

# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

## UEMP

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# CURRENT STATUS

- World wide nearly 1 billion people (1 in 6) live in substandard and slum conditions in informal settlements
- Inaction could mean that slum dwellers will grow to 1.5 billion by 2020
- In the various African countries it is between 40% and 70 %
- South Africa – approx 12% (6 Million)

# CURRENT STATUS - Ethekwini

- Ethekwini Municipality – 650 000 of a population of 3.5 million (approx 20%)
- Informal settlements comprise 75% of the housing backlog in Ethekwini municipality
- Over 540 urban settlements
- Average size is 360 dwellings – 14 000 dwellings
- Over 80% of households earn a monthly income of less than R1600 – indigent category

# LEGISLATION/DECLARATION

- Constitution of SA Ch 2 Bill of Rights Section 24. Environment “Everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being; and to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations”
- Social Housing Act, 2008 and Slums Act of 2007 to provide for the upgrading and control of existing slums
- Millennium Development Goals – Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability  
By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers
- Durban Declaration (2008) between DoH and Shack Dwellers International -all stakeholders be accountable to each other through dialogue learning and partnerships
- IDP – Eight Point Plan

# ENVIRO HEALTH

- A strong environmental health (EH) community will allow government to look at these issues through the perspective of health.
- Informal Settlements should not be seen as just “a housing problem” - complex
- Environmental health problems tend to be far more severe in conditions of poverty
- It is important that the profession does not see its role as one of inspecting and regulating but as working with stakeholders to improve conditions in settlements and cities.
- Low income groups are the most affected by their immediate surroundings

# ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Environmental pollution is an important, complex and dynamic issue:

- Important as it has wide implications for government's aim to provide a better life for all.
- Complex – rooted in socio economic, political, physical and institutional conditions in settlements
- Dynamic – requires a strategy to allow a broad view of all dynamics within settlements but still give the EH official a directed and focused method of arresting this downward spiral by active interventions.

# ENVIRO PROBLEMS

- Lack of sanitation facilities
- Drinking water quality
- Basic cooking facilities and inadequate food storage facilities
- Waste disposal facilities
- High levels of exposure to indoor air pollution
- Exposed to a wide range of pathogens and environmentally related afflictions such as diarrhoea and respiratory illnesses
- Physical injuries
- Overcrowding
- Access to health and other services
- Stress, violence, drug abuse – prenatal and the vulnerable
- The more dense the population > pressure on the environment = unsustainable use of natural resources

# INTERVENTION FOR ETHEKWINI HEALTH

Lessons had been learnt and successes achieved in a previous Project “ A Strategy to manage the Water Quality Effects of Settlements” (1999)

- Joint Project between DANIDA and DWAF.
- National Strategy was tested in 9 provinces
  - Promotes the proactive management of pollution problems through planned interventions
  - Provides a methodology to develop co-operative interventions with communities and all stakeholders
  - Provides a platform for all stakeholders to identify each others resources and limitations.

# DWAF NATIONAL STRATEGY

In 2006 the strategy was replicated in 3 informal Settlements.

Health Unit used the test cases to enhance and adapt the strategy to cater for all waste streams that have an effect on both human and EH.

- Addresses the need to co-operatively develop interventions to manage pollution with community and all stakeholders
- Source Directed Strategy
- Reactive and proactive interventions
- Rapid Appraisal methods
- Structured facilitated approach

## Prioritise Settlements

- Preliminary problem identification, Participatory research, Rapid Appraisal

Identify Stakeholders(Interests, relationships, potential)

Identify Waste Streams (workshops and situational analysis)

Determine pollution problems and causes- prioritise

- Physical, Institutional and Social Cause and Effect

Develop Problem tree and verify symptoms and causes

Select & List interventions and identify right solutions(root causes)

Identify funding

Formulate Intervention Plans

# TEST CASES

- LUSAKA 1 in Amaoti (North)
  - SHAYAMOYA in Cleremont (West)
  - BOTTLEBRUSH (South)
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- Densely populated
  - Severe pollution problems impacting on community health
  - Low level or poor existing infrastructures and services

# RESULTS/IMPACTS

- Implemented by the organization that could bring about interventions (within the municipality)
- Data more readily available and of better quality
- Measure of exposure
- Indicators describing the health risks associated with informal settlements
- Alternative methods
- Exposure of EHPs to strategy
- Peer-peer communication
- Involvement and support from various depts

# RESULTS/IMPACTS

- Production of Training DVD
- Stakeholders pursuing problems identified at Intervention Workshops
- Creation of alliances with independent organisations  
Improved links between stakeholders and community
- Involvement in Business Support workshops
- Commitment and support from politicians
- Identification of champions
- Implementation of various programmes - training and recycling

# RESULTS/IMPACTS

- Core groups in communities whose prime focus is human health and environment
- Identification of capacity gaps in Municipality
- Problem analysis effective for community addressing abuse of facilities
- Community started addressing issues themselves – phone calls of complaint

# LIMITATIONS OF PROJECT

- Believe strategy takes too much time to implement (No guidelines)
- High operational and maintenance costs of some services placed in poorest communities
- Financial and Capacity gaps in departments
- Exposed very few EHPs

# ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

To increase EHP exposure :

- Guidelines and work flow for EHPs working in Informal settlements
- Incorporating strategy into community projects
- DVD (Marketing and Methodologies)
- Environmental Health University students
- Incorporate into policies and work flows/procedures
- Creating learnerships for community members

THANK YOU

*"Talk to us, not about us"*  
Slogan of Abahlali baseMjondolo,  
a South African group of  
shack dwellers