
PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL ATTITUDES ON ACCESS TO SERVICES (1)

by Rudi Hillerman

I wish to share with you my perceptions of local attitudes on the urbanisation process and access to services as a "white" South African who earns his living by being one of the many interveners in the development process that is occurring, particularly in the areas around Durban and Pietermaritzburg administered by KwaZulu and the Department of Development Aid.

What we as interveners should always be mindful of is that we, either as individuals or representing an organisation, should be facilitators in this transformation or development intervention and that we are likely to be used/manipulated by individual(s) or organisation(s) to achieve their own ends.

Past and Present Situation as Reference Framework

In arriving at a perception on local attitudes one must remember that past and present experiences would have influenced both the perception by myself and the attitudes of the residents in these areas.

At present we have black urban township areas in which the local government systems are not functioning or where individuals are allowed to rule; services are generally available although they might be intermittent or of a poor quality (when compared to White areas); housing delivery has been fully privatised so that only middle to upper income earners (in Black terms) have formal access to land; and social services are usefully under-provided.

In the adjacent rural areas my perception is that the situation is slightly better in that the tribal administration is generally reasonably effective (within its own limitations); services are unfortunately also declining - mainly the pollution of rivers and streams; housing delivery has always been an individual's own affair and formal access to land through the tribal authority is possible to low income earners (Black); and social services are also under-provided.

Local Attitudes

The Black inhabitants compare their situation with the situation in adjacent White, Indian and "Coloured" areas, where they see larger houses, larger sites, clean streets, competitive shopping facilities, big and even double-storeyed schools with play facilities, etc. In response to this comparison the assertion is generally made that the residential areas should have equal facilities and services i.e. Black and non-Black areas.

I have frequently heard it said by Blacks that the Government is "duty bound" to provide access to land (a site) and basic services to provide for the basic needs "of its citizens". As a white citizen of South Africa (might I say a privileged citizen) this was never an issue which concerned me.

Some comments on the existing residential areas. Firstly, it is often said that the ruling site sizes (300 m²) are too small and yet many of the development actors (officials, professionals, township developers) are talking of smaller sites (down to 180 m²) to achieve greater densities and hence economies of scale. Secondly, registration of ownership (title) has also become confusing. In the past, families were liable to be dispossessed of their title (Deed of Grant) if the head of the household lost his job. The introduction of rights of leasehold has done little more than confuse everybody. On "freehold" title the misconception exists that one can do on that land what one likes - "as, for example, in Clermont." (This refers specifically to erecting further structures on one's property). Thirdly, having now experienced the present alternative to the so-called "matchboxes", namely houses built by private developers, residents are asking that Government again intervenes in the housing delivery process.

Compared with the urban area, the rural area gives residents more freedom within the land allocated to them.

My perception regarding the mobility of people in the urban areas is that, if it can be afforded, the monied family member would move from an area with rudimentary services to an area with full services, whilst still retaining his first dwelling for family members.

The "unemployment plague", the fear of losing one's income and thence not being able to pay one's monthly installments for a house and/or services, is a further cause of uncertainty in the urban area, this not being the case in a rural area.

What needs to be done

When asking myself the question: "What needs to be done?" I have the following suggestion to make:

- a) Recognize that as "outsiders" we have a different culture, ethics and humanity, and yet do not accentuate the difference but find commonality and otherwise show respect for one another.

- b) Inform each other and be informed and involve ourselves so as to gain knowledge of and an insight into matters that concern and/or are clear to us.
- c) Understand that any intervention, however trivial it may be, must be carefully considered and the full intention and scope understood by the target group.
- d) That both an internal and external monitoring and evaluation process be implemented by the development agent.
- e) Do not neglect the rural areas whilst paying attention to the development within urban areas and vice versa, so as to achieve as harmonious and balanced a development as possible.
- f) If at all possible, acquire a working knowledge of each others' language.

PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL ATTITUDES ON ACCESS TO SERVICES (2)

by Thulani Mthembu

The movement of people from rural areas to cities predominantly takes place among a poor, ill-educated and unsophisticated population which ventures thereto in search of employment and to partake of the opportunities of city life. There are usually a number of reasons urging them to elect to move to cities, e.g. drought, floods and hunger.

In moving to cities, they usually leave behind a life which had no or little state intervention, in that the only visible statal or para-statal activity they know of is livestock dipping tanks operated once a week or month by authorities from the local Magistrate's Court, and pension payments. The only services which are provided are those engineered by the community at large. Let us now tackle those basic services that make human life possible.

Essential services

Water

In the countryside, communities live on natural springs or rain water. Springs are usually communal, having been protected by the neighbourhood as an entity and used strictly by the families which partook in its protection activities.

Moving to cities, they find the only source of water to be stand-pipes along the roads or water-kiosks as we see them in Inanda and in parts of Edendale. In most cases, this facility has to be paid for in monetary terms. In this case if you have no money, you become automatically excluded from this facility or service.

Attitudes

To an unsophisticated person having to pay for a natural commodity like water is difficult to understand, let alone accept. The comment - "Oh! the state is now selling God's water to us" - is heard all around. Such

comments lead naturally to bitterness and to the vandalism of water-kiosks and other metered water sources. This attitude, of course, changes as people become more and more aware of the difference between hygienically treated water and natural spring water. The need for education becomes clear here.

Effluent Disposal

Since in the rural areas, people have been using pit-latrines which are self-built and monitored, little or no difficulty is experienced in urban areas where pit latrines or water-borne sewerage is used. With proper building material, they are able to put up suitable superstructures themselves.

Attitudes

Difficulties in urban townships have arisen where the dreaded bucket system is largely used and not constantly emptied by authorities. It is true that this effluent disposal method has never been acceptable to the black community and is considered as the worst service ever encouraged by the state. In Clermont, for instance, the service is so badly handled that on any given day, walking on the pavements you find spilled effluent, if not uncollected buckets full of effluent. The Sanitation Project survey conducted by the University of Zululand has revealed that the majority of Inanda people will only use pit latrines, be they VIP's (Ventilated Improved Privies) or Aqua Privies, as temporary sanitation measure until waterborne sewerage is provided. The question of costs seems not to be problematic.

Refuse Collection

In rural areas this is usually an individual family task. Each family will, within its premises, dig a pit, for the disposal of its solid waste. As soon as the pit is full another pit is made.