

Beyond COP26_17 March 2022.m4a

Speaker 1 [00:00:00] Okay let's start. Welcome to Beyond COP 26 and participatory water governance, lessons from South Africa. Our first podcast from Wits University School of Public Health, in collaboration with Agincourt MRC research unit and Aberdeen university. It's about engaging communities as partners in health and sustainable actions. So, this series is about using participatory action research to understand community health. And the focus is why is water a problem in South Africa? And what happened in COP 26 related to water governance? So. I'm Jennifer Hove. Your Host, a research fellow from Wits University, South Africa together with my co-hosts Denny Mabetha, who led the participatory action process in Agincourt. So over to you Denny. Can you briefly introduce yourself and tell us where you come from and what you do?

Speaker 2 Okay. Thanks, Jennifer, for the opportunity. My name is Denny Mabetha. I am a project site manager at Wits Agincourt HDDS unit. So as a project site manager, I am responsible to lead the Participatory Action Research Data Collection process, engaging stakeholders from various levels, including the community stakeholders, service providers at the local and the provincial and other levels of the communities. So, I'll be explaining later how we employed the PAR methods to collect data and impact on water related issues in communities.

Speaker 1 Okay, thank you Denny. So this series guests are Mr. Khosa, a service provider from Agincourt and Mr Mnisi, a community representative from Agincourt study site. So, Mr. Khoza, would you kindly introduce yourself, what you do and where are from.

Speaker 3 [00:02:17] Thanks, and good afternoon, my name is, Clayton Khoza, I am the acting Communications Manager for Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

Speaker 4 [00:02:30] Thank you. My name is Jabulani Mnisi. I'm a community representative.

Speaker 1 [00:02:38] Okay. Thank you very much, both of you. So, COP 26 highlighted the need for meaningful, ongoing engagement to deliver social change. So, what is community engagement or participation or involvement? It simply means involving communities in issues affecting their health, their life, in priority setting that is from the beginning and through planning, decision making, monitoring and evaluation. So why is this important? It is important to co-design and co-produce evidence relevant for policy and also for intervention that can be made at local level. And in the wake of COP 2026, what is needed more is to close the implementation gap. We have good policies that support for community participation in both health and water, but not only in South Africa but around the world. But the challenge is implementation of these policies to achieve effective community participation and sustainable actions. So, since the inception of COP in 1999, tangible progress has been made but the biggest question is what needs to be done differently? So how does this relate to South Africa. COP26 demonstrated that climate crisis is a water crisis. South Africa is a semi- arid country characterized by unpredictable climate, with constrained water resources because of weather extremes. So around 5 million people, mainly in the rural areas, they lack access to water. In some of the conversation that took place in Glasgow last year on climate is that climate is at the center of everything we do, and climate change is also rooted in human behavior and how can we change human behavior? There is need therefore for effective action to take place. And also there is the need to localize the conversation and all voices need to be heard and considered. So, we present this doctoral research embedded within a five-year MRC

programme and developing local knowledge on health priorities in a rural province and advancing processes to engage multi-sectoral stakeholder to respond to lack of safe water, as a community nominated priority in South Africa. So, we asked the community to identify their priority health topic and they said, hold on, we cannot discuss health before we address water challenges in our communities. So how did we engage the community and how did they nominate water as their topic of interest. My co-host Denny Mabetha will take us through this.

Speaker 2: Okay. Thanks, Jennifer. It also important to mention that this work was embedded within the HDSS under the process called Verbal Autopsy with participatory action research. The aim of this work is to create safe spaces of engagement between communities and service providers. We employed participatory action research methods, which involves collaborating and partnering respectively with communities and service providers. Communities in this case are representatives of the way that is usually excluded from decision making and implementation. This process aimed at giving the community voice and teeth, enabling the communities to use their voice to raise their voice with regard to service provision in the Bushbuckridge in general. It is also important to note that participatory action methods also involve making decision involving making or making decision together between communities, core researchers and service providers, valuing each other, acknowledging each other's perspective on health and social issues, and incorporating community voice throughout. So, it's about working with communities in making decision, in planning and also implementing those plans. So, we worked with three villages within the HDSS. We nominated community stakeholders, and community stakeholders nominated other community stakeholders who were representative of women of childbearing age, CDF members, youth and adolescents, young women, and made traditional authorities, researchers and members of the faith-based organizations. So like Jennifer said, we asked what is it that is an issue, a common issue within the Agincourt HDSS, and they collectively nominated lack of safe and clean water. We used the PAR method to collectively nominate that health issues. And then we further went to explore on the problem what is the problem, what are the root causes of lack of safe, clean water and what is the impact? What can also be done to address this issue? And we in the process also realized that as communities we cannot work alone to address issues. Hence, that process encourages partnership. Stakeholders within the communities also helped us to nominate other service providers who are relevant to the project. So, we have Mr. Mnisi, who will also take us through that. But before Jennifer, would you like to make a comment on how we proceeded with the community stakeholders or their findings in general?

Speaker 1: Okay. So also like as we have Mr Khoza in this team, He is also a product from what the what the community said, they identified actors who could help us to solve these problems. And they said we needed to create dialogue with the municipality so that we talk. And then build relationships. That's how we've come to know also the municipality and maybe that we can hear from Baba Mnisi his experience with the lack of water in the communities they live in.

Speaker 4: [00:09:43] Thanks Jennifer. Firstly, the causes of the shortage of water I think is climate change, first. The impact of the climate change, cause water to be scarce and there is nothing we can do because it is nature, but also we cannot exclude our municipality because our municipality ought to see to it that there's basic services delivery need. And by so doing, they can manage to supply each and every one clean water. But now it's not happening like that. We've got reservoirs, pipes but they are there as toys. They are not working. But we appreciate them for doing that as our municipality. But not to stand there for nothing, not bringing water because our aim is to get water. On top of that,

in our area here in Bushbuckridge, we suffer because of water, yet we've got our Inyaka dam that is within us. We don't know where it's supplying this water because we ought to receive water, all of us, because of this dam. And with due respect and our knowledge, when this dam was built, it was to serve the community of this rural area. But it is not what is happening. Not blaming our municipality, but saying, they must look at that. Because we are suffering, because now we are getting water from the water tanks. We don't know where this water tank come from, and we do not know where they do fetch water. But they come to our vicinity with the water? And not always. Maybe once a month, you see. So that also has got very, very much effect to our people. Because we find women going to the river to fetch water and that water is not clean because it is not purified. Who will see the effect, of social and health issues. When we come to social is that we cannot socialize if we are not clean because water is a basic need that we have to use, also for children that are going to school every day, they must be clean. And as for socializing, how are they to socialize if they are not clean? And in the health issue, we've got this COVID 19 issue. Where are we supposed to clean our hands now and then? But where are we to get water if water is not there? And besides that, for drinking, for washing, we need that water. So, we urge our partners to look at the issue of trying to provide the basic need in the communities. And the barrier challenge of that is that if we have not enough water, It's a challenge. As I said, we need to cook. We both need to wash. We need to bath. And if water is not there, this is not possible. We are not saying our municipality are not trying. They are trying their level best as we see climate change is the cause, but they have to look unto this issue seriously. Thank you, Denny.

Speaker 1 [00:13:45] Okay. So, are there any other sources of water besides the municipality water that you are getting. Any other sources of water where you are getting water?

Speaker 4 [00:13:55] We are getting water from the water cuts that are selling water in the village. So, if ever you got no money, it means you have no water. You must have money to buy this water and not knowing that water doesn't come to the pipe, but water cuts are always there to sell water you see. So, it gives us a bit of dubious because we don't know whether it is from the people on the top or it is just common people who are selling water.

Speaker 1 [00:14:32] So does every household in the community have a tap in the household or they get water from boreholes or from other sources?

Speaker 4 [00:14:45] Thank you. They get water from the boreholes most of them, but they have taps in their houses. But the taps are just tokens. They are not working, you see, that's why we are worried. We thank our municipality, but at the same time saying for them to see or to make people believe in them is to provide water, we see of now get water from the river or from the boreholes and from the boreholes it is salt water, it's not purified. Nothing. You see.

Speaker 1 [00:15:21] Thank you, Mr. Mnisi. I think, as we have heard from our community stakeholder, community leader that there are having challenges with water. The taps are there, but they're running dry. The infrastructure is there, but there is no water. So, we would want to understand from the service provider's perspectives, to what are the water service delivery challenges or maybe opportunities in in BBR and how is water supplied in the communities?

Speaker 3 [00:15:55] Thanks Jennifer and both the later speakers. Let me first start by appreciating you for bringing the matter to the attention of the municipality. And we are

pleased to say that we are very much open to work hand in hand with our communities and all our stakeholders. And it's indeed true that as a municipality, we acknowledge that we do have some water challenges, in some of our villages, taking into account that our municipality is a nodal point, that means we cannot generate enough revenue to render all the basic services that are needed by our communities. I must also indicate, however, that water provision is a constitutional right. All members of the community, need access to water and not just water, but clean drinkable water, which as a municipality we have been hard at work since the building of our Inyaka Dam in the early 90s up until date. And I must also indicate that as a municipality we have recently been authorized to be a water authority. That means we are providing water ourselves without relying on any service provider. You would note that in the past five years, we had what we call rand water, who were then our water authority. Who happen to take over from the Bushbuckridge water board. However, as a municipality we have realized that we were spending more and Rand-water would not as expected, make water provision possible to the rest of Bushbuckridge. So, we would be paying around between 20-23 million to Rand-water a month, which was costly for the municipality, and we are very thankful to the Department of Water for making Bushbuckridge water authority.

Colleagues, let me indicate that the municipality has done many inroads when it comes to water provision. I must indicate that almost every part of Bushbuckridge has what we call a water bulky line. We have also managed to build water reservoirs. In areas where there are adjacent or maybe five kilometers away from the Inyaka dam, we do not have a water supply problem. Like Mr. Mnisi has indicated that indeed in their villages the municipality has managed to do what we call water reticulation. That means, excuse me, every household who was expected to receive water from their yard taps as per constitution and the bill of rights in our country. Let me indicate that the biggest challenge that we have in areas like Agincourt, Huntington, Ximungwe, not only those, but we also have Cork, Belfast in the north far north of Bushbuckridge, you have Hluvukane, Manyeleti villages to mention just a few. In all these areas, I must indicate that we have built a bulky water line. And the biggest challenge, as a municipality, that we are currently having, it is illegal water connection. Well, illegal water connection and theft. That is our biggest challenge. Hence you hear Mr. Mnisi saying that we indeed have water taps in our yards, but they happen to be running dry without water. The biggest challenge is illegal water connections. Most of our members along the way have tampered with our bulky line, which then the pressure that is supposed to be in those bulky lines is limited to be able to pressurize water to far corners of Bushbuckridge. Hence you would see that the communities such as Ximungwe, Agincourt, Areagh, Kildare, they are without water much as the municipality would have done bulky and water reticulation.

However, I remember it was early last year if not the year before last year and the community of Ximungwe and surrounding areas made a demonstration or a community protest where in the blockaded roads and so forth and the demanded that they need to meet with the executive mayor and indeed the executive mayor made time to go and meet with the communities to hear what the crisis are. And one of their crises was that they do not have water supply. That's number one. The second one was the inaccessible streets, which then the municipality, through the executive mayor established the team of technicians, who were to look into the matter. Why are these areas not having water. Whereas the municipality has a bulky line in those areas, and he has also reticulated those areas. And the biggest problem that was identified was illegal water connections. The community also raised an issue that they were promised by the then premier who is now currently the deputy president, Mr. D. D Mabuza., that that he will replace that asbestos pipe with a steel pipe to make sure that that bulky water line will no longer be

tampered with so that such areas could now get enough water supply. So as a municipality, what we did is, we tried to communicate with the communities like Cunnningmore, because that is where this bulky is mostly tampered with. Cunnningmore coming back to your Mariti and so forth, just to make sure that at least the illegal connections are dealt with so that those areas in the Far East could have water. And indeed, for quite some time, water was provisioned, and people had water. And it means that the communities around those areas went back to their traditional practice, which is to tamper with the bulky line and illegally connecting water. I must mention that by so doing as a municipality we are losing a lot of water because remember if one is to connect water on that bulky without expertise, they connect illegally. So, and we are losing a lot of water it could be through water leakages and water that is just lost somewhere. So let me just indicate that the municipality, as Mr. Mnisi has mentioned it, as a temporary measure while we're are trying to sort out this water illegal connection issue by making sure that, one we have drafted what we call water bylaws, we just waiting for our province to programme it and we approve as council. While we have those, we will be able as water authority to deal with all those who connected water illegally.

And then secondly, these are our troublemakers which Mr. Mnisi have also mentioned that you would see at times the water tankers coming to their areas selling water. And I must indicate all our water tankers are marked with the municipality logo and they are not at all supposed to be selling water, if any of our water tankers are seen selling water to any member of the community or any households, you free to report such to the South African Police Services or you can visit any of our nearest regional offices to report such? So, what should be happening is that that we have drilled boreholes as a temporary measure. And to those areas that are without water, that's where we are now. We have now distributed or provisioned our water tankers to supply water in those areas. But if ever there is a community as we speak that is completely without water, we have our CDF, ward committees, we have our ward councilor at a community level. And those structures are the structures that we are expecting our communities to talk to. And if they cannot get their way through, in getting water supply to their areas, then they are free to visit our offices. If still they are not assisted, the Office of the Speaker, the Office of the Executive Mayor, the Office of the Municipal Manager are always open to assist. Hence, we're saying as a municipality we do not want to see any community without water. If we have not reticulated such an area, we have surely drilled a borehole. If there is no borehole, our water tankers are there to supply water. So, these three things should be happening in our villages to make sure that they do have enough water. But let me also indicate that the municipality, however, in most of our villages, you will you see what we call scour valves. Scour valves on our main bulky line you would see this, either in yellow or reddish colors. And these are community water tankers or any member of the community with a water tanker, have seen an opportunity to those areas without water. So, what members of the community are doing, some of them they are intentionally so, turning off these scour valves draw water themselves from the scour valves, fill their water tankers and go back to their respective communities to make money out of it. So what we are saying is that we are asking from our community members not to buy water from anybody who sells water, because remember first, if the member of the community who has a water tanker is selling water, how sure are we that they are cleaning that water tanker time and again, which may result in our people suffering from diarrhoea or any fungi issues coming out of water. So, we are asking all members of the community not to buy water from water tankers

Speaker 1 [00:27:53] Take us.

Speaker 3 [00:27:53] But our water tankers are there to supply water, and we are very sure that all our water tankers are being cleaned time and again.

Speaker 1 [00:28:02] Yeah, you have said a mouthful and especially with regard to how the water scarcity affects the governance, how you manage the issue with the communities and all the strategies that you have put in place to try to address the issue. But I'm also interested to hear your views with regard to climate change in your experience or your opinion. How do you think it affects the scarcity, the water shortage? So, before you even you respond to and also the water levels and are your tanks always filled with water. You don't have supply issues, also issues from your side.

Speaker 3 [00:28:51] Okay. And let me indicate that. Let's start with the one of climate change. Indeed, climate change affects everyone. We are all aware what climate change is. It mostly affects our weather conditions, seasons. And it's indeed true that as Bushbuckridge, though we a less industrialized municipality, but because we are surrounded or we are in a border municipality between Mpumalanga, on the front we have Limpopo, we are affected by this climate change. Last year we had to ration water because of climate change. Remember climate change? Firstly, it causes a drought. If you have drought in, it means you have less rainfall and once you have less rainfall, it means our dams, our rivers won't have enough to pump to our reservoirs. So firstly, that's how it affects us. And secondly, climate change causes a lot of severe storms, more extreme weather conditions which result in flooding and so forth. So, what happened is that most of our water infrastructure is washed away, and at some point, it is exposed and then mostly damaged? Like I said before that, we are you a nodal point, we can make revenue ourselves we rely mostly on grants. So you would find that we have to wait for the intervention of the province, or we have to wait for the intervention of the treasury, hence you see, at some point the municipality is taking too much time to fix or replace some damaged water pipeline infrastructure. So indeed, the climate change affects the municipality negatively. And when it comes to water supply, if we happen to run for full two, three, four, five, six months without rain or enough rainfall that day forces what we call a Inkomati water catchment, which regulates all municipalities, especially our natural water resources, like dams and rivers. If we do not have enough rainfall in our dams or river levels become low, then that is where the Inkomati Water Catchment comes in to say Bushbuckridge Municipality because of your water levels, are at this level, you are now banned from irrigating your plants, you are now banned from pumping this much of water for a holistic usage and so forth. And another thing is that we are also having our department of water they also come in to regulate in terms of this climate change. But all in all, other than that, we were also affected whereby most of our communities, schools and community homes were blown away and the municipality had to come in. Gift of the givers had to come in. The provincial, national government had to come through and assist our communities. So indeed, climate change extremely, and negatively affects our communities, affects our ability to supply water to our communities. And just in the recent incident early January, the ones that we had in it was the one that opened its Shata, the communities at Hluvakane.Godide, Manyeleti, Welperdiend,

Speaker 1 [00:32:39] Gottenburg

Speaker 3 [00:32:39] and Hlavekisa, were without water for quite some time simply because those heavy rainfalls washed away our water infrastructure, somewhere at Shata village. So, like I said, it took us some time to replace that water infrastructure. But as I am speaking now, the municipality managed to replace and fix that washed away issue. And I think that the issue that you spoke to, it's our reservoirs, whether they're filled with water or

not. If so, how much, like I indicated it is difficult. Like in the area of Kildare and nearest areas to fill those areas, as I mentioned, that we're having a challenge when it comes to illegal water connections because once that bulky is tampered with and it's no longer having pressure, it means that our reservoirs cannot be filled. Once they are not filled, it means our communities cannot get a water supply. Just to give you a recent scenario again. And we also had an SABC television programme. The focus was in those areas, your Huntington, Kildare, Ximungwe, Malamule and so forth, focusing on water, why is the municipality unable to supply water in those areas. Of which we are not unable as a municipality to supply water in those areas, but because of illegal water connections we have been unable. It means that the municipality must now turn around and find other ways to deal with illegal water connection so that every member of a household, every community in Bushbuckridge has got enough water. But I must also indicate that in the research that was done on the Inyaka Dam points out that that the Inyaka dam has enough potential or has enough capacity to supply water to the rest of Bushbuckridge without anybody lacking any water. That dam is big enough, it can supply the rest of Bushbuckridge with water. So, what we're doing currently as a municipality, and like I mentioned, we need to pass those water bylaws we also have bylaws officers on standby and we are sure that once this is done, we will be able to say that we can be able to supply water to the rest of Bushbuckridge. Okay. I'm not sure if I answered all the questions.

Speaker 1 [00:35:19] You did. Thank you so much. That was a mouthful. Do you have anything? Yeah. And, like from engaging with the community, we also learnt that these problems, there are so many and the municipality alone, cannot solve these problems. The community alone cannot solve these problems. And also, the researcher, as researchers, we cannot solve these problems alone, but also working with other department multi-sectoral collaboration. And how is the municipality engaging with other stakeholders to solve this? Problems with the community, with the water suppliers and department of water.

Speaker 3 [00:35:57] Look, look, what we call inter-governmental strategy. In the Council of we do have your traditional authorities, at the community level we do we have the NGOs, representative from the communities. Other than that, we will also have what we call integrated development plan, which Mr. Mnis would agree with me. Before that programme could be approved by council, we start at the village level, that's where we do have what we call CBPs, community-based planning and the community together with its Ward committee, ward councilor, that's where they sit down and plan. What is it that we need in our community for an example Kildare. What is it that Kildare needs? Kildare is without water, then they mark that as their priority. Say they come up with or they point out several needs in the community. But then when we come down before we finalize, we come here, we have a draft IDP and we go back to the public participation programme to the communities and say, look, this is what you raised, and this is what the municipality will be able to do for you this financial year. Which one is a priority to you? And the community will then give us their priority in that program. And that is what you will see appearing in the final integrated development plan. So basically, that is how we engage with our communities and our stakeholders. As for our provincial and national department, you'll also remember that once that IDP is approved by council, it will now have to go to Ehlanzeni district municipality, but it will also have to go to COGTA provincial and COGTA National before it even goes to the Treasury national. So, you would also know that before treasury release money, for a project A, it means that the municipality must now write a report, give motivation and so forth, to say this project is indeed important to community A. So, Treasury will then be able to say that we are releasing this amount of money in the form of a grant and that programme must be done.

Speaker 1 [00:38:28] Okay. Yes, it's interesting to hear you talking about how you engage with the various stakeholders. And I also pose the question to also our community representatives like He mentioned that early in this talk that to you is pleading with the municipality to address issues. So, I want to ask, are there opportunity as communities to create spaces such as VAPAR, where you peacefully engage with the municipality, raising your voice on issues that are most important to you. And do you see these spaces as opportunities to engage with the municipalities or otherwise.

Speaker 4 [00:39:13] Thanks Denny. We are most willing to have this space to engage with our municipality through VAPAR or through any institution that can help us because at the moment we don't have direct communication with our municipality. Though we are there in IDP discussing what we want. But we feel not enough like having stakeholders that are meeting together somehow somewhere like twice, thrice a year to discuss the development of the communities.

Speaker 1 [00:39:56] Thanks Denny.

Speaker 3 [00:39:58] Yeah, maybe, if I may come in Mr. Mnisi. I must also indicate that you would agree with me that the voice of the community is through the ward councilor in the council. And as per the speaker book, Ward Council is supposed to have what we call monthly meetings with the community. If that is not happening in their ward, surely Mr. Mnisi as a community rep, and his co-workers have got a right to visit the office of the Speaker to say we are not having any meetings or community meetings with our Ward Councilor. Why these monthly community meetings, so that the community is able to raise to the Ward Councilor, as their voice, as their face to say, we are not having this in our community. We are not seeing this, though it is appearing, although it was noted in our IDP, but it's not being implemented. Why is this not happening? Because our councilors and our ward committees believe you me, they are submitting ward reports each and every month. Even now, these reports are being submitted to the Office of the Speaker, are being submitted without the community's consent. That means the Ward Council and his ward committee are giving us a false report. So, what I would advise to Mr. Mnisi is that if the Ward Council is not having those monthly meetings, surely Mr. Mnisi and his co-workers, they can visit the office of the speaker, our speaker, the speaker of council is Councillor Sibusisiwe Rakanya. I am sure Mr Mnisi knows who she is. Sonthat these things could be ironed out. Besides that, colleagues, what the municipality is doing to engage with communities, we are having what we call mayoral Imbizos. The executive mayor engages communities on whatever the community needs are. One other thing I must also indicate is that the office of the premium, on a quarterly basis gives our Executive Mayor a slot on our local radio stations to say, can you engage your communities. As I'm taking to you next week Tuesday it will be the 22nd, the executive mayor will be on a Bushbuckridge community radio from 5 to 6:00 in the evening and she will be talking to the IDP, and our community members are also given an opportunity to interact with their executive Mayor. So, there are a number of various ways that the municipality is engaging with communities. Besides that, we have also what we call our electronic customer relations management system, which once you want to engage with us, other than our website, you can go to www.complaints.bushbuckridge.gov.za. So in that app, that is the where you can either communicate with us either via WhatsApp via SMS,

Speaker 1 [00:43:18] SMS.

Speaker 3 [00:43:19] via email, you can see all these channels are there, via Facebook? You can communicate with us. Other than that, we do have what we call info at Bushbuckridge. And believe me, we are responding to complaints, we are responding to a what we call suggestions. We are responding to all this each and every day.

Speaker 1 [00:43:38] Each and every day.

Speaker 3 [00:43:39] via email and they not only raising concerns pertaining to the municipality department, private sector and so forth. And we're able to address that. Besides that, we do what we call local Communicator's forum, and I just for you an example, one, journalist, gave us a call to say there is this woman at Rolle C, who has been without a house for the rest of her life. And she's sharing a room, one room with her thirty-year-old son and a grandson. Through that structure of LCF, we visited that area, as I'm talking to you next week, you can also come and attest, I'll give you a call. Next week a contractor will be building that woman a house that she deserves. Other than that, we have also been notified by this other man who's sleeping on the tax rank after being dumped by his family, saying that they can no longer take care of him because he's old. Next week will also be visiting him with various department house with various just to see how best we can assist him. So, the municipality has a number of ways in which they indeed engaging and assisting the communities.

Speaker 1 [00:44:51] Thank you so much, this is quite informative. And, I think from my understanding, from the issues that you've highlighted, the issues of corruption, vandalism they are happening at the community level, and also that issues about accountability at the community level at different levels. So these issues and structures, there are structures in the community and also at municipality level, at different levels where people can collaborate, can engage. But it looks like these structures, I am not sure if they're not known, or they're not well used by the community or whoever is supposed to use them. So, I feel like there is need for that so that people can improve the urgency. If I am a community member, I don't have water because my neighbor has diverted water. So there is need to actually empower the community and also empower even relevant stakeholders so that these issues can be brought to the open, so that people know how to engage and maximize this

Speaker 3 [00:45:55] This.

Speaker 1 [00:45:56] And benefit from it. And I understand the dam has capacity to supply water, there is capacity. But the problem is not availability of water. The problem is the these governance issues, the planning, the issues to do with community things, the issues to do with a municipality. So, I think there is need for, I don't know how people can really engage because the structures are there as have been highlighted, we have different structures to address these problems.

Speaker 3 [00:46:25] Actually, to be honest with you, at some point, it is not a question of whether or not our communities are well informed or maybe our communities do need them civil education. It's a question of ignorance, because I must indicate that one of the biggest things that you might have seen, two weeks back the Minister of Police MR Bheki Cele, was here at Mariti? Why was the Minister of police at Mariti to launch what we call in traditional council police forum? You see, because crime is rife in our communities and these crimes are only happening socially, they also affect us as the municipality when it comes to service provision. And then what do our people do? They know that my neighbor, like you said have diverted water for irrigation of his farm and it's a huge number

or huge amount of water that is going there. And the other members of the community are without water. Why don't they report such. Someone is stealing electricity. Why are they not reporting such because the perpetrators of these crimes are known in the communities some are our brothers, sisters.

Speaker 1 [00:47:51] Uncles.

Speaker 3 [00:47:52] Parents. But they're not reporting such. Hence, I'm saying some of the things, it is not that they cannot be resolved. It's a question of our communities being ignorant, because should they report such, then it's not even a question of do we have budget or not? It's a question of just removing that illegal connection. It's a question of making an arrest. It's a question of retrieving what is being stolen. And then everything is back to normal. So, it's no longer a question of the municipality. Does the municipality have a capacity to do this or does the municipality has a budget to do this or not. But our communities are very much ignorant, eager to save their uncle skin, brother skin or sister's skin.

Speaker 1 [00:48:36] Like it's.

Speaker 3 [00:48:37] Happening with the they knew challenge now, the GBV. You see, that is what is happening, people are afraid to report because our father can no longer buy us mealie meal if military if we we have him arrested, we will no longer be able to buy bread. So that's just the question of ignorance.

Speaker 4 [00:49:03] Thank you. From what I hear from Mr. Khosa, it's an eye opening because a lot of things that he has said, he might say we ignore. We don't know. Because now, like the meeting that we have to meet once every month with the councilor, it's not there. I can mention in my place, last year, sometimes we meet twice the whole year. But the report to you, it's coming to the speaker. Where does the report come from? Because it is not coming from the communities that will deal with it. Thank you Mr Khoza for an eye-opening discussion for us to know that which are the channels of communication that we can use.

Speaker 3 [00:49:52] Please. Indeed, we we are very much concerned as the municipality because truly speaking our communities at the community level, the mouth, the ears, the eyes, of the municipality, it's the ward councilor. He is for the ward committee, the CDWs, CDFs These are the eyes. ears, mouth of the municipality. So, we are pleading with our members of the communities that if these all these things that are listed are not the happening, the Office of the Speaker is always open, and they can also provide you with a speaker's numbers. She's always available to assist our communities. And if our communities would be lacking simply because of lack of information or the councilor responsible is not giving them enough information, then it becomes a back log on the side of the municipality, or the community perception would now say that our municipality is not delivering services where else it is just the question of communication.

Speaker 1 [00:51:00] Thank you very much, Mr. Khosa, and also Mr Mnisi. And I think what I'm also learning is knowledge is power and engaging with the community and involving them in decision making. And I think from the low level, from the beginning of every project, it helps them to know. So, when the community have good ownership of the community, they then make decisions that does not negatively affect them. So we we thank you so much. And we have also seen with our process that when you engage the

community, you increase the legitimacy of the process. They become aware of everything that is happening in the community. So, I will leave this time to my co-host to just rep up. Okay. Thank you so much, Jennifer. I must say that we understand that communities are at the frontline of climate change, and a lot has been said during the COP26 and there are good policies and guidelines, but there is a need to embed the conversations into what they do every day. There's a need of for an action to reach where we want to get, most importantly, including the voice of the service users, their communities, especially the marginalised and economically disadvantaged societies. And having you both, Mr. Mnisi, representing the communities and Mr. Khoza representing the service providers, we really appreciate having you in this conversation to learn from both service users and service providers. I really appreciate your time and thanks, Jennifer, for leading the conversation. It was mouthful and I believe everyone of us to have learnt from this conversation. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much.