



Municipality Letter



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Abstract: This document contains a letter to the Municipality of Stellenbosch stating the case for funding for the facility as it is a public good. This letter is an excellent example of how the WaSH facility helps the community and how it can be replicated as it serves the entire community. This document would be extremely useful to anyone involved in the civil structure for reasoning to fund the project as well as similar groups wanting to petition their local government for funding.

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Project Website: For much more on the project from which this report derives, please see <http://wp.wpi.edu/capetown/projects/p2014/wash-up-business/>

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About the WPI CTPC Community Resources Series

Community Resources publications are designed to assist residents, community-based and non-profit organizations, local government, students, educators and others working toward sustainable community development in disadvantaged communities in South Africa and elsewhere.

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The Cape Town Project Centre (CPTC) is part of the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) Global Projects Program offering WPI students project opportunities in two dozen centers around the world. Each year, about 26 CTPC third-year undergraduate students from our US university work closely in small groups with local Cape Town organizations and communities on issues posed by our local partners. This report is one of a number of project outcomes produced during two months of fieldwork in Cape Town. See the CTPC website for more information: <http://wp.wpi.edu/capetown>.

Municipality Proposal

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), an American university located in Worcester, Massachusetts, first began its involvement in the Langrug community in 2007. In the seven years WPI has hosted a project team of students in the community, several upgrading programs have taken place, including the construction of the Mandela WaSH-UP (Water Sanitation and Hygiene Upgrading Program) facility. This facility serves many purposes, such as providing access to clean water, toilets, showers, laundry services, and a social meeting space. This year, a team of four students is working with the community members in order to create a sustainable way to support the facility and its upkeep. This facility requires funding in order to be maintained and successfully serve the community as a functioning WaSH-UP facility, and yet there is little monetary support provided to it. If no support is provided to the facility, it will no longer be able to sustain itself and will soon fall to the wayside. If given the opportunity to gain additional funding, the Mandela WaSH-UP Facility will be able to thrive, providing thousands of community members access to sanitation and hygiene that they would otherwise have little or no access to.

In 2007, the WPI Cape Town Project Centre (CTPC) began addressing the ever-present issue of water and sanitation in informal settlements in Cape Town. This project work came to be known as the WaSH-UP program, which stands for Water, Hygiene and Sanitation Upgrading Programme. These programs were intended to integrate social, environmental and economical sustainability in order to provide for improved water and sanitation facilities in informal settlements. The WPI CTPC has accomplished tremendous goals within the past seven years of involvement with these types of projects. The main success of this WaSH-UP program is the successful construction, operation and use of the Mandela Park facility in the Langrug community. To this day, the facility is still operating smoothly and is well maintained and used by the community. The successes of this facility have lead to the construction of another similar facility in the neighboring community. The continuous operation of the existing facility over multiple years in an area where toilets are often destroyed is an amazing feat in itself. Additionally, this program continues to show even greater promise as a precedent for like facilities.

Urbanization has led to the widespread development of informal settlements across the globe. People migrate to urban areas in search of economic opportunity, and find that they cannot afford formal homes. Therefore, they settle on unoccupied, low-quality land. These illegal squatter camps are often densely populated and contain little infrastructure. Because of this, governments struggle to provide basic services to the residents of these settlements. Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WaSH) provision is particularly challenging, leaving an immense amount of people underserved.

Developing and maintaining sanitation services has been a constant effort for the Stellenbosch Municipality. Langrug's sanitation needs are currently met with a sewage system and flush toilets. These systems serve the two lower sections of the settlement, Nkanini and Mandela Park. These toilet blocks are diverse and range in both style and size. The third and highest section, Zwelithsa, remains un-serviced. This issue is currently being addressed with a construction initiative being taken by WPI, CORC and Touching the Earth Lightly.

The facilities main purpose in the beginning was to provide toilets that would be sustained and not decay as so many others had. This facility was also to include common space that could be used by all community members and also serve as a starting point for the WaSH-UP program. This was unique and ambitious in many aspects as it was almost a certain fate of sanitation facilities to fail within a couple months to a year. In doing this, the community would gain some ownership and pride in a facility that they could truly call their own because it was managed by individuals in the community.

In developing this facility some additional efforts have arisen. Firstly, the expansion of the program to a new facility in Zwelitsha. In this expansion, it shows the community's dedication to the program and the outcomes that are being witnessed from it. The next goal is the expanded services being offered at the facility. To begin this project, the main focus was on a sustainable successful sanitation facility. In doing this over the last three years, the project center realized that an important way to do this would be through the education of children. That line of thinking is what has led to a team this year developing those services and educational services to a much more prominent role in the facility. Lastly, using it to represent community involvement has led to using it as a base of operations for a local savings group in Langrug. In doing this, it further promotes

community activeness and also promotes community involvement in a different but, still meaningful way.

There have been several reasons for Worcester Polytechnic's continuing contributions, year after year, to the Langrug Informal Settlement. Up until this point, the university has also remained a stakeholder to the WaSH-UP facility. Unfortunately, funding from the university inevitably came to an end about six months ago and within close proximity to the time when all other organizations stopped funding the facility as well. This situation has resulted in a toilet facility that is operating purely on the caretakers' (employees') faith that funding will return within a reasonable timeframe. The three employees involved with cleaning the facility have been working without a consistent paycheck for the last six months.

Our project group is extremely proud of the diligence shown, but this is not a sustainable option. This facility needs money to operate. To function properly, the facility requires several products such as toilet paper, gloves, hand soap, and various cleaning supplies. Furthermore, electrical bills and services such as security and employee wages must be paid for on a regular basis. With these expenses covered, the WaSH-UP facility can continue to function as an important asset the Langrug Informal Settlement and provide valuable services to a community that is lacking in proper sanitation and insufficient availability of water and toilets.