



The Provision of Quality Municipal Water Services to Communities in Nelson Mandela Bay

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the barriers the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM) faces in delivering quality water service. This paper employed a desktop research. Data were collected using secondary data. The data collected were analysed using thematically analysis. The study's findings show that the NMBM faces various barriers to providing adequate quality water service. The study noted severe backlog challenges, including, among others, the ageing infrastructure and financial constraints perpetuated by corruption. The study established that the NMBM does not supply quality water services to communities due to poor accountability and massive corruption in the NMBM. Therefore, this study recommends that municipalities recruit adequately-skilled personnel to run the NMBM's water supply service affairs.

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1. Introduction

The NMBM Integrated Development Plan (NMBM IDP) (2016: 3) affirms that the NMBM is mandate by the South African Constitution, 1996 to pay attention to all basic requirements of the communities. Lucas, (2016: 1) emphasised that the 'basic water supply' is the minimum set of water supply services' that must be provided to all households, including informal ones, for water to be reliably supplied in sufficient quantities and of adequate quality to sustain individual cleanliness and life. Most of the drinking water in under-developed nations is not clean and as a matter of fact, it is a huge obstacle, even though the provision of high-quality drinking water is one the most important methods for improving human health (Mbaka, Mwangi and Clement, 2017: 29). Feldman (2012: 8) is of the view that South Africans are not able to have access to fresh intake water and better hygiene. In South Africa (SA) during the apartheid administration, essential services were based on racial segregation, and most of the black population was ignored (Musitha, 2020). Mpange (2012: 9) claims that 1994 was a new beginning for the provision of water in the historical events of South Africa. Additionally, the 1996 Constitution gave people

optimism that things would get better in their lives (Tapela, 2015).

Importantly, it was emphasised in the bill of Rights, that everyone should have the right to access fresh intake water and hygiene (Republic of South Africa [RSA] 1996). However, the majority of citizens in Eastern Cape (EC), especially in the rural areas have been deprived of this right, including Nelson Mandela Bay municipal areas (Fobosi, 2013). Many people are frustrated everyday with empty or fake promises with the hope of providing life better (Madi, 2016: 6). In SA, concerns about poor service delivery performance in providing water services to everyone have been growing over the years (Mpange, 2012: 1). As a result, the observable fact of fierce dispute due to inadequate service provision has turn into a common occurrence (Makhari, 2016: 1). The protests are mostly blamed on unmet expectations regarding local government service delivery, with housing, energy, and water being protesters' main concerns (Madi, 2016). Mutamba (2014) asserts that physical or natural scarcities might cause water shortages, but human or business factors are responsible for most issues. In this regard, Kemp and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020) and Makhari (2016) note that serious institutional capacity concerns, poor public

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awareness, corruption, and resource mismanagement are just a few of the many challenges that South African municipalities face. Despite the state's natural challenges, municipalities in SA are still required to provide safe, clean water to all residents without discrimination (Chauke, Mamokhere and Kgobe, 2021). Ellis (2022) argues that some communities across the country have evidence of water supply disruptions, infrastructure failures, water service defaults, mismanagement, and corruption, all affecting the operation and maintenance of water systems. Concerning this, Mogakane (2018: 22) adds that corruption and nepotism within the structure of local governments contribute to poor service delivery.

This study aims to investigate the barriers confronting the NMBM in delivering a quality water service and addressing the question: Does the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM) supply quality water service to the communities?

2. Theory

2.1. Local Governance

The local governance theory was used in this study and it impacts service provision directly. According to Tapela (2015), good leadership is a fundamental entitlement in a democracy and suggests a transparent and accountable government. Thus, good governance comprises an administration that is attentive to the populace's demands, responsive to those needs, and capable of addressing new social challenges by formulating and implementing the necessary laws and policies (Tapela, 2015). Kartakoullis, Karlis, Walker and Locke, (2015) state that good governance is characterised by transparency, solidarity and democracy. In this regard, Kemp and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020), further note that good governance has the following fundamental qualities: involvement, responsiveness, transparency, the rule of law, justice, sense of direction, and surveillance. Therefore, the concept of an effective regional government emerges when these practices and principles are implemented in the community (Kemp & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). According to the same authors, these ideas can improve provision of services and change local government into better local governance. Furthermore, good governance enables development, thus realising the concept of development-oriented local governance in SA (Lekala, 2019: 38). Therefore, development-oriented local governance means local governments working with diverse stakeholders, including communities, to find sustainable ways to improve overall socio-economic well-being and thus improve quality of life (Lekala, 2019: 38). Kemp and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020) and Mbecke (2014a: 268) add that the tremendous local administration as per the vision of the Municipal Structures Act, No. 117 of 1998 which guarantees that the regions' established commitment to feasible, powerful, and proficient metropolitan administrations is ensured and satisfied.

3. Research Method

The study utilised a qualitative approach with a historical design. Secondary data were collected from the Internet, journals, books, among other sources. The data were then analysed, organised, and discussed in themes using textual analysis. The researchers also analysed several articles published in peer-reviewed journals concerning the supply of poor provision of water services to the communities in NMBM in the EC. The researchers used their scientific knowledge of public management and leadership (PML) with government publications to discuss issues regarding to provision water services in SA. The combination of this analytical tool and the empirical review utilised as a framework initiated the discussions, results and recommendations presented in the study. In conducting this review, the study employed a hermeneutic framework to search for relevant literature, incorporate the analysis, and interpret the results obtained from the selected literature (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). All available materials utilised in the study were explored using thematic analysis. The emerging general themes were extracted to create a perception of water service delivery.

4. Results

Nnadozie (2011: 339) claims that a healthy human life necessitates adequate and safe water, and people are expected to use water daily as their basic rights. Water services comprise the collection, transportation, treatment, provision of water for commercial and industrial purposes (Law Insider, 2022; Government of South Africa, 2023). South African legislation and policy emphasised that, sufficient water should be provided, safe, inexpensive, and continually available with the specific least amount flow charge and water quality (Nnadozie, 2011: 339). Concerning this observation, according to Law Insider (2022), water service provision is regarded as the continuous provision of acceptable quality and quantity of water to all individuals within a designated service area. The Department of Science and Innovation [DSI] (2011: 1) indicates that the capacity to offer water services is distributed among local and county municipalities as the water service provider. The available research indicates that, notwithstanding these arrangements, the framework for providing water services in rural, underdeveloped, and secondary industry economic settings faces obstacles (Department of Science and Innovation, 2011: 1). More importantly, an IDP is described as an essential tool for achieving local developmental governance for participative, coordinated, implementation-oriented, decentralised and integrated development (Victor Khanye Local Municipality, 2022/2023: 3). According to Bernard, Sebake and Mukonza (2020: 342), an IDP is a crucial tool for governing local issues, it offers strategic advice to municipalities in conducting their constitutional tasks, and links and coordinates numerous sectoral plans and planning procedures. An IDP aims to hasten the delivery of services by gaining the support of all necessary stakeholders and gives government

agencies and other social partners a clear picture of the municipality's development trajectory to maximise implementation efforts (Victor Khanye Local Municipality, 2022/2023: 3). In a similar line, an IDP, according to the NMBM IDP (2012: 15), strengthens integrated delivery of services and growth, and supports sustainable, integrated communities that offer a full range of services because communities cannot be built in a fragmented way.

4.1 *The South African Drinking Water Quality SUPPORT*

Local municipalities' water supply is governed by the South African Drinking Water Quality Framework, which specifies established norms and criteria to enhance public welfare and dedication to water delivery (Monashane, 2011: 19). According to Hodgson & Manus (2006: 673), the framework "is based on an integrated system of approaches and procedures which address key factors that govern drinking water quality and safety in South Africa". The authors affirm that "the framework focuses on a preventative risk management approach, which is comprehensive, from catchment to consumer" (Hodgson & Manus, 2006: 673). Thus, Hodgson & Manus, (2006) noted that the model encourages a complete awareness of provision of water structure, the factors affecting 'drinking water quality, and the operational controls required to improve drinking water quality and safeguard the public's health'.

4.2 *Water Service Delivery in the Eastern Cape*

Strydom and Katywa (2021) declare that since the Constitution was adopted in South Africa, some residents still lack access to necessities like water, power, and sanitation. As a consequence, protests over service delivery have advanced. According to Municipal IQ (no date), the increase in poor service delivery in the Eastern Cape, where demonstration occurred in a slum of Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela Bay and also in small towns and rural areas, was one among many other most notable aspects of service delivery demonstration against municipalities across the country. Morudu (2017: 4) contends that changes in the number of service provision indicators cause service provision demonstration. Consequently, many of the protests reported in the EC revolved around poor hygiene, from the dirty water and pigs eating excrement to the inhabitants who must relieve themselves in the bush as a result of hygiene insufficiency (Keller, 2021). In this regard, Statistics South Africa [StatsSA] (2018) indicates that despite '88, 6% of South African households having piped water in 2017, only 74, 2% of Eastern Cape households enjoy such access'.

According to Fobosi (2013), even though the government has made tremendous progress, 50% of low-income families in the Eastern Cape still do not have established local governments and cannot get essential services like water, sanitisation, and healthcare. In the case of the NMBM, it has been noted that these protests were caused by the municipalities' poor service

delivery and failure to maintain the existing infrastructure. According to Sizani (2021), many residents are left without a proper water supply after pipeline upgrades made by the municipality. The researcher is of the view that the NMBM's inefficiency, lack of accountability, and inadequacy aggravates communities, resulting in the calls for service delivery protests. The viewpoint is also articulated by Morudu (2017: 4) as he asserts that protests relate to the insufficient distribution of indispensable services at the community phase.

Keller (2021) claims that between August 2020 and January 2021, there were 909 service delivery protests documented 'by the South African Police Service's (SAPS) Incident Registration Information System (IRIS)'. According to Mbecke (2014b), the number and magnitude of protests over the delivery of services in SA indicate "the failure of government efforts to reform the public sector and the inefficiencies of the Batho Pele strategy". Unfortunately, many service protests occur in situations characterised by malicious harm to private and government belongings and the looting of stores (Buthelezi, 2019). In addition, Fobosi (2013) remarks that without action, there will be continuous deprivation of rights of people to sanitary facilities and fresh water in EC.

4.3 *Challenges Faced by South African Municipalities to Deliver Quality Services*

Santi (2018: 62) maintains that in SA, the existence of democracy has achieved progress in ensuring residents have access to the necessities for a decent living. The author adds that since the advent of democracy, numerous development initiatives have been implemented to address the inequalities that the apartheid regime caused. However, despite these initiatives, including 'the National Development Plan (NDP) and Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)', to mention two, service delivery continues to be one of the government's biggest challenges (Santi, 2018: 62). As a result of this, Badenhorst-Weiss and Ambe (2011: 453) note that there is consistent evidence in the mainstream media concerning the difficulties to providing services in the South African public sector, principally in judicial support, policing, social services, health, and local government. Ndevu and Muller, (2018: 185) claims that the so-called "service delivery protests that swept through South African cities and towns expressed dissatisfaction with the local government's delivery of housing, water, electricity, and sanitation as well as concerns about the absence of democracy and the elected officials' lack of accountability." Below section identifies some of the challenges SA municipalities face in providing quality services.

- Insufficient Capacity/Absence of Skills and Incompetency

Lack of capacity has left some municipalities understaffed, resulting in years of tedious service delivery and leaving many communities with inadequate

access to essential services (Masiso, 2018: 24). Minister of the Presidency, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, declares that nearly 50% of South African local government officials do not possess the minimum qualifications outlined in a 2007 publication by the government (Writer, 2021a). De Vries, Reddy and Haques (2008: 62) mention that many local councils lack experience in local governments. According to a COGTA (2007: 2) report on skills in municipalities, 36% of supervisors only had a matric qualification or less, with one civil administrator not even having matric capability, 37% of metropolitan chiefs had under five years in the local municipality, while 74% had eleven or fewer years in local government. The average municipal manager holds a position for three years on average and has nine years of relevant job experience, compared to the technical manager's eleven years of experience (Mulenga, 2017). Masiso (2018: 24), in partnership with COGTA (2007: 2), comments that it is sad to stress that several obstacles such as absence of skills and insufficiency have hindered the government from increasing service and effectively or commendably attending to the issues. Both the RSA (2015) and Santi (2018: 62) concur that the insufficient water supply in SA is caused by absence of skills and competence in the local government, negatively affecting the public service's capacity to deliver and provide high-quality services.

Toxoepus (2019) reveals that there is no expertise, scientific knowledge, and skills among the employee in the local government to execute the main operative and monetary tasks effectively. As a result, most municipalities struggle to reach delivery goals, especially at the management and technical level, mainly due to inadequate capacity (Water Research Commission, 2007: 1). In this regard, COGTA (2021: 39) expresses the opinion that a lack of critical skills in many municipalities jeopardises the municipalities' institutional capacity. Legoabe, (2017) also claims that there is some unqualified Technical Manager who cannot carry out their infrastructure role successfully. The Municipal Demarcation Board, (2012) indicates a chronic paucity of municipal engineers and that there are many managerial jobs vacancies among several municipalities in EC, with 25% of managerial positions remaining unfilled for longer than three months

- **Mismanagement of Financial Resources**

Laubscher (2012: 63) argues that 'local governments in South Africa are under pressure due to poor financial management and lack of accountability', with widespread corruption and fiscal injustices that adversely affect effective and efficient service delivery. Similarly, Beyers (2016: 171) concurs with this opinion by stating that the majority of municipalities in SA are having financial crisis. As Toxoepus (2019) so eloquently puts it, this substantially impacts the local government's capacity to conduct its duties and handle the governance issues that municipalities face. Due to the apparent poor services provided, several municipalities have not been able to complement their budget allocations with payments rate to sustain the needed services to be delivered (Masiso, 2018: 25). The

author further expresses that communities consistently refuse to pay for services received, alluding to incompetence and affordability (Masiso, 2018: 25). According to Toxoepus (2019), as of June 30, 2018, there were R143.2 billion in unpaid municipal bills from consumers overall. Undeniably, municipalities in SA are struggling fiscally; in the Annual Report Financial year 2012/2013, only 4.6% 'of the country's municipalities received a clean audit' (Mtshali & Ntolosi, 2014: 24). Additionally, King, (2016: 23) also noted that many municipalities have been blamed for excessive and under spending of the allocated budget which have reflected in their poor administration, poor project planning, and unwelcoming financial mismanagement.

- **Outdated Water Supply Systems**

Toxoepus (2019) indicates that local governments are entrusted with creating and maintaining the infrastructure necessary for a sufficient water supply. However, due to severe capacity and budgetary limitations, several municipalities experience 'a significant backlog in the infrastructure maintenance and rehabilitation required to provide potable water and sanitation services' (Toxoepus, 2019). Beyers (2016: 170) notes that the lifetime scenarios for current infrastructure systems are "run to fail" due to the utter lack of routine and preventative maintenance. In this regard, Santi (2018) believes that such a circumstance results in insufficient capacity for the current infrastructure.

Regarding the infrastructure challenges, the NMBM IDP (2021: 25) highlights that the following challenges are experienced in the NMBM:

- (1) An estimated 750 km of gravel roads need to be tarred. It will cost almost R6 billion to clear this backlog.
- (2) 'Stormwater drainage inadequacies are experienced in disadvantaged areas, especially newly developed areas, because of limited funding for roads and stormwater construction'.
- (3) Ageing infrastructure, in particular, hygiene and water infrastructure bring about burst pipes, further disrupting service delivery.

Beyers (2016: 169), opine that local governments face challenges in operating and maintaining their service infrastructure cost-effectively and sustainably. This problem results in rapid asset degradation, disastrous infrastructure breakdown, and periodic and long-term disruption to provision of service (Beyers, 2016: 168). Tapela (2015) states that ageing, poorly installed, and inadequate water infrastructure has negatively impacted provision of water services, especially in disadvantage regions. This, in turn, has inspired widespread social protests. Tapela (2015) further indicates that other infrastructure challenges include the theft of existing infrastructure. In this regard, Tapela (2015) avers that public displeasure about drug addiction primarily regards young people who steal copper faucets for resale to satisfy their addiction. As a result, municipalities are replacing copper faucets with

plastic faucets, but plastic faucets are often of poor quality and break or leak regularly (Tapela, 2015).

4.4 *The Challenges Faced by the NMBM to Provide Quality Water Services to the Communities*

- Capacity and skills

‘Capacity refers to the availability of and access to tangible resources (human, financial, physical, or technical) and the knowledge to implement policies to provide public services’ (2010: 114). The review of the study’s findings steered by Khambule (2013: 9) in close collaboration with Mdlongwa (2014) reveals that the inability of the municipalities to render basic water services effectively and efficiently to the public emanates from human resource challenges related to the general skills and abilities in the local sphere of government. For this reason, the Bureau of Economic Research (BER) published a research note on the state of South African municipalities (Writer, 2021b). The research focuses on why many cities and towns do not provide basic services (Writer, 2021b). According to Writer (2021b), the researchers noted that a lack of skills in local government capacity and competency is often cited as one of the main reasons for poor local government performance. Moreover, a study by Mdlongwa (2014) indicates that in SA, several municipalities lack staff with the needed technical skills that can help the municipality provide quality services.

The Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority [LGSETA] (2020) report findings indicate that indicate that most managerial and other high-skilled jobs are in short supply. Similarly, President Cyril Ramaphosa commented that people who are often neither appropriate nor qualified are employed and promoted to important positions (South Africa Government News Agency, 2021). In this regard, Mabeba and Mathebula (2018) further discovered that politics-administration is one of the major complexities of service delivery. On top of these factors, Maseko (2018: 29) adds that a lack of qualified staff in the district and local governments, inadequate training standards, and inadequate coordination between the central, district, and local governments hinder the effective delivery of services.

- The financial state of the NMBM

According to Mantzaris (2014: 82), the Auditor General's annual report is the most true manifestation of the fiscal position of municipalities in SA. Thus, a report issued in July 2012 reveals that only 7 out of 283 municipalities registered clean audits in 2010/2011. Mantzaris (2014: 82) further notes that no Eastern Cape, Free States, Gauteng, Northern Cape, or Northwest municipality received clean audit reports. Nonetheless, a review by Tirivangasi, Mugambiwa, Mutyenyoaka and Rankoana, (2017: 18) shows fraudulent spending ‘of R5 billion by 112 municipalities and their businesses, compared to R22.7 billion by 101 municipalities in the previous year’. Mdlongwa (2014) believes that

throughout South Africa, many municipalities have gone bankrupt or are on the verge of bankruptcy, affecting their ability to provide quality services to the public.

Furthermore, Mkhathshwa-Ngwenya and Khumalo, (2020: 272) contend that most African municipalities face financial challenges as a result of the financial misconduct and absence of management competencies. As a result, the studies by Mamokhere (2020: 2) and Smith and Cronje (2002: 192) note that local government and civil servant fraud and corruption continue to be significant challenges to good public sector governance. Besides, these same authors note that vast amounts of government funding are not accounted for in the public sector and government resources are used for personal gain (Mamokhere, 2020: 2; Smith & Cronje, 2002: 192). According to Mamokhere (2020), it is disturbing that the Tzaneen Local Municipality faces unethical behaviour, including corruption and lack of accountability from government officials. This observation by The Citizen is also applicable in the NMBM, where infrastructure upgrading would take a long time, leaving locals without a proper water supply. This result from poor planning by the NMBM officials and mismanagement of funds needed for successfully carrying out the projects.

- Water Supply Infrastructure

The lack of modern water management systems is rampant in developing countries. Makiwane, Fiko, Mefi and Asoba, (2020) explain that corruption, maintenance, and infrastructure improvements in South Africa are severe challenges in ensuring water quality, safe water, and sanitation. The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) (2009) notes that infrastructure deteriorated by inadequate operation and maintenance at the local government level provides a strong basis for improving national water and sanitation. A study by Monashane (2011: 31) indicates that municipalities cannot render water services due to the absence of proper water systems. The same author further revealed that the available water systems are either outdated, have been vandalised by individuals during delivery protests or have been sold for financial gains to contractors or scrapyards (Monashane, 2011: 31). In a precise manner, Barnard (2020) confirms that the NMBM bulk supply pipelines are up to 100 years old. Similarly, a study by Monashane (2011: 30) notes that the vandalism of the infrastructure aggravates the water supply. For example, in March 2022, the Motherwell area had to go for days without an adequate water supply. The NMBM had to shut down a pipeline to a large part of it due to suspected vandalism of municipal water pipes. The study by Monashane (2011: 29) collaborates that some municipalities are unable to collect debt on water services from their consumers, affecting their ability to render adequate water supply. This has been a hotly contested issue in Gqeberha, as some households were sometimes blocked from using municipal services since they were accused of not paying their bills, which the residents say is untrue.

4.5 Capacity Building Within South African Municipalities

Powell (2012: 24) indicates that improving local government is a vital need and will require that skilful experts be appointed to senior administration positions and that local government be protected from unnecessary party-political impact and tensions. Habib (2015) argues that the local government needs to ensure that their workers are sufficient, well-trained, skilful and efficient. In essence, municipalities are supposed to recruit capable personnel with the ability to improve quality delivery to all residents as indicated by their job obligations (Mkhatshwa-Ngwenya and Khumalo, 2020: 272). Zybrands (2012: 87) suggests that employing skilled and qualified staff and consistently abiding by the regulations, rules, and guidelines will bring positive improvements. According to the City insight (2020), the required abilities are distinguished as examination and strategy abilities (reasonable, logical, and critical thinking abilities for area chiefs); monetary preparation and executive abilities; key initiative and board abilities; venture and agreement abilities; and information and communication technology (ICT) abilities.

4.6 The Capacity Needed to Uplift the NMBM for Them to Provide Quality Water

The study conducted by Shah (2017) notes that managers in any organisation have a duty to identify, train, and hire people who are a good fit for a position and hire workers with the necessary training and education. Therefore, the NMBM must recruit capacitated personnel with suitable qualifications for each position to enhance service delivery. In their analysis, Kroukamp and Marias (2005: 125) declare that in July 2000, former President Thabo Mbeki accentuated the need for and importance of training for civil servants. This training will help managers acquire the skills needed to carry out their duties effectively and improve management competencies. The NMBM employees must be exposed to such training programs to gain the needed skills. LGSETA, (2020: 42) identified some of the required skills are as follows: “problem-solving, decision-making, networking, strong political leadership, the ability to manage different forms of partnerships, the ability to share and disseminate knowledge and experience, having sufficient knowledge of legislative, constitutional and human rights issues, and advanced project management skills to manage alternative delivery strategies effectively”. “Professional and responsive local government departments also require managers with the skills to drive change and transformation, for example, institutional changes (attitudes, cultures, perceptions, relationships), daily changes (systems and processes, division of responsibilities, customer orientation) and structural changes (roles and responsibilities, departmental integration, performance management, more political involvement)” (LGSETA, 2020: 42)

5. Discussion and conclusion

Developing countries may deliberately craft standard measures that impose a cost or other disadvantage on foreign competitors to provide protection to domestic firms. Moreover, standard compliance is often costly for exporter countries. Thus, standard can act as an impediment for trade even when it is imposed due to genuine health and safety of the consumers. Nonetheless, standards also assure the consumers that they use safe, reliable and good quality products. Without standards, non-standardized products may be dangerous as manufacturers will not be obliged to provide qualified products.

The study found that the NMBM does not supply quality water services to communities. Consequently, these challenges have led to a service backlog and caused numerous service delivery protests. The study showed that the impacts of inadequate water delivery with the NMBM are detrimental to the inhabitants' health and impinge on people's right to dignity when they do not have access to adequate water. The study concludes that the inadequate provision of water is due to inefficiencies within the NMBM, affecting its ability to supply adequate water to these communities.

The subsequent recommendations are given below:

- The development and maintenance of water supply systems

The study found that ageing infrastructure, vandalism, and the bursting of old pipes are the primary issues affecting the adequate provision of water. To improve the supply of water, it is recommended that the municipality replace the outdated infrastructure with a new infrastructure to ensure that residents consistently receive adequate water. The new infrastructure will also help to conserve water, avoid needless water shutoffs, and reduce the cost of renting trucks. To successfully implement this, the municipality must guarantee the procurement of high-quality resources and equipment to minimise breakdowns and reduce the need for recurring installation fees. If necessary, the municipality should outsource relevant water delivery to private companies through public-private partnerships to assist. Municipalities must strive to provide clean drinking water in all gardens that use municipal taps.

- Acquisition and retention of critical technical skills

The study noted that most South African municipalities face the challenge of a lack of skills. Based on this observation, it is recommended that any municipality prioritise the recruitment process to ensure that they acquire highly-skilled employees with appropriate qualifications for a range of vacancies. The NMBM must hire adequate staff and provide training programs to ensure the staff can run, administer, and keep the water infrastructure functioning. Such employees must address water leaks and burst pipes in the settlements and guarantee that communities can access water easily. They must also supervise construction projects to ensure high-quality and long-lasting results. The municipality must ensure that it

performs the recruitment process in line with the National Qualification Framework Act to avoid political cronyism and nepotism. In addition, the municipality must implement quarterly or annual qualification verifications for all municipal employees to ensure their appropriateness.

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