

**Reflecting on the WEF nexus: Feedback from the community engagement days at  
Vaalharts, South Africa  
12-15 June 2023**

\*Reflections by Nonofu Baakeleng, Bontle Baloyi and Naziha Mokadem



Team members from left to right: Prof Germarié Viljoen, Dr John Rantlo, Dr Adeline Ngie, Dr Naziha mokadem, Prof Willemien du Plessis, Nonofu Baalakeng and in front Bontle Baloyi

The visit to the Vaalharts irrigation scheme area during the week of the 12 June 2023 was a three-day event. The main purpose of the trip was to provide feedback to the communities and stakeholders of the Greater Taung Local Municipality and the Majeng Community Property Association in the Magareng Local Municipality on the results of the surveys that were conducted and to provide key findings, recommendations as well as a way forward of the WEF project whilst also providing a brief outline of the study. The main focus of the first day was to have a session with the enumerators and deal with the dissemination of the study results thus far, going through the pamphlets on which they will rely when engaging with the various communities, and the best ways to disseminate the information. The main event on the second day was a session with the community members and stakeholders, aimed at presenting the findings of the study and getting feedback from the community members, as well as suggestions on how to achieve WEF Communities. The third day had several activities lined up, from an interview with the Taung community radio station (Vaaltar FM), a visit to the municipal library and political

office, to a visit to one of the local High Schools to speak to its learners about the importance and benefit of tertiary education.



Attendees of day 1

### **Day 1: Workshop with Field Workers**

The first day of the workshop primarily focused on training and providing feedback to fieldworkers to ensure the effective dissemination of research findings and posters. The programme commenced with a warm welcome from Professor Germarié Viljoen, who provided a comprehensive overview of the day's objectives.

Professor Willemien du Plessis proceeded to present feedback on the project, offering detailed insights into various aspects of the study. This included exploring the project's background, the underlying problem it seeks to address, and an examination of the activities and design involved. Subsequently, Professor Germarié briefly introduced the dissemination process. The presentation concluded with a proposed group activity, wherein the fieldworkers were divided into groups per table to engage in a group discussion.

**Group activity:** The group activity consisted of three questions which were to be discussed amongst fieldworkers, and each group had a representative to present their answers to the rest of the attendees. The questions and responses were as follows:

- *What do you understand by the term dissemination?* Most of the fieldworkers understood the term and were familiar with the term.

- *What is the importance of dissemination and why is it necessary to do so?* This question was broken down into simpler terms in this manner
  - *“Why is it important to effectively communicate the information/same message?”* With common and similar answers, fieldworkers agreed that it is important to share the same information effectively to avoid misinformation and rumours.
  - *How will you best disseminate the information?* Different fieldworkers from different areas had different, although similar ways to disseminate information based on their various existing platforms in their regions. All stated that they would share information using relevant platforms which amongst others included; dissemination via:
    - Social Media,
    - Traditional office,
    - Schools,
    - Churches,
    - Direct stakeholder involvement.



Role play: Fieldworkers presenting findings to ‘stakeholder group’



Fieldworkers discussing the dissemination process

After a short tea break, the second session of the workshop commenced with a presentation delivered by Professor Germarié about understanding the content on the pamphlets and posters. The presentation was followed by a group discussion, during which the fieldworkers were tasked with presenting the pamphlets to their fellow group members. This exercise aimed to foster familiarity with the content and encouraged the participants to seek clarification by posing questions.

Concluding the session, a role play activity centred on dissemination and ethical training took place. Fieldworkers assumed the roles of various stakeholders such as traditional leaders, religious leaders, and councillors, creating a realistic scenario where they could practice presenting the information and explore potential questions that may arise.

## **Day 2: Session with the Community**

The second day of the workshop was dedicated to presenting the findings of the project to the community members of Greater Taung Local Municipality and Majeng in the Magareng Local Municipality area, as well as the relevant Stakeholders.



## Presentation of the findings

The programme for the second day started with a welcoming remark and opening address as well as the project overview presented by Prof Willemien. This dealt with a brief overview of the objectives of the study, outlining the purpose of quantitative survey activities undertaken in Greater Taung and Majeng areas. Dr Adeline Ngie presented the results of the surveys and data analysis. The first aspect on which the results were presented are demographics, focusing on age, gender and main sources of income in the communities. The second aspect was based on sanitation, water, energy and food security, which looked at the services provided by the two local municipalities as well as access, quality and availability of resources, including the cost thereof. The third aspect dealt with water, energy and food governance and social justice. This aspect dealt with inequalities, availability and effectiveness of the indigent policies, groups and forums dealing with WEF development, awareness of relevant laws, legislation and regulations concerning WEF decisions, and the responsibility for improving WEF security. Prof Germarié and Dr John Rantlo jointly presented the project's legal aspect framework of water, energy and food (WEF). They explained the concepts of the WEF nexus, WEF communities, and social justice. It provided a brief analysis of South Africa's legal framework, lack of specific legislation dealing with the WEF nexus, as well as an explanation of the legal vehicles that can be used to establish WEF communities.



## WATER

- 1 You have the right to have **access to sufficient water.** (section 27(1)(b) of the Constitution.)
- 2 **Free basic water of at least 6kl (6 000 l)\* of water** per month per indigent household.

\* The above amount may differ among municipalities.

Please note!  
The indigent household must register with the municipality for water & electricity.

## WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

## ENERGY

- 1 Right to have **access to energy is linked to the right to adequate housing, dignity and environment.**
- 2 **Free basic electricity of 50kWh** per indigent household per month for a grid-energy system.
- 3 Free access to energy **may include access to alternative energy sources.**

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## FOOD

- 1 Right to have **access to sufficient food** (section 27(1)(b) of the Constitution.)
- 2 Right to have access to sufficient food is directly linked to various other constitutional rights, namely:

**Dignity** (section 10);  
**Access to health care services** (section 27(1)(a));  
**Education** (section 29);  
**Labour relations** (section 23);  
**Access to social services** (section 27(1) (c));

**Access to sufficient water** (section 27(1)(b));  
**Access to an environment that is not harmful to one's health or well-being** (section 24);  
**and**  
**Protection of property rights** (section 25).

### WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

- ✓ Don't waste water / boil water if uncertain about quality
- ✓ Re-use water
- ✓ Report water leakages

- ✓ Save energy i.e switch off the appliances not being used
- ✓ Report illegal water and energy connections
- ✓ Do not vandalize infrastructure / report vandalism

### ACTS THAT PROVIDE FOR WEF NEXUS

#### WATER

The Constitution of South Africa, 1996  
Water Services Act 108 of 1997  
National Water Act 36 of 1998

#### ENERGY

National Energy Act 34 of 2008  
National Energy Regulator Act 40 of 2004  
Electricity Regulation Act 4 of 2006  
Eskom Conversion Act 13 of 2001  
National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998  
National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004  
National Forest Act 84 of 1998

#### FOOD

Constitution of South Africa, 1996  
2002 Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa (IFSSSA)  
2013 National Policy for Food and Nutrition Security (NPFNS)

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR (WEF)

(WATER - ENERGY - FOOD)

### PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

FINDINGS FROM SURVEYS CARRIED OUT IN 11 WARDS

- ⊗ Food insecurity
- ⊗ Poor water quality due to lack of energy
- ⊗ Not aware of laws and rights
- ⊗ Unreliable energy supply
- ⊗ No water access
- ⊗ Need cross-sectoral, participatory decision-making

- **National government**
  - The Department of Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation at the Presidency
  - The Presidential Climate Change Coordinating Commission
  - Minister of Water & Sanitation
  - The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment
  - The Department of Mineral Resources and Energy
  - Eskom
  - The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
- **Provincial government**
  - The provincial departments responsible for environmental matters
  - The provincial department responsible for agriculture
  - The provincial department responsible for health
  - The provincial departments responsible for traditional affairs
  - The provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders
- **Local government**
  - District and Local municipalities

**Group discussion**

The attendees then had an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarity. A number of issues were raised, including, the need for prioritising land distribution for agricultural purposes; water scarcity which affects agricultural prospects; lack of skills and resources to manage resources; need for curriculum changes and better training in schools to encourage early learning and training on the importance of managing and preserving natural resources to achieve social justice. Other issues raised include the lack of synergy and communication between Government Departments, Municipalities and Traditional Leaders which has an impact on finding strategies and solutions that will benefit the communities. One of the issues that was raised was directed at the Vaalharts Water User Association regarding water rights and servitudes affecting traditional communities. This was addressed by the CEO of Association, Mr Niel van Eeden, who reiterated the mandate and powers of Water User Associations, which do not include the provision of water rights, as this is the mandate of the National Department of Water and Sanitation. The Vaalharts Water Use Association appointed a service provider to upgrade the water canals and is awaiting the approval and passing of a Master Plan for the upgrades in the Vaalharts Irrigation Area. The plan was discussed and consultation took place with all relevant stakeholders.

### **Group exercise on WEF solutions**

The last part of the workshop was a group exercise aimed at brainstorming ideas to establish WEF communities. For this exercise, the attendees were divided into groups, who had to come up with solutions that they thought could work in their communities to achieve water-energy-food security. The main findings include a need for better communication amongst stakeholders (government departments, municipalities and traditional leaders, for example); better training in schools that encourages early learning or training on the importance of managing and preserving natural resources to achieve social justice; the issue of skills and a lack of resources to manage WEF resources; the need to increase the number of fieldworkers to that the information can reach a wider

audience; and the request that municipal officials should also consider to attend such sessions so that specific concerns can be directed to them directly.



### Day 3

On the third day of the visit, tasks were delegated to the team members:

- Dr. John Rantlo was invited to do an interview with Vaaltar FM (Taung community radio station) on the project and the WEF nexus. The interview was conducted in seTswana and included a brief overview of the objective, purpose, survey results, and what is meant by the terms social justice and the WEF nexus. He provided a brief overview of our findings on water quality, what the communities can do about water quality, as well as how the communities can assist the municipalities to attend to water quality.





- Dr John and Bontle noted waste deposits where which community members dispose of their waste, other than making use of municipal services.



- Proff Willemien, Germarié and Bontle delivered posters and flyers to the Greater Taung Library as well as to the municipal offices. They also left posters and flyers at the Municipal Manager's office at the Magareng Local Municipality. Unfortunately, the Mayors as well as Municipal Managers were not available on that specific date.
- Dr Adeline, Dr Naziha, and Nonofu paid a visit to the Vaalharts Water User Association to deliver posters and flyers and to discuss the survey results on water and sanitation. Dr Naziha provided them with her study on the results of the water quality. They did a site visit of the Department of Water and Sanitation's workshop

to see the construction of pipelines used for water sharing in the Vaalharts area, as well as other areas in South Africa.



- Dr Adeline, Dr Naziha, and Nonofu visited Tlhwahalang Secondary School, where they met with some teachers and discussed school difficulties. They then met with Grade 12 students and emphasised the importance of geography in many sectors such as (environment, statistics, agriculture, water science, and hydrogeology). Dr. Adeline and Nonofu provided them with numerous bursary links and explained to them how to apply for tertiary studies.



#### **Day 4: Retour to Potchefstroom**

After an eventful visit to Vaalharts, the team returned to Potchefstroom.

Remarks: The communities were very receptive to the WEF Nexus research team of the North-West University and were quite eager to learn about the project and the potential opportunities that community members, municipalities and Traditional Councils can

establish WEF communities, should they wish to. However, a lot more still needs to be done to inform the communities how to ensure the sustainable implementation of all the legal measures necessary to establish WEF communities and to attain water-energy-food security.