

Urban synthesis report

Second evaluation of DSD services and projects

Researched and written for the Department of Social Development
by Khanya-aicdd

Final draft
September 2008



Views presented in this paper are those of the authors and do not represent positions of the South African Department of Social Development.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY	iii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iv
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Urban Renewal Programme nodes	1
1.2 Key issues from the first evaluation.....	1
1.3 Background to the second evaluation	1
1.4 Objectives and methodology.....	2
2 UPDATE ON PROJECTS	3
2.1 Types of projects visited	3
2.2 Events since the first evaluation.....	4
2.3 Participants' perception of the impact of the projects.....	5
2.4 Status of the projects.....	6
2.5 Assessment: what worked and what didn't work.....	7
2.6 Update on project issues arising from the first evaluation	8
3 CHANGES IN THE NODE SINCE THE FIRST EVALUATION.....	8
3.1 Changes to DSD services and projects.....	8
3.2 Changes in staffing levels	10
3.3 Other changes.....	11
4 KEY ISSUES.....	11
4.1 Key issues on projects.....	11
4.2 Key issues on DSD's services.....	12
5 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	13

GLOSSARY

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ADC	Alexandra Development Centre
CBO	Community-based organisation
CDP	Community development practitioner
CLO	Community liaison officer
DO	District Office
DoL	Department of Labour
dplg	Department of Provincial and Local Government
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early childhood development
GBV	Gender-based violence
GYI	Galeshewe Youth Initiative
HBC	Home-based care
HCBC	Home community-based care
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IDT	Independent Development Trust
ISDM	Integrated Service Delivery Model
ISRDP	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme
LED	Local economic development
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
Nicro	National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders
NPO	Not-for-profit organisation
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
PRP	Poverty Relief Programme
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
URP	Urban Renewal Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a synthesis of the eight Urban Renewal Programme (URP) nodal reports, namely: Alexandra, Galeshewe, Inanda, Khayelitsha, KwaMashu, Mdantsane, Mitchell's Plain and Motherwell. Since the first evaluation, two **critical changes** that have affected all nodes include the separation of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and the consequent changes in the Department of Social Development's (DSD) role regarding service delivery; and the development of the 10 Year Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM) plan with which DSD services are now being aligned. However, lack of appropriate structures and systems, lack of staff and staff capacity, limited resources and strategic guidance, and weak alignment and integration across departments has made the transition to the new ISDM approach very challenging. For some nodes, adjusting to the changes resulting from SASSA's separation was equally challenging.

DSD is moving towards a more **developmental role** in delivering projects and services, with increasing outsourcing of services. The Poverty Relief Programme (PRP) is more focused on food security and income security in line with provincial thinking and directives, and services are confined to crisis situations and clients considered most vulnerable and at risk. Only a limited number of new projects are planned.

Five **key issues** emerged across all nodes: integration, co-ordination, planning and communication; institutional capacity; staffing and staff retention; training; and access to, and quality of, DSD services.

A core issue is **DSD's role in poverty reduction**. The specific poverty reduction impacts of DSD's interventions are not easily identified. The perception of DSD remains as a dispenser of social grants.

Common findings related to **DSD's service delivery** across several urban nodes included the need for better and more proactive planning, monitoring, capacity-building and technical support, and greater scope, scale and accessibility of services (and projects). There is insufficient institutional capacity and inadequate operational infrastructure in DSD district offices, in community-based organisations and not-for-profit organisations, to effectively implement and manage the vision, goals, objectives and plans of DSD. The quality of **training** and the way it is delivered is questionable. There is need for training both of DSD staff and of project members in financial management, conflict management, reporting, setting up and management of systems, marketing, monitoring & evaluation (M&E) and technical skills.

A **lack of integration and co-ordination** across and within government departments at all levels was a common experience across nodes. Some specific examples include cumbersome administrative procedures; lack of understanding of roles; difficulties in implementing the ISDM; lack of knowledge sharing or linkages across projects; lack of communication; and use of different monitoring systems. There is a need for a formalised and effective communication system in relation to social development service delivery to enable sharing of resources, and the integration of services provided by local government, provincial DSD and other departments. The lack of joint planning between provincial and district offices needs to be addressed because DSD provincial and district plans do not always align in practice, despite the presence of the Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM) being theoretically used as a basis for operational planning.

Related to this, the centralisation of regional functions is increasingly contrary to policy frameworks, and more work needs to be done on implementing decentralisation, especially around **staff allocation, recruitment and retention** and the **high number of vacant posts**.

Recommendations

DSD needs to **define its social development and poverty reduction role** more clearly to assist staff to understand their changing roles. This will also help projects understand which tasks can and cannot

be fulfilled by DSD and help DSD identify the kinds of interventions and impact it is making. Along with the appropriate **infrastructure at district level** this will also help ensure that the **shift to the new developmental approach is widely understood and applied**. **Roles and responsibilities** of the various role-players need clarification. By role players is meant DSD, including staff, external service providers, consultants, project members, beneficiaries and the wider community. A **co-ordinated effort** across all spheres of government and government departments would be needed to achieve this.

One way in which roles and responsibilities can be clarified is through **workshops and forums**. Forums can also enable projects to do their own M&E and share learning and knowledge as well as create networks between projects, funders and stakeholders.

Project life cycles and procedures need clear definition, and **guidelines** are required **for the development and planning of projects**. Capacity requirements and assessments should be conducted at the beginning of the project design process. Involvement of provincial and area office staff in the design process will also ensure ownership at all levels.

Project success indicators need to be formulated, using participatory methods as far as possible so that project members define their own parameters for success. A **participatory M&E** system linked to reflection and learning is crucial to allow project members to evaluate their own progress and to learn from their practice, and to allow DSD to support and interact with members in a reflective way. DSD doesn't have to pretend to have all the answers. A process of mutual learning assists all stakeholders to improve over time from their shared experiences. Training on participatory M&E, both for DSD staff and project members, must be prioritised.

Staff appointments should be **devolved to the regional level**. Consider new ways to **recruit and retain staff** and develop strategies to fill the human resources gap, such as employing more auxiliary staff and creating incentives. **Staff allocation** to the different units should **reflect DSD's priority focus areas and strategies**.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Urban Renewal Programme nodes

The Urban Renewal Programme (URP) was launched in 2001 to focus attention on eight urban nodes identified as areas facing extreme poverty¹. These nodes were selected because of the deep poverty in which many of their citizens live. In 2006, the Department of Social Development (DSD) commissioned quantitative and qualitative studies to evaluate the department's performance in the URP nodes and the 13 related Integrated Sustainable Rural Development (ISRDP) nodes.

High rates of unemployment characterise the URP nodes². The average rate of unemployment³ in the nodes stood at 65% in 2008, up from 63% in 2006. More than half of these people (54%) were out of work for four or more years, indicating a structural problem of unemployment. 57% of households were headed by a female in 2008. More than a third of households (38%) had children in them who were not children of the head of the household. This is a sharp increase from the 27% in 2006. Three percent of households were looking after orphans. Forty-nine percent of households in the urban nodes accessed child support grants in 2008. Government grants (including pensions) were the most important source of income for households in the nodes, followed by income from work.

Respondents indicated a decline in service quality for water and electricity, but general improvements for most other basic services. There was an increase in access to piped water in the yard, but a decline in piped water into the house. Unhappiness with water quality appeared to be growing. There was an increase in the percentage of people saying they found it difficult to pay for their food needs (from 60% in 2006 to 65% in 2008). Knowledge about the food parcel programme dropped from 18% to 12% over the same period. Eighteen percent of respondents felt that no sphere of government was doing anything to improve their quality of life, up from 11% in 2006. HIV and AIDS and alcohol abuse remained the top health concerns for residents of the urban nodes. Although home-based care (HBC) is very important, just 3% of households were accessing it in 2008, and 3% were able to provide HBC to others (combined with ISRDP result).

Churches and burial societies remained the most important organisational forms in the urban nodes. Crime, unemployment and HIV and AIDS were the primary concerns for urban residents in 2008. A significant minority of people saw a job as the first solution to poverty. Of all the urban nodes, Inanda appeared to be doing worst across a range of poverty-related indices, and Motherwell the best.

1.2 Key issues from the first evaluation

Table 1 below highlights key issues that came from the first evaluation in 2006. Lack of staff and resources, ongoing deep social problems, and poor co-ordination and integration were top of the list. This is despite the point of the URP being to improve co-ordination and integration. An inadequate approach to projects and problems with DSD services were significant problems. All of these concerns reappeared in the second evaluation, as this report later indicates.

1.3 Background to the second evaluation

In 2006 qualitative baseline research on DSD's services and activities was undertaken in each of the ISRDP and URP nodes. The baseline provided a description of the livelihood profiles of residents in

¹ The nodes are Alexandra (Gauteng), Galeshewe (Northern Cape), Inanda and KwaMashu (KwaZulu-Natal), Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain (Western Cape), Motherwell and Mdantsane (Eastern Cape).

² Information in the following paragraphs in this section was obtained from Strategy and Tactics 2008 'ISRDP/URP 2006 baseline/2008 measurement survey', Strategy and Tactics, Johannesburg. This report was part of the quantitative survey accompaniment to the qualitative research carried out by Khanya-aicdd comparing data from the 2006 baseline and a follow-up survey in 2008. The surveys were both statistically sound and are a reliable indicator of conditions across the nodes.

³ Unemployment as a proportion of the economically active population, excluding pensioners, full-time students, those on disability grants and other similar categories

the nodes, information about DSD services and projects and identified service delivery gaps. A focus on DSD poverty relief programme (PRP) projects provided information from the point of view of project beneficiaries and nodal DSD staff.

Table 1: Key issues from first evaluation

Group	Issue	Node
Depth of poverty	Deep social problems (crime, unemployment, gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS, substance abuse)	Khayelitsha, KwaMashu, Mdantsane, Mitchell's Plain
	High reliance on social grants	Mdantsane, Mitchell's Plain
Inadequate approach to projects	Lack of adequate training for project members	Alexandra, Motherwell
	Poor project management, and lack of management and planning capacity (including poor business plans)	Mdantsane, Motherwell
	Lack of infrastructure, premises and equipment at project level	Alexandra
	Lack of exit strategies	Mdantsane, Motherwell
	Lack of technical support for projects	Mdantsane
Inadequate business focus	Poor access to markets	Alexandra
DSD services	Staff shortages, lack of capacity and lack of resources in DSD	Alexandra, Inanda, Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain, Motherwell
	Gaps in delivery of services	Alexandra
Poor co-ordination	Poor co-ordination, integration and communication (within DSD, between spheres, between DSD and other departments, between service providers)	Alexandra, Galeshewe, Mdantsane

Following the baseline research, researchers facilitated a process with nodal DSD officials to prioritise the issues emerging from the baseline, and to develop an action plan to respond to these priorities. The researchers then facilitated a support process to carry out the action plan based on the identified priorities. This process continued throughout 2007.

1.4 Objectives and methodology

The objectives of the second evaluation were to update information on the functioning of DSD-supported projects and to identify whether, and how, issues raised during the first baseline research were dealt with: what had changed since the first evaluation; what impacts were there on project beneficiaries; what did and did not work; were issues that arose in the first evaluation dealt with and what, if any, new issues arose. The evaluation also sought to identify changes to DSD services in the nodes since the first evaluation: what the changes in services and projects were; what the changes in staffing levels were; and what the reasons for the changes and their impact were. Finally, the second evaluation sought to identify emerging issues and to assist in planning a way forward for the nodes based on these issues.

Researchers worked with DSD nodal staff to identify three projects in each node for the second evaluation. The projects were selected from a list of those that were previously evaluated and the aim was to select projects of varying success to enable some indication of the criteria for success or failure of projects. Researchers did some methodology training in January 2008 and carried out fieldwork for two weeks between February and May (the latter in places where there were some difficulties in finding appropriate times to do the evaluations). DSD nodal staff provided updated information on projects and services based on information from the first evaluation prior to the individual project evaluations. Where required, researchers carried out preparatory interviews and made logistical arrangements with the DSD nodal manager or another appropriate staff member. In most cases a community liaison officer/community development practitioner accompanied the researchers to the projects and assisted with the evaluations. Key themes were consolidated and presented to a workshop of DSD nodal staff, to which DSD provincial staff members were also invited. Other relevant stakeholders, including other government departments and service providers, where applicable, were invited to these workshops.

2 UPDATE ON PROJECTS

2.1 Types of projects visited

21 projects from eight urban nodes were evaluated in the second round. Of these, 15 were income generating (IG) projects i.e. they existed to sell a product or service at a profit to generate an income for the project members. Eleven existed to provide a free service to the community such as caring for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Table 2 shows the types of activities the projects were engaged in, with the income generation projects listed in the left column and the community service projects listed on the right. Some projects were involved in more than one type of activity so are recorded more than once. The most common activity involved food gardening/vegetable growing/crops/plant nursery. Table 4 lists all the projects and their location.

Table 2: Project activities

Income generation	No of projects	Social service	No of projects
Food gardening/vegetable growing/crops/plant nursery	5	Support for youth including “life orientation” programmes, business skills training and support in completing education, obtaining a driver’s licence, applying for jobs, etc.	2
Sewing	4	Home and community-based care (HCBC)	2
Handicrafts	2	Soup kitchen	2
Baking and catering	2	Skills training	2
Internet, photocopying and fax service	1	Support for the elderly	2
Poultry	1	Caring for HIV and AIDS orphans and victims of domestic and child abuse	1
		Support HIV and AIDS infected and affected	1

Most projects were aimed at poverty alleviation and, in many cases, food security. All projects involved some form of **skills training** so that with these skills, members could engage in income generating activities. In Galeshewe, the Galeshewe Youth Initiative was aimed at empowering the youth with a variety of training opportunities from life to business skills. In Motherwell, although the Ibhngololutsha ICT Empowerment Resource Centre’s primary purpose was technical and business skills training to project beneficiaries, it also operated as a small business providing internet, photocopying, and faxing services. In other projects, activities which could also result in income generation were used as a basis for psycho-social enrichment of single parents or the elderly such as the Thokoza Club in Inanda. Some projects were engaged in more than one activity e.g. Masibambane Community Gardening in Khayelitsha, which supports community gardens and related activities including home-based care (HBC), and Inanda Diversion project in Inanda which provides skills training in bead-making and also the production of cultural clothing.

Many projects either had to downsize or close completely due to **poor management and/or lack of funds**, e.g. all the projects in Alexandra were closed as a result of the issues relating to, and subsequent closing of, the Alexandra Development Centre (ADC). The Alpha and Omega Community Project in Mitchell’s Plain also had to downsize because of its difficulties in obtaining ongoing funding to support a soup kitchen and other activities it runs in a local church. **Lack of appropriate markets** or marketing skills was also common e.g. the Thokoza Club in Inanda, which has advanced substantially in membership, was constrained by a lack of identified markets for its finished products.

A high **turnover of members** e.g. in the Inanda Diversion project, and a drop in members was also noted e.g. the Sakhisiwe Mdantsane Nursery which started with 44 members and now only has 17. The numbers usually reduced to a core membership which remained stable. Reasons commonly recorded for people leaving were:

- no stipends/no income;
- poor training;
- lack of DSD support or funding;

- poor management/lack of progress;
- in-fighting of members and interpersonal issues;
- unable to afford travel costs
- found employment elsewhere or leaving to study/complete school.

2.2 Events since the first evaluation

Positive and negative changes were reported throughout all the projects and, in some cases, changes had both positive and negative effects. The **positive changes** were as follows:

- **Financial improvements:** one increased production or sales, one reported obtaining a loan, and one started receiving food parcels, stipends and a transport fee;
- **Additional inputs** for projects: four bought additional equipment and assets themselves, two secured new premises for which they pay rent, one had equipment donated to them, one got a shelter and then an electricity supply, one temporarily secured free premises from the municipality, one received a container to work in, and one adopted a uniform for identification);
- **Improved support and interaction with others:** three were seeking or had already established strategic partnerships, and one improved their networking with other welfare agencies;
- **Training and skills development:** three projects received formal training - one in poultry farming, one in sewing and one in computer literacy and basic business management;
- Three projects improved their **access to markets**;
- Two projects **developed or improved their relationship with DSD**;
- **New DSD staff** members were appointed to two projects;
- One project **improved its staffing situation**;
- One project started a **soup scheme**;
- One project mentioned gaining from the **support process (by Khanya)**;
- The management of the Sizanani Home-Based Care Project in KwaMashu was **moved from the development and research office to social services under the HIV co-ordinator** (since its focus is on HIV and AIDS-related issues) which improved working relationships and service delivery.

From a **negative** point of view, **poor management and communication** resulted in projects decreasing activities or closing completely, e.g. in Alexandra, all projects have dissolved with the exception of one which re-established itself using its own resources. This is closely linked with some projects **running out of funding** and for some, **not enough income being generated** (the Masibambane project in Khayelitsha). For example, the Galeshewe Youth Initiative began running out of funds even before the partnership with Nicro and subsequent split. The Bhekanani Luncheon Club has not only **run out of funds** but their **relationship with DSD had also broken down** leaving the project at a standstill. In Mitchell's Plain, the Alpha and Omega project was forced to downscale because the support they were anticipating from DSD for 2007/8 did not materialise. The **lack of DSD support** was not only an issue for the Bhekanani Luncheon Club with rare visits from DSD and Independent Development Trust (IDT) officials, but also for the Masibambane projects in Khayelitsha where the concept for the development of a juice factory as an income generating project had not been supported, nor had the idea of food gardens.

High turnover of members not only negatively impacted projects' status and level of activity, but, in some cases, planned training was not implemented, e.g. the Inanda Diversion project. The Sakhisiwe Mdantsane Nursery and the Ibhongololutsha ICT Empowerment Resource Centre in Motherwell have also suffered as a result of a high turnover of members.

Three **project sites had been relocated**, mostly with negative results for two of them. For example, the Inanda Diversion's project site was taken over by the Department of Local Government and Inanda has now been moved to smaller premises which are not conducive to the intricate artwork being done and are an occupational health safety risk, lacking electricity, ventilation and sunlight. The Golden Stitches Trust project in Motherwell moved to the DSD complex in Motherwell because DSD wanted to have all their funded projects under one roof. This was positive because their previous premises

were expensive, unsafe and leaked when it rained, whereas now it is safer, there is no rent and the services are free. However, the negative impact was that they moved further away from potential customers and members, there are no telephone lines, making it difficult for customers to find them, and there are no shops nearby for food or inputs.

Theft and vandalism was another threat. Three projects reported acts of theft or vandalism since the last evaluation. Sakhisiwe Mdantsane Nursery in Mdantsane had their computerised sprinkling system and spades stolen, windows broken and netting and wooden stands destroyed. On a positive note, the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper publicised their plight, as a result of which they received additional funds from DSD to renovate the current building and vandalised sections. The Ibhngololutsha ICT Empowerment Resource Centre's new premises at the DSD Motherwell complex was also broken into and all their electronic equipment was stolen (total value R170,000). Although they were partially insured, they only got a meagre payout (only R33,000) and this had a negative impact financially and on the morale of the members. They were only able to replace the essentials.

Another negative aspect is that there is a **lack of local demand or market** for products in some projects e.g. the Thokoza Club in Inanda.

In some projects, there had been **little or no progress in terms of training**. Bhekanani Luncheon Club in KwaMashu had had training but claimed that some members still do not have enough confidence in their sewing skills to use them to earn money. In Motherwell, although training was organised by the Department of Labour (DoL) for the Zanethemba Motherwell Nursery Co-operative, it was not successful and ended with the service provider being fired by DoL.

Lack of capacity also threatens certain projects' success and sustainability. The Sakikhadi Poultry Project in Inanda stands a major risk of compromising its present accomplishments should the project be forced to increase levels of production for which the site lacks capacity in terms of numbers of chickens, pens etc. The Thokoza Club's members, also in Inanda, have started selling their products door-to-door, but most members are aged and many have health problems so there is a limit to the amount of physical exertion they can cope with in carrying out door-to-door sales. Soil for Life in Mitchell's Plain also lacks the human resources capacity to adequately service emerging community and home-based food gardens, but has adopted a decentralised approach to try and address this.

2.3 Participants' perception of the impact of the projects

Table 3 indicates participants' perceived impacts of the projects. Most important were the development of new skills (with particular emphasis placed on management skills), improved income, social networks and the wider benefit to the community. Very few projects talked of negative impacts. Perhaps the word 'impact' was understood to mean positive impact rather than any type of impact.

Table 3: Perceptions of impact of projects

Perceived positive impact	Node
New skills, training	Alexandra, Galeshewe, Inanda, Khayelitsha, KwaMashu, Mitchell's Plain, Motherwell
Income and employment	Alexandra, Galeshewe, Inanda, KwaMashu
Social networks	Inanda, KwaMashu, Mitchell's Plain, Motherwell
Benefits to community from project products and services	Alexandra, KwaMashu, Mitchell's Plain, Motherwell
Entrepreneurial and project management skills	Khayelitsha, Mdantsane, Motherwell
Food	Mitchell's Plain
Reduction in unemployment and crime in community	Galeshewe
Learning and inspiration	Mdantsane
Self-esteem	Motherwell
No positive impacts	Alexandra, Mdantsane, Motherwell

2.4 Status of the projects

The rating in table 4 below is a simple scale indicating whether members thought the project was going well (green, shown in black in the table below), had potential but not quite realising it yet (orange, shown in grey in the table below) or failing (red, shown in white in the table). Of the 21 projects evaluated in the second round, members in six (28.5%) projects rated them as green. There is no value in comparing these results with the first evaluation since one of the criteria for selection of the projects for evaluation in the second round was to study both strong and weak projects.

Table 4: Projects' assessment of their status

Node	Project name	Status using REID's classification	
		2006	2008
Alexandra	Legae La Rona Sewing Co-operative	R	O
	Vukani Maafrica Baking and Catering Co-operative	O	R
	Arts and Craft Co-operative	R	R
Galeshewe	Galeshewe Youth Initiative	G	O
Inanda	Inanda Diversion	-	O
	Thokoza Club	-	O
	Sakikhadi Poultry Project	-	G
Khayelitsha	Masibambane Community Gardening	-	O
	Men on the Side of the Road	-	G
KwaMashu	Sizanani HBC	G	G
	Ukukhanya Catering & Hiring	G	G
	Bhekanani Luncheon Club	O	O
Mdantsane	Sakhisiwe Mdantsane Nursery	-	O
	Khanyis' Car Wash	-	G
	Nabubom Support Programme	-	O
Mitchell's Plain	Alpha and Omega	-	R
	Soil for Life	-	G
	Sinethemba	-	O
Motherwell	Golden Stitches Trust	G	O
	Zanethemba Motherwell Nursery Co-operative Ltd	O	O
	Ibhongololutsha ICT Empowerment Resource Centre	O	O

Only three projects rated themselves red: the two Alexandra projects which have been dissolved and the Alpha and Omega project because of the loss of the ongoing support they were expecting from DSD. The project does not understand why DSD has supported other less committed emerging soup kitchens but not them, when they have an existing track record and NPO number. As a result the project has not been able to diversify its funding base and as a consequence has been operating in a largely survivalist mode, supported by a small core of local but sometimes ad hoc donors and sponsors. This view is supported by Soil for Life who agrees that a lack of government support for committed projects and social entrepreneurs like Alpha and Omega was a "travesty of justice". As a consequence the status of the project has gone backwards resulting in it ranking somewhere between orange and red.

Generally, projects rated themselves as orange where they felt they had potential for growth and sustainability and issues that were holding the project back could be resolved. Factors that affected productivity, such as the high turnover of staff (and consequent time and money wasted on constant re-training of new members) were also cited as reasons for an orange rating. Although most projects that rated themselves orange still maintained a fairly positive outlook, lack of funds, income and/or stipends, project ownership and ongoing support and/or commitment from DSD were all factors that were perceived to be preventing the projects from moving from an orange to a green rating.

Factors that were seen as indicators of success and therefore merited a green rating included increased membership, meeting objectives, expansion of activities or outreach, financial success/income

generation, institutional strength, benefits of the project filtering to the wider community and recognition (from the community, DSD, other government departments etc).

Notably, when rating themselves, no projects seemed to take into account long-term sustainability as a self-reliant, independent entity without DSD support and/or funding.

Although not all the projects received a rating in the first evaluation, of those that did, the rating of 30% of projects went down, and the rating of 10% went up. 60% stayed as they were. Only two of these were rated green both in 2006 and 2008. The overall picture is not very positive.

2.5 Assessment: what worked and what didn't work

Across all nodes, members felt the experience gained, and lessons learnt, from working in projects was useful. For example projects learnt how to approach **food security** in a way that was more sustainable and responded to local circumstances. The development of **basic skills** and training of trainers enhanced capacity and in some cases enabled them to transfer skills to others. **Co-operation** between DSD and other departments, such as the Department of Labour (DoL), regarding training and start-up funding for initiatives was a positive development. Equipment enabled them to produce more and work better as a team. For example electric powered sewing machines helped members do more intricate and greater volumes of work than they could with manual sewing machines, increased the financial value of the completed product and gave them a greater sense of satisfaction in the finished products as well as promoting better team work and interaction. In at least some cases, projects **increased members' earning capacity** and improved their and their families' livelihoods. Some projects were able to increase awareness and **outreach** in their communities. Other things that worked in some projects were the ongoing **commitment and dedication** from a central core of members who worked as volunteers, good team work, community support, the ability to mobilise local resources and support from DSD.

In some projects, there was good **support, co-operation and relationships** between members, DSD and other government departments. Links between projects also ensured that skills were maintained and that projects continued to build and consolidate their networks. Conversely, in other projects, these relationships and co-ordination is precisely what failed. In some cases, projects were not able to attract the attention and support of other government departments for activities, especially the DoL and Department of Education (DoE). The lack of inter-departmental integration, delays in disbursing funds, limited and unsatisfactory support resulting in projects feeling deserted, breakdown in communication with DSD, lack of attendance by service providers, lack of clear ownership within some projects and the total dependence on DSD for funding and support were related issues of concern. DSD could be playing a more active role in facilitating linkages between similar projects. DSD's lack of intervention when projects were experiencing problems that could affect their sustainability was also noted and at a nodal level, DSD was characterised as being much too bureaucratic and not a very visible or active player with respect to emerging or existing community-based projects and NPOs.

Although, on the whole, basic **training** worked across all nodes, in some projects members felt they were given insufficient financial and business management training which left them unprepared to operate and run their business as independent entities. Members of some projects were also dissatisfied with the way projects were managed. In some cases, members felt that the ratio of workers to members was unrealistic, particularly because of the intensive activities required by the objectives (e.g. social services), staff capacity and available funding.

Generally **lack of resources** was seen as important. Specific examples include the inability to mobilise resources for short- to medium-term project visions, especially those related to larger-scale income generation projects, lack of transport, lack of materials, and particularly lack of suitable premises because of inability to afford rent. Some projects struggled to raise funds, including getting more funding from DSD. Related to this was the lack of clarity on why applications for further funding were

not successful and also the **dependence of projects on volunteers** (who are not always able to sustain their voluntary work) in cases where they did not have funds for salaries or stipends.

Other obstacles were the inability to sustain income generating initiatives in resource-poor areas, the lack of the correct marketing skills or access to appropriate **markets** to be able to sell their produce, loss of team members and the difficulty in finding enough permanent jobs or income-generating opportunities. In combination, all the above contributed to the critical wider issue of inability of projects to sustain themselves.

2.6 Update on project issues arising from the first evaluation

Generally, most projects had not moved forward significantly and across all nodes the main concern was to secure more **funding** and resources to increase the project's activities, production and income. A key issue was that project members were not always participating meaningfully in their projects. Business management training and support was weak. Clearly defined indicators and measurements of project success were lacking and the **weak M&E systems** were unable to identify and respond to problems quickly enough.

A key obstacle for projects in progressing from training to independent operation was the lack of **start-up capital**. Related to this was the lack of clearly defined **exit strategies** for DSD. Issues that posed great risk for project sustainability were a lack of project sites/premises, equipment and other resources, poor markets (and marketing skills) for the sale of finished products, extending the project to other beneficiaries, sustaining motivation levels of participants and staffing issues at DSD nodal office. Lack of, or delays in funding and stipends also had negative impacts on many projects. Longer-term sustainability and viability was a critical challenge for all projects.

3 CHANGES IN THE NODE SINCE THE FIRST EVALUATION

3.1 Changes to DSD services and projects

Table 5 indicates changes to DSD services and projects since the first evaluation. Districts reporting node-specific changes are named in brackets. Policy shifts at higher levels drove the key changes at nodal level in the period between the two evaluations. Most significantly, DSD's emphasis on social development rather than welfare and the associated separation of SASSA marked the start of a reorientation of activities at nodal level. Outsourcing of more services was also a significant change driven from the top. The Poverty Relief Programme (PRP) was focused on food security and income security in line with provincial thinking and directives, and services were confined to crisis situations and to clients considered most vulnerable and at risk. Only a limited number of new projects were planned.

Table 5: Changes in the node since the first evaluation

Description of the change	Why it happened/who or what caused the change	Implications/impact
Macro-level changes likely to have a big impact		
Change from welfare to development focus	The exit of SASSA from DSD in April 2006 and development of the Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM) and strategic plan for the latter (2007-2010)	Services are being aligned with the 10 Year ISDM Plan (2007-2017) and there is greater emphasis on helping communities to help themselves rather than depend on handouts
DSD was split into two separate entities: SASSA for administration of grants and DSD to manage social development issues	National DSD policy	More efficient administration of grants but the emphasis on intervention has added extra responsibilities for existing staff. Following the exit of SASSA no mechanism existed within DSD for dispensing social relief, so individuals affected by natural

Description of the change	Why it happened/who or what caused the change	Implications/impact
		disasters still apply to DSD at nodal level for social relief, although monies are disbursed by SASSA (All Pay)
Administration of food parcels handed over from DSD to SASSA and food parcels are now only given in times of distress	National DSD policy	Households that used to receive monthly food parcels may suffer. DSD has resorted to more locally-attuned ways of offering relief
Improved services in some nodes...		
Increased Social Services (including an increase in the case load targeting vulnerable groups) and Community Development and Planning including crime prevention, M&E and Extended Public Works (Alexandra)	The need for such services and the increase in numbers of service providers and DSD staff members	Improved service delivery
New projects were added or have applied for funding (Galeshewe, KwaMashu, Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain)	New projects that received information about DSD services applied for assistance	There is hope for community development
DSD is attempting closer contact with projects (Mdantsane)	Increase in visits	Project members feel more supported and empowered, are receiving more training and learning how to manage projects
Intervention strategies for youth and early school leavers were prioritised (Khayelitsha)	District staff have a more flexible budget and can therefore identify, facilitate and experiment with more development interventions/projects at community level	Improved service delivery
...but poorer services in others		
Deterioration in the poverty reduction projects funded through the ADC (Alexandra)	DSD discontinued funding to the ADC and it was consequently closed	The lack of financial and infrastructural support led to the projects ceasing to operate
Quality of services decreased (Inanda)	Loss of staff, difficulties experienced with SASSA's client processing system and an increase in certain categories of clients demanding urgent and protracted statutory work	Too few social workers left to deal with too many cases, leaving them overwhelmed and decreasing the quality of services as priority cases are attended to first, such as child abuse and neglect
The amount of funding available for projects was reduced (Motherwell)	There was a shift in provincial spending away from the ISRDP/URP nodes to the newly prioritised 10+1 poorest local municipalities which are now receiving priority attention	Likely to have a detrimental impact on nodes as URP sites are not considered amongst the 10+1 poorest
A shift in emphasis		
More emphasis is being placed on awareness and intervention for service delivery (Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain)	National DSD policy and improved M&E, increased staff capacity and more funding	Growing understanding of the need for this focus but extra responsibilities placed on already overworked staff
Growing emphasis on supporting emerging (local) service providers and on monitoring for quality and impact of services being delivered (Khayelitsha)	National DSD policy	Increased supply of welfare and social services e.g. HCBC, Disabilities, Older Persons, Substance Abuse, Child and Family services and ECD

Description of the change	Why it happened/who or what caused the change	Implications/impact
Strong focus on ECD centres (Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain, Motherwell)	Management of ECD centres was moved from district to local offices to ease administration and oversight	The monitoring of ECD centres has improved but already overworked social workers have more work although they can be assisted by auxiliary social workers to do the quality assessment work
Most new projects are linked with either food security or income security, with a focus on supporting and facilitating skills required to generate income as opposed to supporting income-generating projects (Mitchell's Plain)	National DSD policy	Create jobs and reduce poverty
Increased staffing budgets and allocation		
District Office (DO) staff recruitment is becoming more flexible and the staff budget has increased (Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain)	The exit of SASSA and subsequent change from welfare to development focus	Increased capacity to identify, facilitate and experiment with more development interventions/projects at community level
Introduction of Social Auxiliary Worker posts and creation of more Community Development Workers posts (Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain)	National DSD policy	Possible to expand service delivery

3.2 Changes in staffing levels

Vacancy rates varied from 5% (Alexandra) to 67% (Mdantsane) (Table 6 below). Across most nodes there was an overall **increase in numbers of staff**. In some, new posts had been created and filled (Khayelitsha). However, some nodes remain under-capacitated, whether as a result of posts not being filled yet (Mdantsane, Motherwell), because not enough posts were allocated (Galeshewe) or because of a high turnover of staff, and staff losses. The latter was caused by high mobility as staff sought either to be closer to their residential localities, or to work in other state departments, and also there were delays in confirming appointments because the recruitment function had moved from regional to provincial offices (Inanda). Outsourcing of certain services (Galeshewe) and temporary contracting (Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain) took place in some nodes, although this did not necessarily reduce DSD staff workloads since some cases returned to them (Galeshewe).

Table 6: Changes in staffing levels

Node	No. of allocated positions	No. of vacancies	% vacancy	Comments
Alexandra	21 (9 management; 12 non-management)	1	5%	
Galeshewe	268	17	6%	
Inanda	32 (2 management; 30 non-management)	15	47%	
Khayelitsha	78	18	23%	
KwaMashu	26 (1 management; 25 non-management)	13	50%	
Mdantsane	43	29	67%	
Mitchell's Plain	52	11	21%	Although it appears the vacancy rate is 21%, this figure is skewed because many vacant posts are filled by contract staff
Motherwell	41	27	66%	

The appointment of **social auxiliary workers** added additional capacity to under-staffed areas (KwaMashu, Mitchell's Plain). **Under-capacity** remained a problem across the board, however, because the allocated positions are clearly inadequate for the work that needs to be done to respond to the massive social problems these poor communities are experiencing.

3.3 Other changes

There was a range of other changes in DSD's organisation in the nodes. These include discussions on **restructuring** of the staffing of regional DSD (Alexandra); **decentralisation** of services and functions (Alexandra, Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain); inflation of numbers coming to DSD as a result of outreach work by social workers (Inanda); improved **integration**, whether inter-departmental or with civil society organisations (Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain); more resources into **M&E** (Khayelitsha, Mdantsane); increased **emphasis on awareness and prevention** (Mitchell's Plain); **relocation** of staff to different premises (Motherwell). In some nodes there were no major changes (Galeshewe, KwaMashu).

In a number of nodes, the shift in emphasis and activities from disbursing grants to a developmental orientation is difficult to implement (Galeshewe, Inanda, Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain), some staff are not clear on what they are meant to be doing and more guidance from higher levels in DSD is needed to assist in re-visioning. The transfer of grant disbursement and associated staff resulted in a staff vacuum and confusion about future roles for remaining staff. The lack of structured mechanisms for strategic discussion and sharing of emerging and cross-cutting issues at the district office (DO) remains a challenge for institutional transformation at district level, as does a current lack of resource materials and database on statistics and trends related to each node, to build the knowledge and understanding of district staff on the socio-economic profile of the area. Across all nodes, a lack of appropriate structures and systems, staff and staff capacity, resources and strategic guidance, and alignment and integration across departments has made the transition very challenging.

4 KEY ISSUES

4.1 Key issues on projects

Training was highlighted as a key issue in half the urban nodes. Business skills training was particularly lacking, and of uneven quality. Trainers were not always proficient in the specific area they were employed for and training was sometimes done before crucial decisions on ownership have been made. Linking training to placement at existing workplaces remains a challenge and projects struggle to get training and information on opportunities, including tenders and funders. The monitoring and assessment of training also influences the success of implementation in projects.

Sustainability of projects – threatened by lack of continued funds, support and planning – was another key issue. **Lack of DSD support** was raised in almost all nodes. **Lack of project sites and markets**, or lack of access to them, was highlighted as were the difficulties projects faced in trying to expand their work and/or diversify. The lack of a clearly articulated exit strategy on the part of DSD was also raised.

Other issues on **funding** were also raised (Inanda, Khayelitsha, KwaMashu, Mitchell's Plain, Motherwell) and included the concern that community-based projects do not have a diverse funding base and are reliant on DSD and goodwill of volunteers for what little funding they have. Lack of, or limited, **stipends** for volunteers and members was another issue and concern over the uncertainty of future funding was also raised. Some projects felt that the DSD **funding application process** was overly complex and stringent. This connects closely to issues of inappropriate and too complex business plans highlighted in the first evaluation.

The practical application of the **sustainable livelihoods approach** in designing projects was not well understood in some nodes (Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain) and as a result, the DO supported very few projects under this line item in its budget. However, the DO staff wanted to increase the number of

these projects. Participants in the evaluation also felt that DSD was not playing a proactive role in identifying other poverty relief and community development projects.

Lack of integration, co-ordination, planning and communication and associated issues between DSD, projects and other role-players/stakeholders was of concern across all nodes. Specific examples include strategic direction/issues not being sorted out before projects' business plans are drafted; unrealistic targets; lack of proper M&E systems; initiatives not being linked to placement at existing workplaces; and DSD projects being conceptualised at provincial level which did not always resonate with local needs or aspirations. **Changing of objectives, roles and responsibilities** during the life cycle of projects was another factor, resulting in loss of focus and continuity which undermined success. **Sharing knowledge** between projects also remained a challenge with projects doing similar work not learning from each other or gaining the benefit of best practice models.

4.2 Key issues on DSD's services

Integration, co-ordination, planning and communication: The lack of integration, co-ordination and joint planning across government departments at higher levels and between levels within departments was an issue. Although the integrated service delivery model (ISDM) was used in some nodes as a basis for operational planning, DSD provincial and district plans did not always align in practice (Inanda, Khayelitsha, KwaMashu, Mdantsane, Mitchell's Plain, Motherwell). Specific examples include how **cumbersome administrative procedures** interfered with effective social work delivery (Inanda) and how the **lack of understanding of roles** caused tension (KwaMashu). A similar problem resulted while implementing the ISDM which requires high levels of strategic management and community development skills and knowledge (Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain). These skills were not well defined and were limited at DO level. There was also a **lack of up-to-date community-based data and documentation** which could be used to increase the level of understanding of staff tasked with engaging at community level.

DSD was not facilitating knowledge sharing or linkages across projects it supported (Khayelitsha, KwaMashu) and the **lack of communication and use of different monitoring systems** between DSD and IDT was also problematic (Galeshewe, KwaMashu).

The **inclusion and participation of intended beneficiaries** of DSD and other projects in the planning and implementation of activities was also highlighted as necessary (Motherwell), as was the need to **build partnerships** with NPOs, the private sector, community groups and other like-minded organisations. Linked to this, **regional functions were increasingly being centralised**, contrary to policy frameworks suggesting a need for high levels of decentralisation. This delayed service delivery (Galeshewe, Inanda, KwaMashu).

Lack of capacity: There was inadequate **institutional capacity and operational infrastructure** both within DSD DOs and amongst community-based organisations (CBOs) and not-for-profit organisations (NPOs) – including co-ordination, management and strategic capacity. This made it difficult for the DO to match or meet the staffing and co-ordination needs required to optimally implement the ISDM or effectively implement and manage the vision, goals, objectives and plans of DSD. While DSD continued to rely on the services of contracted service providers for much of its social service delivery, it had **limited capacity to mentor or support emerging service providers** (Khayelitsha).

Service delivery: Weak and reactive planning was highlighted – including delays in moving from the planning to implementation stage and lack of monitoring, capacity-building and technical support. The **lack of scope and scale of services** (and projects) and **accessibility** were also issues. DSD was not easily able to track or disaggregate what projects or interventions it was directly or indirectly supporting and did not appear to be playing a visible role. In some nodes the perception of DSD remained as a dispenser of social grants. At a conceptual level there was general agreement that DSD should **support more projects** falling in the areas of Sustainable Livelihoods and HIV and AIDS. However, at an operational level, the number of projects supported remained limited and were a small

part of the overall operational budget. DSD staff did not have the knowledge to set up finance, M&E, management and accountability systems.

Staff vacancies

There were several issues around **staff allocation, recruitment and retention** and the **high number of vacant posts**. The shortage of staff was particularly prevalent in terms of community development practitioners (CDPs) (Motherwell) and there was a problem around **accountability and ownership** when project level staff members were employed (Galeshewe).

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need for a formalised and effective **communication system** on social development service delivery to enable sharing of resources, and the integration of services provided by local government and provincial DSD. DSD's vision and functions also need to be integrated with that of other government departments and tiers of government.

Roles and responsibilities need to be clarified amongst the various role-players, from DSD, including staff, to external service providers, including consultants as well as project members, beneficiaries and the wider community. DSD also needs to define its social development and poverty reduction role more clearly in order to assist staff in understanding their role as well as to clarify its distinction from SASSA. This will also help projects understand which tasks can and cannot be fulfilled by DSD and help DSD identify the kinds of interventions and potential impact it is making. A memorandum of understanding between DSD and project members should also be drawn up at the beginning of projects stipulating the roles and responsibilities of each. This clarification process, along with the appropriate infrastructure in terms of DO capacity will also help ensure that the shift to the new developmental approach is widely understood and applied. A co-ordinated effort across all spheres of government and government departments will be needed to achieve this.

One way in which roles and responsibilities can be clarified is through workshops and forums for projects and/or stakeholders. Forums will also enable projects to monitor and evaluate themselves and share learning and knowledge as well as create networks between projects, funders and stakeholders. This will also help build synergy between key stakeholders and develop strategic and operational linkages at provincial, district and nodal level.

Beneficiary participation in decision-making also needs to be improved, for example, by beneficiaries being included on the Boards of service providers so that they can represent interests of projects and provide an early warning system on potential problem areas in the day-to-day operations.

An **audit of current practices and skills** within DSD? needs to be done and this should include the management system, accountability of employed staff, financial procedures, decision-making systems, the scope/feasibility of the current activities, the monitoring of – and the relationship with – the currently established enterprises, ownership and capacity of staff. Once gaps are identified, they can then be addressed.

Clearly defined **project life cycles** and clearly defined procedures, as well as guidelines for the development and planning of projects, will help improve service delivery. **Project design** is also important and capacity requirements and assessments should be conducted at the beginning of this process. Involvement of provincial and area office staff in the design process will also ensure ownership at all levels.

Project success indicators need to be formulated – by monitoring and evaluating qualitative and quantitative results and impact of projects and service delivery, both can be better planned for and project sustainability can be better achieved. The system of training and capacity-building given to projects should also be monitored and evaluated. Their appropriateness can then be assessed and recommendations can be made for improvement. A **training curriculum** that can be tailored to the

needs of individual projects could also be designed to cover technical and financial management, entrepreneurial skills, systems, exit strategies, reporting and so forth – this is key to the success and sustainability of projects.

Devolve staff appointments to the regional level which is much closer to the needs of the node. Considering new ways to recruit and retain staff and develop strategies to fill the human resources gap, such as employing more **auxiliary staff** and creating incentives, is important. Staff allocation to the different units should also reflect DSD's priority focus areas and strategies.

Staff performing or supporting community/social development functions need to be brought in at a higher level or grade to attract the kind of experienced staff DSD needs to turn its new vision into a more tangible reality.