Social Capital in practice: Application of social capital towards socio-economic development of the poorest communities in the Western Cape Province (South Africa)

by Carolin Gomulia

• Introduction

The paper explores the lessons learned through the practical application of social capital approaches by the Western Cape Provincial Government in South Africa in the form of the Social Transformation Programme (STP). The programme aimed to assist 27 of the poorest and most vulnerable communities in the Western Cape over a period of 2.5 years, from June 2007 to March 2010. Drawing on post implementation reports and on first-hand experience as the acting director in charge of the programme's implementation, my paper showcases how social capital approaches can effectively mobilise community-based development and increase efficiency in government as well as highlights the challenges within a political environment.

The paper will not elaborate on an in-depth literature review regarding the main themes of social capital and social transformation but rather show the trajectory of how the application of these concepts had been operationalised by the provincial government.

Evaluation reports of the programme, which was terminated in March 2010 due to party political changes, provide a rich resource for academia and practitioners to study the strengths and weaknesses of the operationalisation of social capital for public welfare policy in developing countries.

• Background and history

The Western Cape Province is one of nine provinces in South Africa. It is located at the most southern tip of South Africa with Cape Town as the main urban centre. The Western Cape's population comprises 11.4% of the population of the country (Statssa, 2013) and contributes 14.1% to the national GDP (Southafrica.info, 2012). The province faces major socio-economic challenges of inequality, poverty and issues related to high crime levels. Its overall socio-economic performance is on average better than the rest of the country, but still quite severe when considering indicators such as the Gini-coefficient.

The intense apartheid history left a post conflict society characterised by social disintegration, social exclusion, high levels of unemployment, crime and poverty. Specifically in the Western Cape one finds large areas of informal settlements against the backdrop of beautiful landscapes and a booming tourism industry. Apartheid has created a deeply fragmented society which now, 20 years later, still battles with the legacy and at the same time faces new and mounting challenges. One of the newer challenges is the HIV/AIDS pandemic, large unskilled youth labour force, drugs and crime as well as the impact of the slowing down of the global economy which contributed in many instances to the deepening of these legacies. A lot has been achieved but many challenges remain. This situation requires careful deliberations by the government of the day on how to address these major issues most effectively,

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while at the same time, prioritise its scarce resources. This also means that partnerships with the social and private sector as well as active citizenry are crucial towards change.

> "Our state is too weak to address the challenges by itself. State-led development will not succeed in a country where state capacity is lacking. In addition, pervasive state intervention – where the state is everything and all else is subordinate – breeds complacency and dependency among the citizenry and leads to the withdrawal of investment and disengagement by the business sector. We can address our critical challenges only if citizens and leaders from all sectors actively engage with the state to improve delivery and enforce an accountable government. (Dinokeng Scenarios, 2009)

Set in the context of South Africa, a post-conflict society in transition, social capital appeared to be an innovative theory to address the complex issues faced by a post-apartheid state. The South African state is regarded as a well- institutionalised state with internationally acclaimed policies and strategies, but it seemingly lacks the ability to successfully implement these policies and strategies. This is further exacerbated by one of the highest inequality levels in the world with a Gini-coefficient of almost 0.7.

Against this background, the Provincial Government of the Western Cape decided in 2005 to integrate a 'social capital approach' into their provincial development and poverty-reduction strategies. Each department was tasked to identify how social capital could feature in their current programme and project work. At these early stages of the implementation of social capital only a very small leadership minority of senior officials understood the concept and were able to operationalise it. For most of the officials it was seen to be 'yet another' new approach to be implemented.

Further research and the attempt to mainstream social capital throughout government showed slow success in 2006 and 2007. Most of the 12 provincial government departments created specialised social capital positions to support the implementation of the concept as well as a website to assist the understanding of the concept among officials and also the public. In 2007, the same government designed and inaugurated the so-called Social Transformation Programme (STP). The objective of the programme was firstly to enable the 27 poorest and most marginalized geographical communities of the Western Cape Province to become resilient and to empower the leadership of these communities to drive their own development through partnerships and networks with the provincial government playing a facilitative and enabling role. The programme's intent was to enable communities to bundle their network resources in the form of organisations, associations and informal networks into an organised and recognized structure, called an intermediary structure, to interact with resource stakeholders outside of the geographical communities in a more organized and constructive way.

The progamme intended to transform the way government operated. The aim was to change government's role from playing a predominantly reactive role towards assuming a role that is more developmental and interventionist in nature to ensure effective, efficient and needs-based service delivery based on cross-departmental networks and cooperation. Government wanted to become the facilitator and enabler for locally driven development enriched through partnerships.

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Finally, through constant search for partnerships and beneficial networks the programme anticipated to involve the broader society to showcase how, by working together towards a common purpose, South Africa is able to build a path towards a better future for all its citizens.

- **Theoretical underpinnings**

The design of the STP was based on the main social capital theorists (Putnam 1993, Grootaert 2002) as well as on specifically developmental social capital theory (Ritzen et al 2000, Knack 1997, Woolcock / Narayan 2000, Carroll 2001). Initial research projects and best practise exchange with the Canadian Government in 2005 lead to the decision by the Western Cape Provincial Government to adopt the World Bank definition of social capital as the working definition for the Provincial Government:

> "*Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together.*"*(World Bank Group on Social Capital, 2002)*
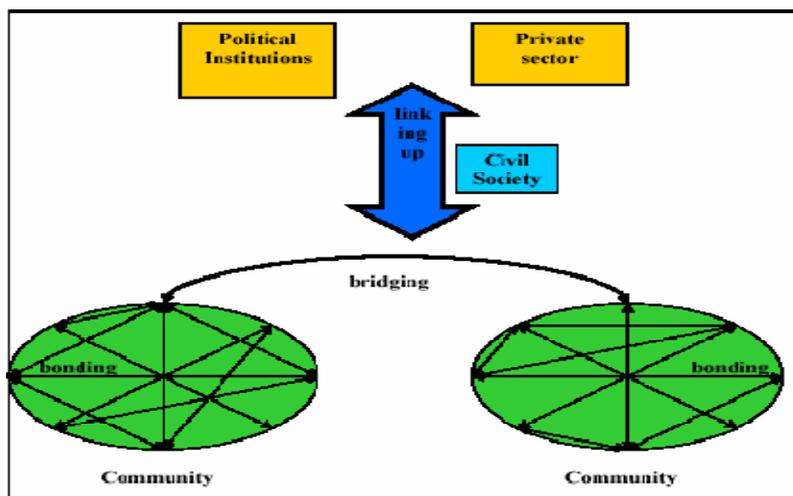
This definition was put forward with the following explanation

> "*Broadly speaking, social capital refers to the institutions, relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of social interactions within a society.*" *(PGWC, 2006)*

This definition was soon expanded upon and quite a few other theorists were considered in the operationalisation of the concept. The key emphasis shifted towards making the concept of social capital easy understandable and more tangible towards the operationalisation of the concept.

Important for the design of the STP and other projects was the distinction of different types of social capital, bonding, bridging and linking as elaborated upon by Woolcock and Narayan (2000).

It is useful to distinguish between different types of social capital, namely bonding, bridging and linking

Source: Gomulia, 2006

social capital. Bonding refers to networking that happens within relatively homogeneous groups. This type of social capital can very easily lead to exclusion of others and/ or have negative effects. Bridging capital brings together people across different social divides. The third type, linking capital, refers to vertical alliances, such as between government and civil society, or between organized labour and organised business.

The government argued that high levels of bonding social capital exist in poor communities in the form of neighbour support networks, strong family ties, but also in negative forms such as gangs. The racial segregation introduced during apartheid with a deliberate social engineering process to separate

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different racial groups was also driven by a deliberate spatial planning approach. Hence, the provincial government identified the need for linking social capital that would bring different communities together across spatial divides.

Besides social capital, six further concepts supported the development of the Social Transformation Programme strategy:

Social Transformation: This concept attempts to understand the long-term outlook and the importance to involve the whole of society through networks and partnerships. For social transformation to be successful the different target groups must define their own future, the options available to them and the collective plan towards achieving the desired transformation. This requires platforms of dialogue, trust and a sense of cohesiveness around a common purpose (Burkey, 1993). In this context social transformation was envisioned as a revolutionary approach in overcoming the legacy of apartheid. The underpinning pillars of the concept are an interventionist state and citizen activism. It describes a strategic partnership between government and citizens in addressing development challenges. Social transformation acknowledges the creative tension between government and its citizens.

Community Development: Generally a community development approach speaks to development that addresses the needs of communities through a bottom-up approach. Communities themselves need to be able to express their own needs. Government and other societal stakeholders will need to create an environment that enables the joint identification of development needs and plans by and in collaboration with societal actors. This approach puts communities at the centre of development with government playing a supporting and facilitating role together with a range of enabling and developmental partners. For the implementation of the STP such an understanding of community development immediately challenged the complex bureaucratic make-up of the government sector. It required political will, mindset changes of officials, innovative budgetary systems, and the willingness to adopt new work approaches. This approach was important in order to ensure that government allows its citizens to lead and not impose blanket solutions to disparate problems.

Integrated and holistic governance: Establishment of a state apparatus that is highly efficient and developmentally oriented is another element that the STP took into account. The state was perceived to play a crucial role in facilitating development, unlocking opportunities and at the same time providing social nets for the most vulnerable and marginalized in society. It is people-oriented, partnership-based, interventionist and well-managed. The model of integrated and holistic governance is based on the above presented idea of the responsibility of the state to ensure that resources are used most effectively and efficiently.

The boundaries between departments needed to become more transparent and fluid towards mutually–reinforcing planning and implementation to achieve shared goals and objectives. In addition, holistic governance is seeking stronger cooperation on a vertical level between the three spheres of government to enable a seamless government. The concept of holistic governance also speaks to the

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responsiveness of the state to its citizens, not only through service delivery, but to enable citizens to actively participate in and access government. The STP was designed with an understanding "*that each department will no longer derive its central raison d'être from fulfilling an abstract sectoral mandate to provide education or health services as the case may be, but rather to undertake these service obligations in service of a higher order strategic imperative.*" (Rasool, 2005)

Public Participation: The means of political participation are manifold. Political participation is participation in elections as well as standing for political office or even violent activities. People often participate politically when a group of the population has an important need, is disadvantaged in certain ways and wants to achieve a change. To facilitate participation, civil society organisations may try to participate in the political process to carry through the interests of a certain group. Furthermore, political participation can take place through membership in a political party but also through civil disobedience (Gomulia, 2006). Public participation is one of the core principles of South Africa's Constitution. The STP put this principle first and sought to empower communities to apply their rights as citizens to actively participate in the planning and implementation of government policies, strategies and programmes. It sought to enable citizens to engage and understand the state in a meaningful way.

Social Cohesion: The term social cohesion has been employed as a framework and agenda for examining, promoting and managing the quality and sustainability of societies. There is some consensus among social scientists that social cohesion can be said to be present in societies to the extent that societies are coherent, united and functional, and provide an environment within which its citizens can flourish (Chidester et al, 2003). In the way social cohesion is defined, "more is better". Social cohesion is a state of affairs in which a group of people (delineated by a geographical region, like a country) demonstrates an aptitude for collaboration that produces a climate for change (Ritzen et al, 2000). In the context of the STP social cohesion was seen as the end goal for the programme.

Conflict Transformation: The term itself evolves from the concepts of conflict resolution and conflict management but emphasizes that conflict should focus on transforming relationships, interests, discourses and sometimes even institutions such as the constitution if necessary. The shift towards conflict transformation acknowledges that conflict is often very deep rooted in past events so that a transformation of the inner and outer needs to take place in order to achieve desired outcomes. Another important factor for conflict transformation is that projects and interventions are developed on a long-term basis including multiple levels (Lederach, 2003). The STP included the concept of conflict transformation as conflict formed part of many of the challenges faced by communities, but also because conflict is an inherent part of community development. As the STP aimed to transform society at large the approach blended perfectly in to not contain conflict or start from a new page, but to transform the force of conflict into a positive resource for society.
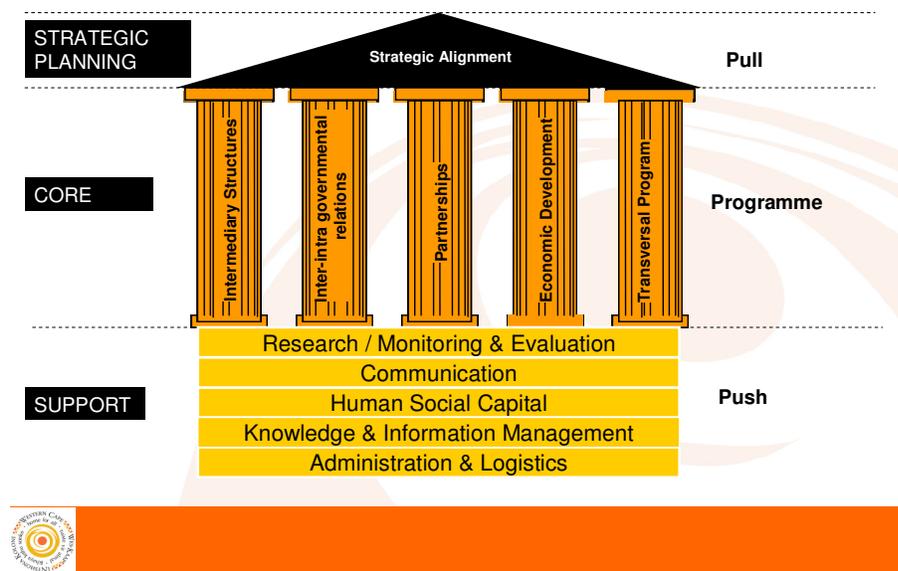
- **Implementing social capital as a tool for development**

The Social Transformation programme was a complex social policy programme with the intention to address developmental challenges with a social capital approach in 27 geographically defined

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communities. Social capital was applied on two levels in the implementation of the STP. The external approach focussed on assisting communities to develop a network of various organisations and stakeholders within their community and then, in a second phase, enabling these networks, also named intermediary structures, to interact with government and other stakeholders. The internal approach focussed on developing mutually beneficial networks and relationships among government officials across departments as a means of breaking down traditional silo's endemic in large bureaucracies. The main emphasis was put on bridging and linking social capital.

The graph below shows the various aspects and pillars of the Social Transformation Programme.

STP-27 FRAMEWORK

Source: STP Internal Strategy document 2008

A key aspect of the STP was the selection of 27 geographical areas based on crime and poverty statistics. This aspect itself brought about additional challenges to the implementation of the programme which will not be explored in this paper. It is however important to understand that the delivery of the STP focused on selected geographical areas within the province.

4.1 Intermediary Structures – laying the ground for bridging and linking social capital

At the heart of the development of the implementation plan was the importance of linking social capital between government and the 27 selected geographical areas. The design of the programme was based on the idea that communities should have a strong, united voice towards influencing government decision-making on resource distribution for their own development but also towards developing a form of agency that would assist them to build partnerships and unlock resources beyond government. This would take the form of intermediary structures.

Intermediaries are generally referred to as the societal actors that facilitate communication and the flow of information between communities and government institutions (Gomulia, 2006). Intermediary structures are not necessarily formalized organizations or institutions, but platforms where community

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representatives and stakeholders find a way to network among each other in order to engage with other societal actors. According to Krishna (2002) intermediary actors can facilitate interest formation, aggregation and representation. It provides the opportunity for communities to represent their interests in an accessible manner at a low cost. The latter is especially important for poor communities who might not otherwise have the means to interface directly with formal institutions. In other words, intermediaries provide communities with a "voice" in a coherent and coordinated manner.

Intermediary structures can facilitate bridging and linking ("scaling up") social capital. This means that an intermediary structure provides communities with access to the resources and opportunities of government, the networks of government, the NGO sector and the business sector to unlock further opportunities for communities.

The Provincial Government of the Western Cape had decided that the absence of such a structure in communities in the Western Cape thwarted real development of these communities. The array of organizations and networks in civil society undoubtedly all attempt to serve the common good of society. However, in the absence of a mechanism to ensure that these efforts are well-targeted, coordinated, and focused in an integrated manner, the impact of the efforts is minimized and remains ad hoc in nature.

The intermediary model chosen for the STP was an umbrella body bringing all sectors of communities together such as youth, women, business, religion, health and others. Two structures within the Western Cape Province served as good-practise examples, namely the Khayelitsha Development Forum and the Proudly Manenberg Campaign. Both structures were established structures and the multi-sectoral approach as well as the attempt to integrated government engagements with the structures served as practice examples.

In all instances communities themselves decided who and which sectors should be represented in the structures through extensive community engagements from June 2007 onwards. From the beginning, it was set out that these umbrella bodies will be coordinating structures for the development of the community whose main purpose was not the implementation of projects, but to drive the developmental agenda in a needs driven and inclusive approach.

The first phase saw communities receive support to set up structures in a locally suitable manner. The STP recognized the different dynamics in each area, and allowed the structures to develop through an organic process, thereby ensuring community ownership.

In order to complete phase one a fully constituted intermediary structure would have undertaken the following processes:
- Representative mobilization of community through multi-sectoral community engagements;
- Election of an interim executive followed by a strategic planning session with the executive;
- Business/Development Plan developed;

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- Publicly elected executive during an open launch by the community; and
- Registered as a Non-Profit Organisation with the National Department of Social Development to enable the structure to function as a body that can receive funds and channel resources.

The key principles each of these intermediary structures adhered to were:
- Constantly working to adhere to the principles of STP such as inclusion of marginalized and 'voiceless' sectors in the communities;
- Constantly seeking to build partnerships and networks with all structures, organizations and institutions in the community;
- Ensure regular public meetings with the community;
- Ensure transparency and accountability to the community and any stakeholder in terms of the resources, funding and business processes of the intermediary structure;
- Intermediary structure is accountable to the community and not to a political representative;
- Members of the intermediary structures are elected, not self-nominated. Political affiliation does not play a role in the participation nor nomination towards membership of the intermediary structure.

The networking among various intermediary structures for bridging social capital was initially anticipated, but only a few processes could be initiated. Sharing sessions and summits held resulted in one of the most important tools for mutual learning among the different communities. Executive members of intermediary structures were able to talk to each other in terms of community leadership challenges, organizational development and geographical differences across the province.

After the establishment phase and the phase of buy-in from the whole geographical community as described above these structures were supposed to be able to interact in a meaningful way with government and other stakeholders. Considering that these structures had been set up in the poor areas, resources were scarce and also the level of formal education often low. The STP then provided IT infrastructure and basic coverage of stationary and telephone cost as well as, specifically in the rural areas, transport money. The basic support was aimed at assisting the sustainability aspect of the structures. This was coupled with some capacity building initiatives in terms of conflict transformation, basic knowledge on government structures and the South African Constitution to ensure that the intermediary structures were knowledgeable about how to claim vertical / linking social capital.

The aspect of Local Economic Development (LED) and partnerships at large was also introduced to start unlocking the economic potential of the area. Unfortunately, these aspects were not exploited much as the programme was closed by the time this phasewas about to commence.

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4.2 Inter-governmental relations - bridging social capital within government and preparing for linking social capital.

The Provincial Government of the Western Cape had prior to the conceptualisation of the STP identified the lack of internal social capital as a challenge towards effective, efficient and developmental service delivery in the Western Cape. These challenges referred to low levels of integration among government departments, very hierarchical structures and silo thinking within government.

Hence, inter-governmental relations became one of the core elements of the STP to foster bridging social capital among employees of the provincial government. One intervention to foster inter-governmental relations was the establishment of Inter Governmental Service Delivery Forums (IGF) in all 27 communities. These forums attempted to bring various government departments together to meet specific community development objectives and government deliverables. The need for these forums arose from communities demanding interaction with government and government officials. The IGF thus provided an interface between communities and government. This interface was planned to take place at middle management level, but to also include coal face staff with decision making power. Through the IGF, government officials were challenged to come up with creative solutions to the issues that communities were faced with. Co-operative governance and the strategic use of state assets and resources for efficient, effective and transparent governance lay at the heart of this intervention.

One of the main objectives of those forums was to foster the alignment of inter governmental service delivery through building trust between communities and government. This way of consultation was aimed at needs-based and integrated delivery to not only ensure accessibility of services, but also to facilitate changes in the mindsets of government officials towards 'business unusual'. The IGFs put at the centre the aspect of "listening" to intermediary structures. The idea was that government representatives would then filter the needs and aspirations of the communities up to their respective line managers on local, provincial and national level.

Besides being the interface with communities the IGFs also sought to provide a platform whereby state departments could meet to share information, exchange ideas, develop integrated service delivery plans, coordinate service delivery interventions, do joint planning, offer training and best practice models and, most importantly, provide the technical and budgetary support for community development initiatives.

It is important to note that the IGF's were not set up to substitute other inter-governmental structures mandated by the Inter Governmental Relations Framework Act. The IGFs were intended to compliment the latter with input from the community level.

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- **Challenges and successes**

As much as the STP seemed like an innovative and well thought through process the complexity of community level politics and dynamics had been severely underestimated in the establishment of the intermediary structures. The establishment of networks based on trust and mutual understanding takes time, something that is often a luxury in the political context when the next elections are lurking.

The achievements and progress of the STP had been questioned many times. In fact, the non-tangible achievements became the main criticism for the programme. In 2009, the Social Transformation Programme had reached all the 27 areas it was mandated to serve. The following list outlines the key achievements and successes of the programme.

- 25 intermediary Structures established;

- 14 business plans developed;

- 3 STP summits held;

- 31 integrated Service Delivery Jamborees held[1];

- Institute for Justice and Reconciliation 'Community Healing' – Training workshops held;

- Project office structure established;

- 4 local intergovernmental forums established;

- STP website fully functional;

- STP colloquium conducted monthly;

- Partnership with Inter-governmental Relation units and 2010 unit; and

- Inter-departmental steering committee established and functioning.

This programme had been named STP, in other words 'the change of the societal' – 'the change of ways in which society interacts'. This has happened and manifold examples of the 'unreported' or uncountable achievements can be named (see quotes annexure A). One example with wide reaching effects for the future was the fact that the Department of Home Affairs and the South African Social Security Agency signed a memorandum of agreement to continue joint service delivery on same days in same communities. Other examples showed that by creating inter-departmental networks/connections officials were able to approach colleagues in other departments with questions and challenges when servicing beneficiaries.

Besides the successes, the programme encountered the following challenges:

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[1] Jamborees were one-stop-shop government services provided in a concentrated and coordinated manner over a period of two to four days bringing the various government departments together into one locality. This is another inter-governmental aspect that contributed to social capital which has not be elaborated upon in this paper.

Politicization: The main reason for the closing of the STP and the discontinuation of government support to the STP was the politicization of the programme. The initiation was done under the banner of the Premier's[2] priority programmes which initially gave the programme exposure and cloud to deliver, but at the same time introduced the political dimension. The power of the programme to reach out to communities through its conceptualization made it an attractive target for politicians. The years 2008 and 2009 were years of high political volatility in the South African democracy and happened to affect the STP severely. The change in the political direction and the change of the ruling party in the province resulted in the discontinuation of the programme. South Africa has a tradition of changing political direction dramatically when leadership changes to show the stronghold of the new direction. The negative effects of the lack of policy continuation are widely ignored in the South African context.

Localised community dynamics and politics: The initiation of the project underestimated community dynamics and local politics within communities. It might have been another preconceived idea by government that it would be 'easy' to convince communities of the merits of the STP approach and gain buy-in early. Long standing power relations and historical baggage in the fight for government resources often alienated structures and individuals in key positions in the 27 communities from participating in 'yet another' government programme.

Inclusiveness: The STP attempted to initiate its work in an inclusive way to ensure trust building at an early stage of the inception of the programme. The large number of organisations and structures within communities coupled with a lack of resources to conduct a proper assessment of all structures lead to major challenges. However, in most communities, the STP failed to include all classes and layers of society.

Integration and Coordination: The challenge of integration within government is not new and has been identified as such in almost all endeavours of government. The STP had produced a couple of models and pilots regarding integrated planning and implementation. However the lack of dedicated leadership throughout the government resulted in unwillingness of many government officials to deliver on the STP programme as the hierarchical order still dominated. In many instances the rational for delivering services in a different mannerwas not well understood and lead to a lack of appetite for collaboration among public officials.

Conceptually, integration is normally well understood in theoretical terms, but it appears that there is a hesitancy or inability to operationalise it on the scale required to successfully implement development programmes in an integrated fashion. Notwithstanding, it must be noted that preliminary successes in this regard have been achieved and could foster confidence on its applicability on a regional wide scale.

Scope of the programme: The initial selection of 15 areas and the rapid growth to 27 geographical areas (which in total made up approximately 63 communities) resulted in criticism from many fronts. It was questioned if the 'targeted' approach of the STP could still be considered as a pilot. The challenge was to

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[2] The Premier is the highest political figure in each of the Provinces of South Africa and heads the Provincial Cabinet.

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combine the need for government to deliver to 'all' its citizens where, in this case, it focussed on a selected group of citizens with the highest needs.

Positive Citizenship: Whilst endeavours to address the basic needs of citizens have dominated the public service mandate over the past 14 years the building of individual capacities of communities was not pursued in a coherent manner. Great emphasis has been put on the rights of citizens, but the responsibilities that come with rights did not receive equal attention. The importance of capacitating people living in the 27 areas to cope with the harsh realities of social and economic deprivation needs to be elevated. A basic toolkit of how to survive the realities of conditions as they are today is required.

Institutional readiness: The implementation of the STP in the Provincial Government of the Western Cape started to inculcate the notion of a developmental state, the requirements from civil servants to become active agents of change, and the notion of collaborative leadership as a means to lead beyond authority. The complex system that underlies a provincial government as a public institution needs to be taken into consideration when adopting a sustainable development approach. Greater expert guidance is required on how to leverage off existing legislation, policies, guidelines, other institutional mandates, infrastructure, and structures to inculcate a sustainable development approach.

- ## Conclusion & Recommendations

In the case-study described above the application of social capital in conjunction with other approaches is an innovation in itself. The idea to actively apply social capital as social policy in a developmental context proofed challenging and in most instances a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

The Social Transformation Programme was a deliberate attempt at social engineering of networks and relationships by government coupled with short delivery timeframes and large scope of work in a highly politicised environment. It was also questioned whether government was the right key actor to initiate a process of this nature. Only in combination with other approaches could social capital manifest itself in the described context.

The concept yielded positive results on community level through its intermediary structures.

Besides the combination of approaches it also showed that the institutional circumstances need to provide an enabling environment for social capital approaches to flourish. Considering that relationships are built on trust and working towards mutual agreed positive action, it was quite ambitious to implement a project of this nature within electoral timeframes. Political volatility in the province and the country further exacerbated the building of trust across spheres and stakeholders. Trust is both a means to an end and an end in itself in fostering mutually beneficial relationships amongst a variety of stakeholders. As much as communities ultimately bought into the STP and its strong social capital lens by establishing intermediary structures, not enough effort was build in to consider the 'strength' of the network and also the sustainable drive of the established network in form of leadership and resources.

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It is imperative that the institutional framework provides an enabling environment for social capital approaches to flourish. Considering that mutually agreed positive action and trust are the cornerstones of relationships, it might have been quite ambitious for a political actor driven by electoral timeframes to implement a project of this nature.

In conclusion, the social capital approach itself build a good foundation for the STP but the overall environment for the implementation of the programme deemed not supportive. A huge lesson learnt for the application of social capital in the policy environment is that networks and relationships need time hence programmatic approaches need to cater for this. Real change and the influence of socio-economic development can only be measured over time.

Institutional readiness and the ability to implement change were also pre-assumptions the STP was based upon. The lack of bridging social capital in the form of inter-governmental relations was a challenging burden. As the systemic structure limited the growth and establishment of networks and relationships the networks among officials only grew gradually. In addition, it is important to understand that bureaucracies are very complex systems and very difficult to understand for outsiders. What is often perceived as laziness of government officials are often simply apathy and a lethargic outlook; the results of having been subjected to the trials and tribulations of a massive, politicised bureaucratic institutions for too long. They have long forgotten why they came to work in government in the first place and the maze of systems and processes do not allow them to see who they are actually working for – the citizens who need their services most. So they continue to move as a little gearwheel in a huge engine. New work approaches such as the strong social capital lens as suggested via the STP are often not welcomed.

In order to successfully apply the social capital approach on a government level it seems important to prepare the environment but also base its conceptualisation on long-term and sustainable planning beyond electoral cycles.

In closing the following can be said about the STP itself. The STP has opened many people's eyes, has brought surprises, good and bad ones, but has definitely touched many people's lives. Whoever has been working on the programme and has been able to see the results and value will not be able to continue working with a 'business as usual' approach. We believe that the 'ways' and the thinking that the STP promoted will remain in people's actions and thinking.

A quote from the National Development Plan 2030 will serve as a closing remark in the hope that some seeds sown through the STP process will encourage and contribute to a South Africa that continues its long walk to realise a more equal society for all its citizens.

> *South Africa belongs to all its peoples. Now, in 2030, our story keeps growing as if spring is always with us. Once, we uttered the dream of a rainbow. Now we see it, living it. It does not curve over the sky. It is refracted in each one of us at home, in the community, in the city, and*

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across the land, in an abundance of colour. When we see it in the faces of our children, we know: there will always be, for us, a worthy future.

South African belongs to all its peoples. We, the people, belong to one another. We live the rainbow. Our homes, neighbourhoods, villages, towns, and cities are safe and filled with laughter. Through our institutions, we order our lives. The faces of our children tell of the future we have crafted.

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ANNEXURE: Quotes by participants and officials of the STP

"The Social Transformation Programme was a brilliant idea in the first instance. It was based on the fact that it empowered communities and individuals to take charge of their own lives and be able to communicate their expectations of government how to deliver. The programme was set out to create a sustainable environment for their lives. Communities would be able to monitor government and its delivery. They would become more confident to be listened to their needs and empower them to work closer with government, private sector and NGOs from various perspectives.
In this sense communities and individuals are empowered by the programme. The programme has given them a sense of value and enhancing their dignity in terms of their understanding and their appreciation and experience of the democratic values enshrined in our constitution. The programme itself would have lessened the dependency on government, not have totally eradicated it, but communities enabled to defend themselves." (Government official, PGWC)

When the team moved into our community in 2007 we immediately went on the offensive, since there were existing structures from C.O.C.T namely NDF (Neighbourhood Development Forum) (old name Area Forum) which dealt with the very same issues that was introduced as STP intermediary structures (IS). The process of introducing the IS continued and eventually came into existence.
It took a lot of mediation with the organisations to ensure a buy-in to this pilot of Social Transformation. History was made that when we took the interim structure to a plenary an overwhelming majority endorsed the interim committee without any political party opposing the process because of the transparency in which it was brought to the community.
The launch on 10 May 2008 was definitely a highlight again an auspicious occasion with everybody attending. Our struggle had just begun of which our clusters was formed and networking with government departments and business and the faith based communities established.
It is now sad to notice that immediately after the letter sent to us on the 18 December 2009 the decline of interest by Government Departments. I now fear that an opportunity to give communities a voice has been brought to a temporary halt because of how politics is confusing our people and the trust that we built with communities and all role players is being affected but we will be forging ahead and hope that there will be a serious consideration to continue the support of these structures that is making a meaningful change in their communities. (Chairperson Intermediary Structure)

"The programme has been politizised but not on the level in government where it really made a difference to the people. It is really short-sighted that they are closing the programme because the middle management, that drives the service delivery in communities, worked very effectively together on this programme and made a difference, where it mattered." (Government Official, WCED)

"The Steering Committee in the early days was accompanied with lots of enthusiasm. The steering committee provided a platform for robust engagement and information sharing across government departments. Serious efforts were made to break silos in service delivery and improve collegiality. The steering committee provided leadership in the formation and strengthening of intermediary structures. Also the steering committee facilitated intercourse between government and communities." (Government official, PGWC)

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> *"The Social Transformation project was a project that proved difficult and challenging at times but very rewarding and successful at others.*
>
> *The biggest challenge faced by the Social Transformation team was the lack of trust at the beginning of the process. Communities had seen so many government officials over the years, all promising to engage with them around their development needs. And in most cases these had come to nothing. So the Social Transformation team had a huge task to undo all the mistrust built up over the years. It took many meetings with abuse hurled and officials standing strong before certain of the communities would even really listen.*
>
> *Another challenge was the mistrust between community members, especially as communities were often divided along political lines. The officials had to emphasise their neutrality and unbiasedness in the process over and over again and also ensure that the process followed in establishing these interim structures was untarnished by any political differences.*
>
> *As interim structures were established and started operating, they became gatekeepers to the community they were representing. This proved a challenge in itself as government could no longer have direct access to a community that they had worked with in the past.*
>
> *However to the Social Transformation team's credit, they found ways around these challenges and saw them as opportunities to learn about community dynamics and to alter strategy where needed.*
>
> *However there were not only challenges, there were many successes and heart-warming human stories that made and continue to make community development work worthwhile.*
>
> *The Jamboree process produced many heart-warming moments, especially as applying and receiving their identity documents for the first time was an emotional experience for many people.*
>
> *I recall the Hanover Park Jamboree where around 20 people from the Vygieskraal Informal settlement came to apply for their Identity Documents. They did not realize that they needed money for photos or for replacement documents (only first time applications for ID's are free). They were devastated when they realized their hopes would be dashed as they had no money. When people heard this, officials from the different departments started clubbing their money to assist these people. The photographer at the venue also agreed that he would only charge half his usual rate. And these community members left content that they would finally receive their documents so that they could seek employment or apply for grants. SASSA also committed to visiting the community once they had received their ID documents to initiate the grant process. There are many stories such as these.*
>
> *Another successful process was the bringing together of government officials from various departments to share their initiatives for the community. There were collaborations that were forged through these processes such as WCED, DoCS and DSD coming together around anti-drug programmes in the community during school holidays.*
>
> *Though there were numerous challenges experienced throughout this process, there was much goodwill built through this programme and many good working relationships developed along the way. "* (Government Official, PGWC)

> *"…All the related statements that found its way into the newspapers ,had already indicated to me this is viewed as ANC structures, and the office personnel as ANC supporters, therefore it needed to be destroyed, even Lynne Browne questioned negatively these structures in the legislature. So I think now is the time to show that we are apolitical, and make ourselves more relevant to our communities. I for one welcome this decision (Not for their reasons given) but to test the resolve of our community in XXX."* (Chairperson of Intermediary Structure regarding the closure of the office)

> *Social Transformation Program (STP) the name itself creates the perception of something positive. I came from a rural background (disadvantage area) working in the STP I could see that the program were doing great things empowering the community. Working in STP made me realize the reason I so much wanted to work in the public sector to deliver effective and efficient service to the broader community special the disadvantage.*
>
> *I would like to propose that each government official been send out for at lease seven days a year to work on the ground to interact with the communities so that they know the reality of living in a disadvantage area and the challenges faced by communities so they do not deviate from the task and the reason they are in the public sector. The STP provided me with a different overview of the public sector and its core function, to deliver service to the community. It was really a pleasure working in the Social Transformation Programme.* (Government official, PGWC)

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