8	11.1
No	22.3	19.6	20.8
No difference	65.2	70.7	68.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=523)

It was felt by the sample that an increase in the female to male gender ratio would not increase the amount of contributions to the committee. While 39% of the sample who were of this opinion felt that there was an overall lack of respect for women and 25% felt that payment was more fundamentally linked to a person's individual willingness to pay, as opposed to gender (refer to Table 26). Also, as personality type (12% of the male respondents who felt that women on the committee would not increase a persons willingness to pay) women were not much good at approaching people. In addition to this, there was a cultural restriction on the mobility of women within the community.

Table 26 Reasons why more women on the water committee would not increase the willingness of the community to make this contribution

	Male	Female
There is a lack of respect for women present	39.5	38.8
Depends on willingness to pay	25.6	24.4
Women are not good at approaching people	11.6	4.1
Men have the money and power	9.3	2.0
Performance of the committee is not related to gender	4.7	4.1
Women are lazy/poor talkers	2.3	6.1
If a person has no money it makes no difference	4.6	14.3
Other	2.3	6.0
	100.0	99.8

(n=109)

As indicated in table 28, more women on the committee would increase the willingness of the community to contribute to the water project since the women were more familiar with water, more shrewd with money and very good at convincing people.

Table 27 Reasons why more women on the water committee would increase the willingness of the community to make this contribution

	%
Women are good in financial matters	34.1
Women larger consumers of water/know more about water	26.8
Misuse of money (corruption)	17.1
Women more serious than men	7.3
Because we need water	7.3
They know how to convince people	4.9
If a person has no money it makes no difference	2.4
	100.0

(n=41)

4.6 LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

On the whole, the female respondents were involved more in the water project than the male respondents, at 66% and 61% respectively (as indicated in table 28). This contradicts the opinions expressed by the respondents thus far - in that men were perceived to be more active in the community than women. Qualitative findings strongly support this in that women (often out of loyalty, duty and respect) will claim that in practice the cultural dominance of men is paramount, while in practice women perform an "unrecognised", yet very significant role, in community development. This role is unrecognised since men and even women will not verbalise that this role is performed by women nor will women draw attention to their performance. Furthermore a project was deemed to be of lesser importance as soon as it became known as a "women's project" and so the best way to ensure a project's success was to give it the authority which the male leadership and involvement ensured.

Table 28 Were you involved in the water project in any manner?

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Yes	60.5	66.0	63.3
No	39.5	34.0	36.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=769)

The respondents were involved in the water project on a number of levels, as indicated in table 29. The most common form of contribution to the water project was the donation of money to the project, with approximately 38% of the respondents donating money. Certain people contributed through attendance at community meetings: a trend that showed a male bias, as previously indicated in the section 3.2 on page 15. Amongst the male respondents, 32% attended community meetings, while only 24% of the female respondents attended meetings.

It is very significant that more women donated labour to the project (22% of the sample), than did men (15% of the sample). This again demonstrated that the women were more involved in the project than they admitted to. In the case where labour was donated to the project, women were relatively more involved than the men were. However, when labour was employed on the project there was no significant gap between the male and female respondents at 6%. Other forms of assistance included the provision of food or drink to the workers; being on the water committee and lending equipment to the project. On the whole, 83% of the sample felt that their contribution was useful to the project²³ and ensured that the project was a success. This showed that the female respondents recognised the importance that their contribution made to the overall success of the project, especially since 87% of the women felt their contribution was valuable as opposed to 80% of the male respondents.

Table 29 Capacity of involvement in the water project by the male and female respondents

	Male (%)	Female (%)
Attended community meetings	32.4	24.1
Donated money to the project	38.2	37.5
Donated labour to the project	15.0	22.1
Other assistance eg food or drink for workers	3.1	4.4
Served on the water community	2.5	3.6
Employed as labour on the project	5.5	6.1
Lent equipment to the project eg bucket, wheelbarrow etc	3.0	2.2
Other	1.8	1.9
	100.0	100.0

(n=772)

²³ Refer to question 5.3.

The vast majority of the sample wanted to know more about the functioning of the water committee, however relatively large percentage of male respondents at 96%, compared to 92% of the women. The difference would be accounted for by those women who felt that it was a male responsibility to be involved in community structures²⁴.

²⁴ Refer to question 4.9.

5 EVALUATION OF THE DELIVERY PROCESS

With hindsight, 69% of the sample felt that there had been no delays experienced in the delivery process²⁵. There was no difference between the perceptions of the male and female respondents. Furthermore there was no indication that projects implemented by non-Mvula agencies experienced more problems with delivery than Mvula projects.

The main problems experienced in the water delivery process resulted from problems which could best be termed technical, as opposed to management problems or problems arising from community dynamics. The most prominent concern was that in the one non-Mvula community, although the project was completed, there was not water running yet (as indicated in Table 30). The community were unable to explain why the system had not yet been made operative. The second largest problem, as experienced by 17.8% of those people who had experienced problems, was that the project had been delayed because of financial problems. This was a problem which was not unique to non-Mvula communities. The third largest problem experienced was the result of poor pipes.

Table 30 Problems that caused delays in the delivery of the project

	Mvula Project (%)	Non-Mvula Project (%)	Total (%)
Started project late due to financial problems	16.7	43.8	32.1
Pipes in poor condition	45.8	15.6	28.6
Children playing which wrecks the pipes	4.2	12.5	8.9
Water stoppages	8.3	6.3	7.1
No engine to pump water	0	9.4	5.4
Too expensive	4.2	6.3	5.4
Reservoir was leaking	8.3	0	3.6
Taps too far away	8.3	0	3.6
Bad tasting water (chemicals)	0	3.1	1.8
Money to pay the labourers was stolen	4.2	0	1.8
Delays due to rain	4.2	3.1	1.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=56)

²⁵ Refer to question 7.1.

Amongst the sample who felt that there were delays experienced in the project, 63% felt that these delays could have been avoided, while 3% felt that they could not have been avoided and 34% said they were uncertain²⁶. Of those people who felt that the problems could have been avoided (as indicated in Table 31), 49% felt that this was best done by making proper arrangements in advance with the community. A further 22% felt that the committee should maintain the system by fixing problems as they arise and 9% felt that more suitable people with better qualifications should have been involved in the project delivery. This relates to people within the committee and not to the qualifications of the external agent.

Table 31 Methods proposed through which the problems could have been avoided

	Total (%)
Make proper arrangements in advance with the community	49.3
Because they claimed to have fixed everything	22.4
By employing suitable qualified people	9.0
Force the people to pay	6.0
Put taps closer to the property	6.0
By building engines	3.0
Finish project off fully	3.0
We have water all the time	1.5
	100.0

(n=67)

Amongst the sample that felt there were problems with the project, 24% felt that these problems could be avoided if there were more women on the project and 30% felt that these problems would not have made a difference. 46% felt that the number of women on the committee made no difference to the level of delays / problems²⁷.

The main reason cited as to why fewer problems would have been experienced in the project with a greater number of women was because women work best under the supervision of men. Therefore a committee constituting more women would mean that there were more people to undertake the work (50% of the people who felt that the problems would have been avoided if there were more women on the

²⁶ Refer to question 7.2.

²⁷ Refer to question 7.3.

committee)²⁸. Also, since women are the people in the community who feel the burden of collecting household water, they would be more dedicated to the success of the project (25% of the people who felt that the problems would have been avoided if there were more women on the committee). Amongst those people who felt that increasing the number of women on the committee would have no difference to the number of project delays, most felt that performance was not linked to the gender of the person (79% of the sample who felt gender had no impact on performance).

5.1 RELIABILITY OF THE WATER PROJECT

The reliability of a water project is a relative term that gives an indication about the level to which a community can trust the system to be functioning. Within the survey, there was another dichotomy in that the community felt their water supply system was reliable yet at the same time 30% of the systems stopped functioning on a daily basis, 15% on a weekly basis, 16% of bi-monthly basis and 12% on a monthly basis (as indicated in table 32). This by no means appears to be the characteristic of a reliable system, however the regularity of these stoppages seemed to contribute to the perception of reliability. Qualitative findings indicated that at certain times of the day, systems would run out of water due to demand exceeding the capacity of the system. People within the community dealt with this by ensuring they collected water from the system earlier in the day, as the late afternoons was when water was in short supply. In the qualitative research, a distinction was made between short-term water shortages, and longer term shortages.

Overall, the sample felt that the water project was very reliable²⁹. Comparatively speaking the Mvula Trust projects were considered to be more reliable than the non-Mvula Trust projects. Amongst the Mvula Projects sample, 71% felt it was reliable as opposed to 61% in non-Mvula Trust projects.

²⁸ Refer to question 7.3.1.

²⁹ Refer to question 8.1.

Table 32 Regularity with which the water supply stops functioning

	Mvula Trust	Non-Mvula	Total
Daily	22.3	38.9	28.5
Twice a week	4.9	10.8	7.1
Weekly	16.3	12.7	15.0
Twice a month	19.7	10.2	16.2
Monthly	11.0	14.0	12.1
Every three month	16.7	1.9	11.2
Every six months	3.0	3.8	3.3
Once a year	6.1	7.6	6.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=421)

It appeared that the level of information held about why the project stopped working needed to be more widely circulated. On the whole community members were not informed about why these delays in the flow of water occurred. Information about why this occurred was more widely known in Mvula communities (42% of Mvula sample) and amongst women (37% of female respondents), than non-Mvula communities (29% of non-Mvula sample) and amongst men (38% of male respondents)³⁰(refer to Table 33).

Table 33 Do you know why the water supply project stops functioning?

	Mvula Trust (%)	Other Agency (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Yes	41.2	29.0	38.0	36.7	37.3
No	58.8	71.0	62.0	63.3	62.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=806)

It should be borne in mind that only 37% of the sample knew why the water supply system stopped functioning. The two main reasons cited as for why the system was not functioning were considered long term reasons which impacted on the sustainability of the project. Firstly, the reasons given as to why both the Mvula and the non-Mvula Trust systems stopped working were as a result of the engine being broken. This was the opinion of 29% of the respondents in Mvula communities and 45% of the cases in non-Mvula communities. Secondly, the lack of general maintenance on the system was identified as the reason for the system not functioning

was noted by 21.5 % of the sample. The third reason affecting the functioning of the system was a short-term problem of the reservoir running out of water, which occurred more frequently.

Table 34 Reasons why the system stops working

	Mvula Trust	Other Agency	Total
Engine broken	29.1	44.9	32.9
Maintenance being done	21.4	21.7	21.5
Water not full in the reservoir	21.8	7.2	18.3
No diesel	14.5	2.9	11.8
Water pipes burst	7.3	5.8	6.9
People not paying for water	2.7	4.3	3.1
Sharing one engine between two communities		11.6	2.8
Save water	3.2	1.4	2.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=286)

5.2 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

There were many problems associated with water supply system, as identified in section 5.1, on page 39. The majority of these problems could be avoided if operation and maintenance thereof was proceeding more efficiently than at present. The water committee were responsible for the operation of the system, although evidence suggested that certain private individuals were often mandated to undertake the actual maintenance work. Qualitatively it was shown that most of these responsibilities were left to the male people in the community, as private individuals or members of the water committee.

Table 35 shows who was responsible for the operations and maintenance of the water project. In the Mvula Trust communities, this was largely the responsibility of the water committee (89% for operations and 71% for maintenance). In non-Mvula communities this was also largely the responsibility of the water committee (50% for operations and 43% for maintenance) but there was an equally large role for an outside organisation (30% for operations and 42% for maintenance) whether the funding agency itself, or a project agent for the funding agent.

³⁰ Refer to question 3.4.

Table 35 Who is responsible for the operations of the water supply system?

	Operations (%)		Maintenance (%)	
	Mvula Trust	Other Agency	Mvula Trust	Other Agency
Water committee member	88.7	49.8	71.0	43.3
Private individual	8.4	19.8	15.5	15.0
Outside organisation	2.8	30.4	13.6	41.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=751)

(n=763)

Women were not given an opportunity to take on the responsibility of operating and maintaining the water supply system. Within both Mvula and non-Mvula communities, between 94% and 99% respectively of these positions were held by men (as indicated in Table 36). What is more concerning is that marginally fewer women in Mvula communities are given the opportunity to operate and maintain the water supply system than in non-Mvula communities. This provides clear evidence that at present the gender quota as stipulated in Mvula policy is not being correctly applied.

Table 36 Gender of the person who operates and maintains the water system within Mvula and non-Mvula areas

	Operations (%)		Maintenance (%)	
	Mvula Trust	Other Agency	Mvula Trust	Other Agency
Man	97.9	93.5	98.6	94.4
Woman	2.1	6.5	1.4	5.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=639)

(n=607)

The performance of the person responsible for the operation and maintenance of the system was evaluated by the respondents in Table 37 and Table 39 respectively.

In terms of the performance of the systems operator, there was insignificant difference between evaluation of the male operators as given by the male and female respondents. In both cases approximately 85-86% of the sample felt that the male operators performed well, while approximately 8-9% felt they performed average and only 6% felt that they performed poorly.

Table 37 Evaluated performance of the person who operates the system based on gender

		Male Respondents (%)		Female Respondents (%)	
		Gender of Operator			
		Man	Woman	Man	Woman
Performance	Good	85.1	28.6	86.3	75.0
	Average	8.9	14.3	7.5	12.5
	Poor	6.0	57.1	6.2	12.5
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=637)

It was startling to see the different performance evaluations given by male and female respondents to the performance of those people who operated the system. The male respondents felt that only 39% of the female system operators were performing well, as opposed to the 75% performing well when evaluated by female respondents. Given certain biases that male and female respondents may hold towards people of their own gender, the skewed evaluation given by the respondents over the performance of the female system operators need to be critically evaluated. It appears that the basis on which the female operator is evaluated is not based on performance, but the basis of her gender and the characteristic connotations thereof. There were no negative marks of performance against any of the female operators. The type of connotations working against more women being water system operators were identified in the qualitative research to include, amongst other things, the following: women are not technically-minded; women are erratic and so cannot be relied upon to operate a system; and women are breaking their cultural heritage by taking up positions of leadership in the community.

Table 38 Reasons why the person who does the operations of the system does a good job?

	Percentage
Water is always available	32.0
Doing the job properly	18.4
No complaints/never had problems	11.9
Work is satisfactory	11.2
Good service	6.3
Liaises with the community	5.8
Problems solved quickly	5.2
Responsible/dedicated	4.5
Closes and opens water at the appropriate time	4.0
Water starts/stops all the time	0.2
Not doing job properly	0.2
Water not yet available	0.2
Total	100.0

(n=673)

The performance rating of the person maintaining the water supply system was similar to that of the person operating the system. Qualitatively it often occurred that this was one and the same person. In Table 39, the male respondents felt that 84% of the male operators were doing a good job, while only 43% of the female people responsible for maintenance were performing well. The female respondents, in a similar manner to when evaluating the female operators, felt that the 86% of the male people in charge of maintenance were doing a good job and 89% of the female operators were performing well.

Table 39 Evaluated performance of the person who maintains the system based on gender

		Male Respondents		Female Respondents	
		(%)		(%)	
		Gender of Operator			
		Man	Woman	Man	Woman
Performance	Good	84.2	42.9	85.8	88.9
	Average	7.6	57.1	8.6	11.1
	Poor	8.3		5.6	
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=637)

The good rating of the person who maintained the system was based on the quick services they provided and the approachability of this person to request service (31% of respondents). Also the lack of problems experienced with the stand-pipes (28% of respondents) and the overall impression that they were doing their job well were other reasons given. Again there were no valid reasons given as to why the female people in charge of operating the system were getting a different, notably lower, rating than the male people responsible for maintenance. From this it is concluded that the women are being discriminated against in the rating by the mere fact that their gender is female.

Table 40 Reasons attributed to the good performance of the maintenance person

	%
Quick service/approachable	30.5
No problems with taps so far	28.1
Doing the job well	21.2
No complaints about him	17.6
Takes time to repair	1.2
Basic experience of engineering	0.6
Not using the system	0.4
Corruption in person operating the system	0.4
Total	100.0

(n=501)

5.3 DOES GENDER MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

In terms of performance ratings, the women involved in operation and maintenance, although a smaller sample, were given a lower rating by the male respondents although no valid reasons were cited for this evaluation. This leads to a conclusion that the performance rating is not based on the performance, but other factors that are associated with a person because of gender.

In the final section below, which looks at who the community feel should drive development, the gender biases within the community are further unpacked.

5.4 WHO SHOULD DRIVE DEVELOPMENT?

Community development is a process that should be conducted in equal partnership between the men and the women of the community. This was a perspective shared by both the male (74%) and the female (78%) respondents, as indicated in Table 41. The

cultural perspective that men should lead in the community acted as a dampening effect on the possibility of women leading in conjunction with men.

Table 41 Who should drive development in the community

	Male (%)	Female (%)
Both men and women should drive development	73.9	78.4
Men should drive development	19.1	14.4
Women should drive development	7.0	7.2
	100.0	100.0

(n=790)

A significant 20% of the male respondents and 14% of the female respondents felt that men should lead development. This was attributed to the fact that men can talk and push development forward because they are more focused and determined because they are born leaders (as indicated by 30% of the sample who favoured male leadership in development in Table 39). This sample further felt that men were more dedicated and committed to development within the community than women were. This perception needs to be critically evaluated since women have arguably as much to gain from community development as their male counterparts.

Table 42 Reasons why certain people should drive development

	Men (%)	Female (%)	Both (%)
Share ideas / exposure to issues in the community		14.0	49.1
Both must work together			26.1
Both can work for the community			11.9
Women have equal rights to men		40.0	8.1
There is no difference in development in terms of gender			4.6
Women take the initiative before men		24.0	
Women know the needs of the households		22.0	
Men can talk and push development forward	29.5		
Men are dedicated and cleverer than women	19.4		
Men are the good workers/communicators	17.1		
Men are physically stronger	10.9		
Men have more respect	9.3		
Men are more available	5.5		
Men have time to visit different places	4.7		
Women are useless and always make excuses	3.9		
	100.0	100.0	100.0

(n=790)

The female respondents felt that since women had equal rights to the men in the community, they have as much right to drive development as men (40% of female respondents). In addition to this, women can share their ideas about development which they have because they are more affected by the lack of development in the community than men are (14% of female respondents). The women felt that it was a well known fact that when a problem arises, the women in the community take initiatives before the men do. The women mentioned that the men always spoke about taking initiatives long after the women had found solutions (24% of female respondents). However, the men did not recognise this characteristic in women. And finally, the women felt that they knew the needs of their households better than the men did, they were better equipped with knowledge about in which direction to lead community development (22% of female respondents).

The show of confidence by the women about taking a lead in community development was a refreshing change given the timid, almost apologetic, nature of their earlier responses about male leadership in the community. This is best explained by the qualitative findings that women recognise their well-positioned status in the community in terms of undertaking development, specifically since it relates to the domestic sphere and the household (which has culturally been a female domain). Yet, the same cultural factors portray women as inferior to men and require women to be subservient to the men of the community. This provides contradiction in the minds of the women - women know about community development needs better than men, but women are not allowed to use this knowledge as it breaks the cultural norm of subservience.

In mediating this contradiction, women start to verbalise male autonomy while proceeding with development in a non-verbal, unrecorded manner. This is best demonstrated by the way women did not speak in community meetings, yet when it came to voting, more female respondents voted for the water committee than male respondents did. At the same time, men claimed to attend community meetings more regularly than female respondents, yet they were not at the meeting at which the water committee was elected. In all probability, the male respondents felt that the reason for the meeting (community water supply) was of no concern to them and chose not to

attend. Women on the other hand, knew the importance and uncharacteristically attended this meeting.

Amongst the male respondents, 30% felt that men spoke more and were able to drive development forward, and that men were more dedicated and cleverer than women (19% of the male respondents) were able to lead the community. Furthermore, men were better communicators and workers than women (17.1% of male respondents). Many of these reasons could be disputed given the evidence in this report. Most notably was the fact that 22% of the female respondents donated labour, as opposed to 15% of the male sample.

The main two factors hindering women from taking up a position of leadership in the community were a lack of self-confidence and a lack of experience. At no time was there any demonstration in a lack of knowledge, ability or dedication. Leadership is a skill that a person is born with and which is developed through life experiences and opportunities. Within African rural culture, women are given few opportunities to exercise these skills and hence are timid and shy about taking up positions of leadership. These skills can best be developed through applying a more prescriptive gender ration.

6 CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section provides the main conclusions to the report, each followed by a recommendation.

- On the whole, women participated in the water project to a lesser extent than the men. Although the sample proportion of women were at the public meeting at which they first heard about the water project, fewer women claimed to speak in community meetings, either because they feel they have little value to contribute, or because they are shy since they believe they are not good at public speaking. This is difficult to believe given the fact that women know more about water-related matters since they take primary responsibility for the household collection and utilization thereof. Women within the community, not only on the water committee, need to be involved in a workshop about empowerment. In this manner, the participation of women within community meetings at which crucial decisions are made will be increased. Also, women in the community will be less afraid to be nominated and accept positions of leadership in the community.
- Women empowerment needs to be specified as an objective in Mvula Policy. This will ensure that the Project Development Facilitators (PDFs) reinforce the importance of women within the meeting between the community and the water committee. This will go a long way towards building a better self-esteem in women and to increase the faith in their own ability. In addition to this, a workshop on empowerment needs to be run with the women of the community.
- Only half the sample voted for the water committee, marginally more women than men. This did not impact upon the evaluation of the water committee's performance since two-thirds of the sample felt the water committee performed very well and a further fifth felt the water committee performed well. Interestingly enough, this evaluation was based more on the product delivery, and not on the product reliability.

- On the whole the performance of the project was good, as was the evaluation of the water committee. However, the male respondents demonstrated a lack of confidence in the ability of women, which demonstrated the gender bias within the rural context. Women largely have internalised this lack of faith in their ability which perpetuates the disempowering cycle in the community. The only way to address this would be to hold empowerment workshops within the community, not only with the water committee members but with all the women in the community in order to ensure a more broad based support of women on the committee.