



FORD FOUNDATION

*Working with Visionaries on the  
Frontlines of Social Change Worldwide*



RHODES UNIVERSITY

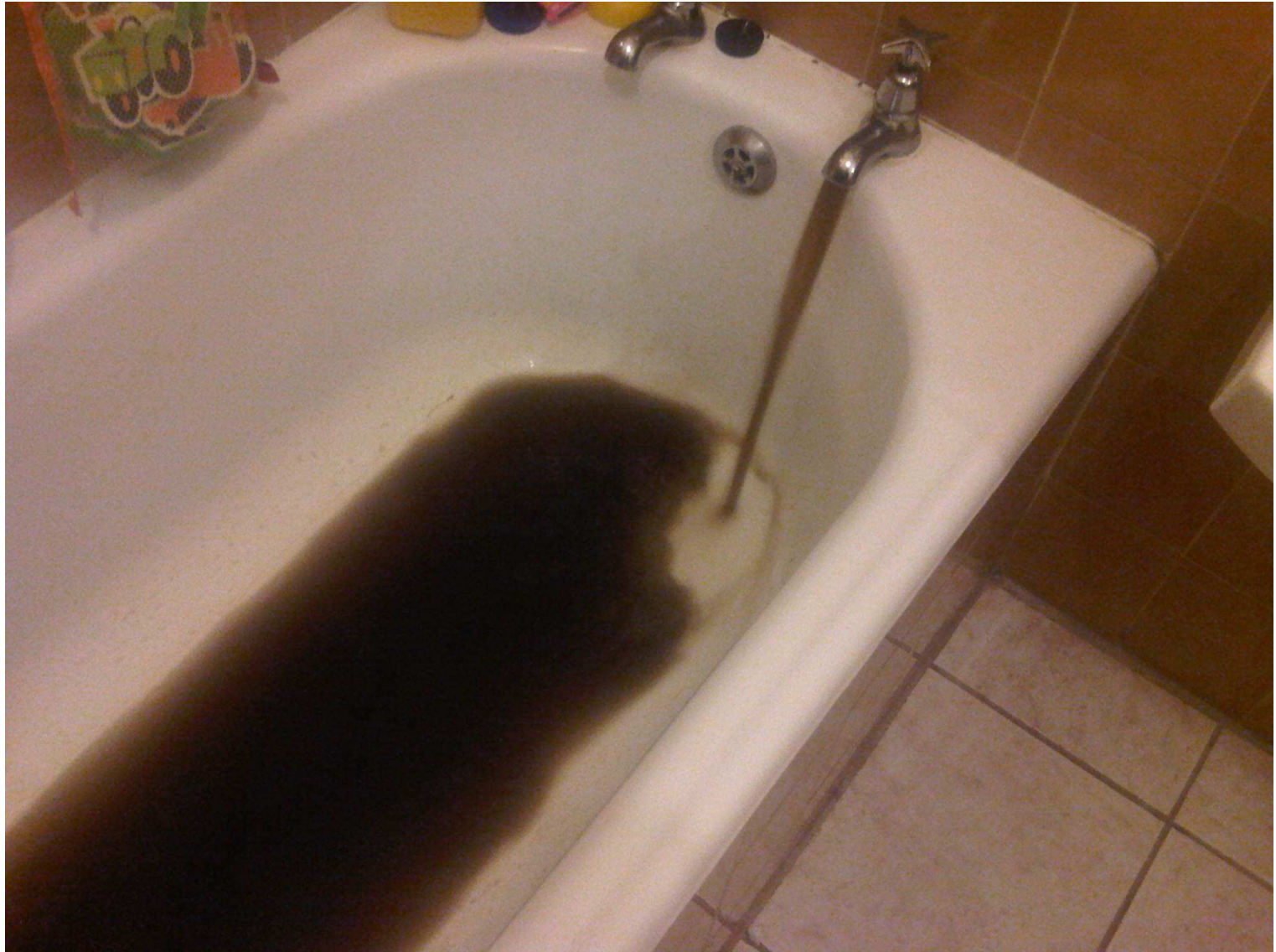
*Where leaders learn*



Can mobile phones increase effective  
citizen participation in local  
government processes?

Prof. Hannah Thinyane

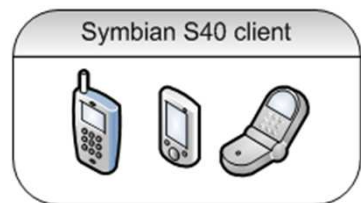
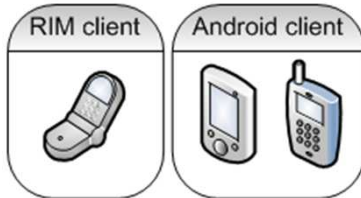
Computer Science Dept, Rhodes University, South Africa



# MobiSAM Application

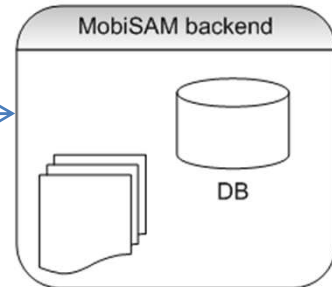
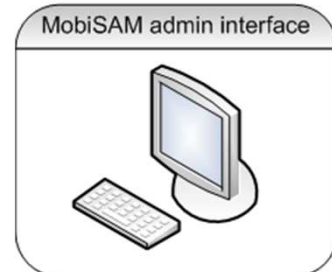
- Mobile phone application
  - uses polls to gather information
- Information is collated and visualised automatically
- Enables users to be engaged, informed and empowered to participate
- Efficient, immediate, contemporary, cost effective
- Real time data and analysis
  - valuable to municipalities and civic actors

# Mobile Network

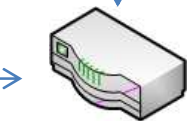


Packet Data

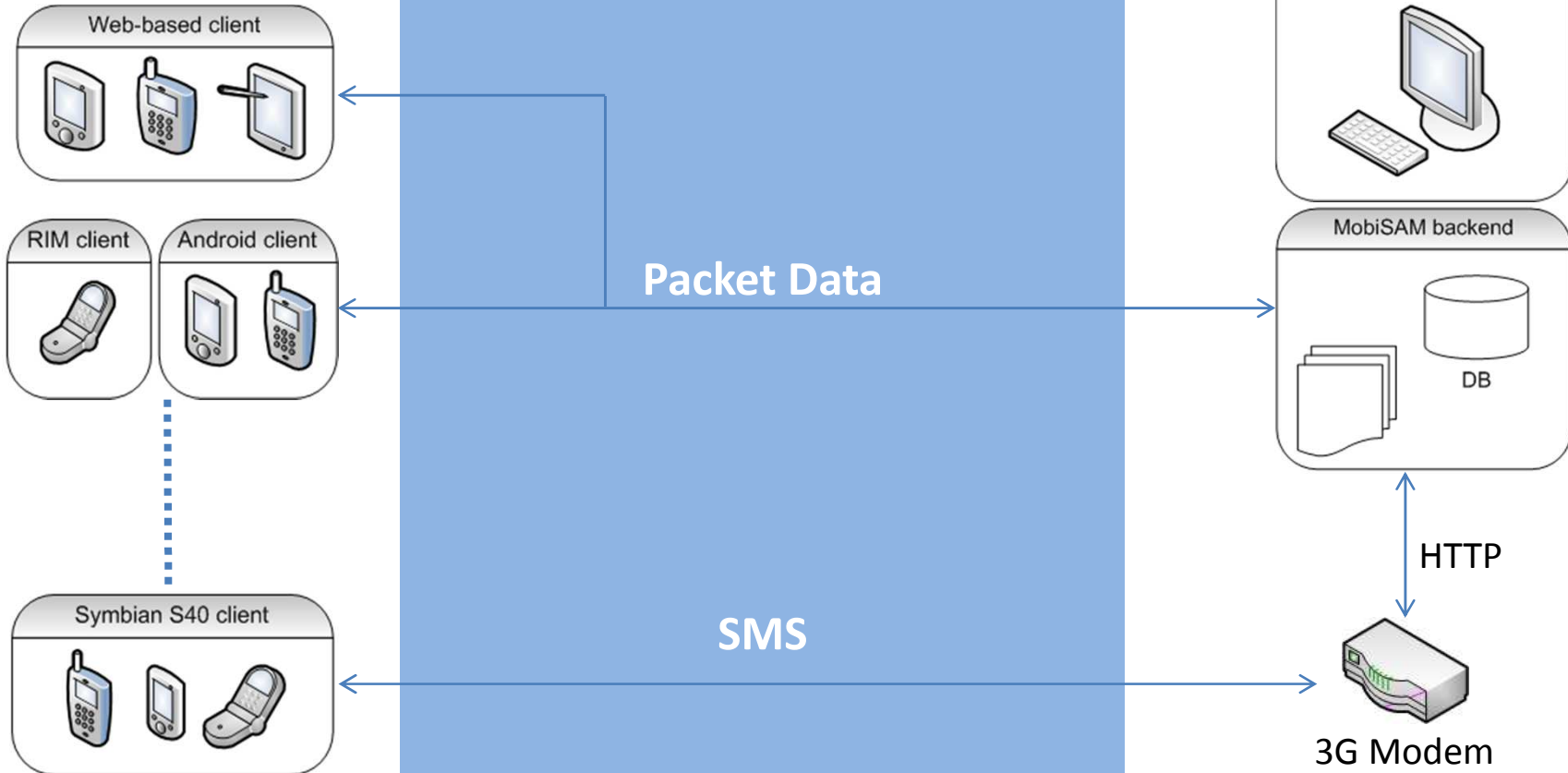
SMS



HTTP

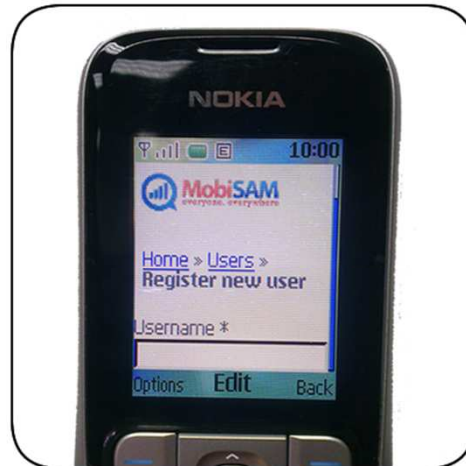


3G Modem

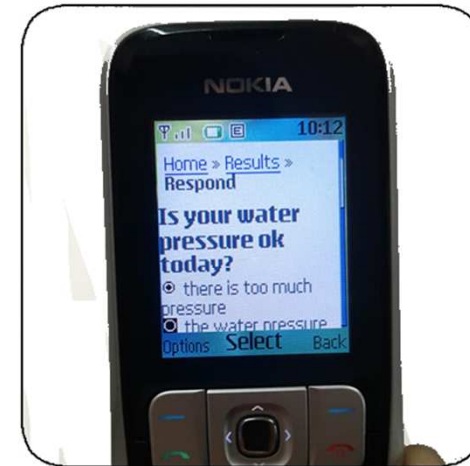




go to [www.mobisam.net](http://www.mobisam.net)



register



have your say

# Visualisations

Results table for : Is your water pressure ok today?

## IS YOUR WATER PRESSURE OK TODAY?

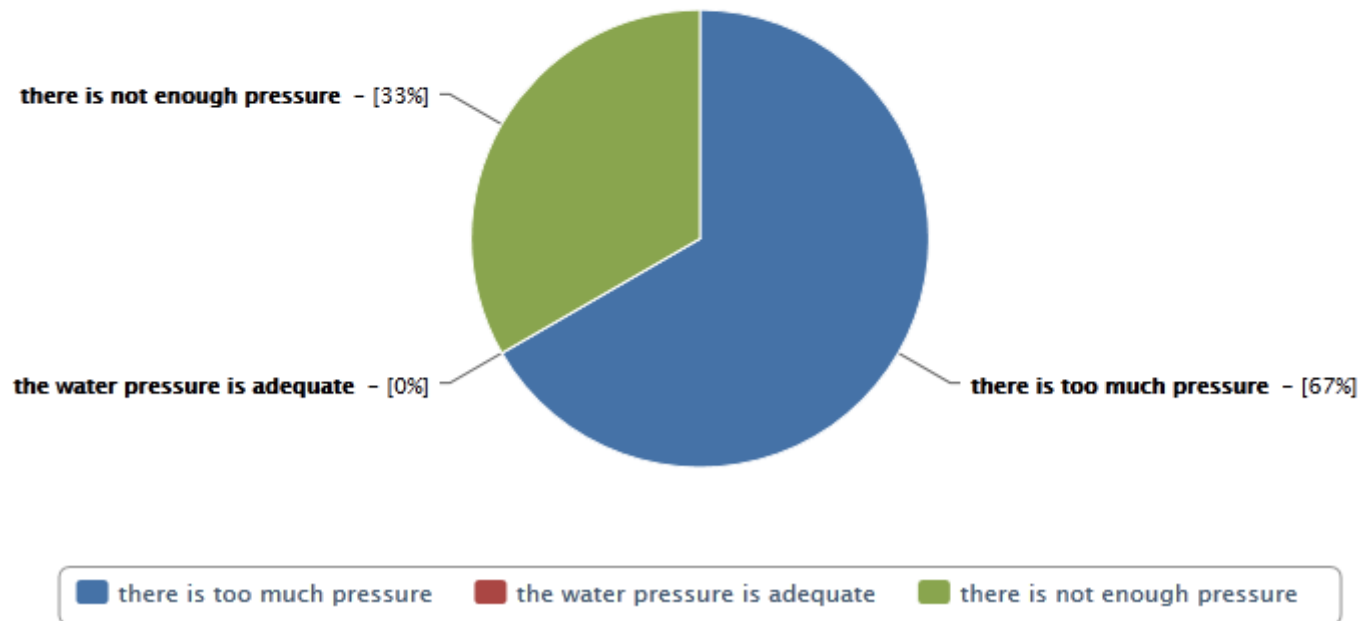
	Votes	Percentage
there is too much pressure	2	67%
the water pressure is adequate	0	0%
there is not enough pressure	1	33%
<b>Total Votes</b>	<b>3</b>	

# Visualisations

🔗 Is your water pressure ok today?

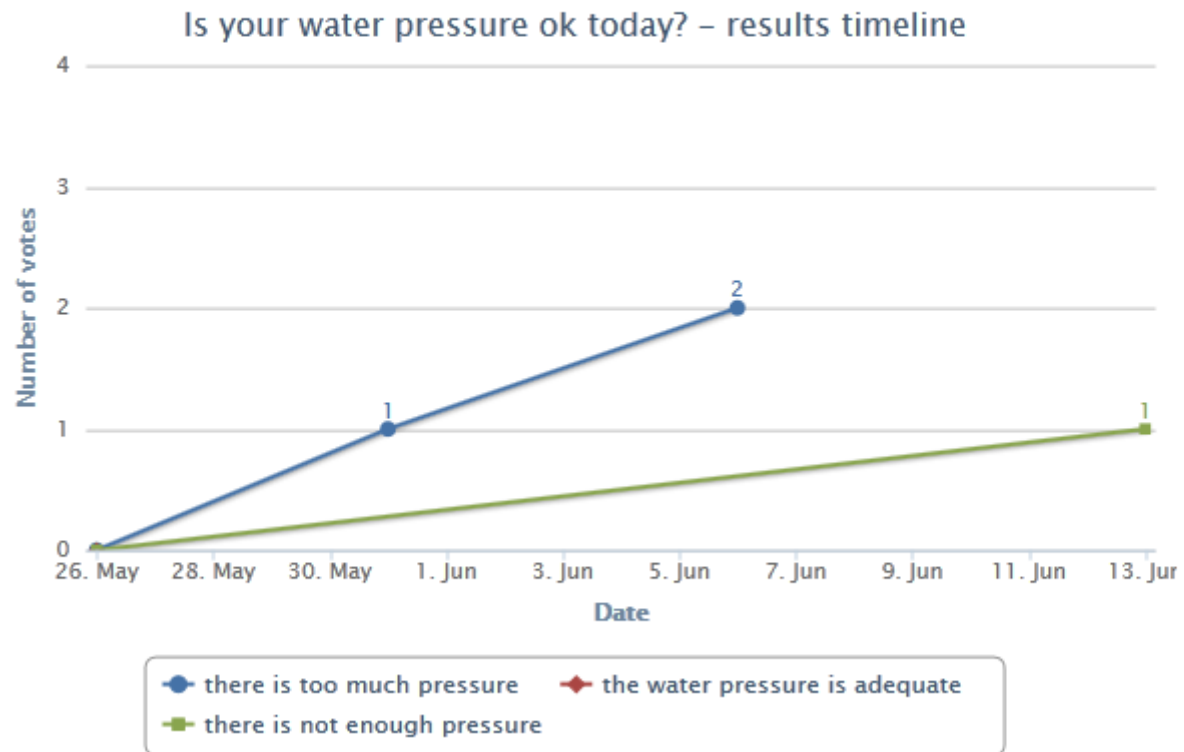
Start Date : 2013-05-27 | End Date : 2014-07-01 | number of all votes : 3

Is your water pressure ok today??



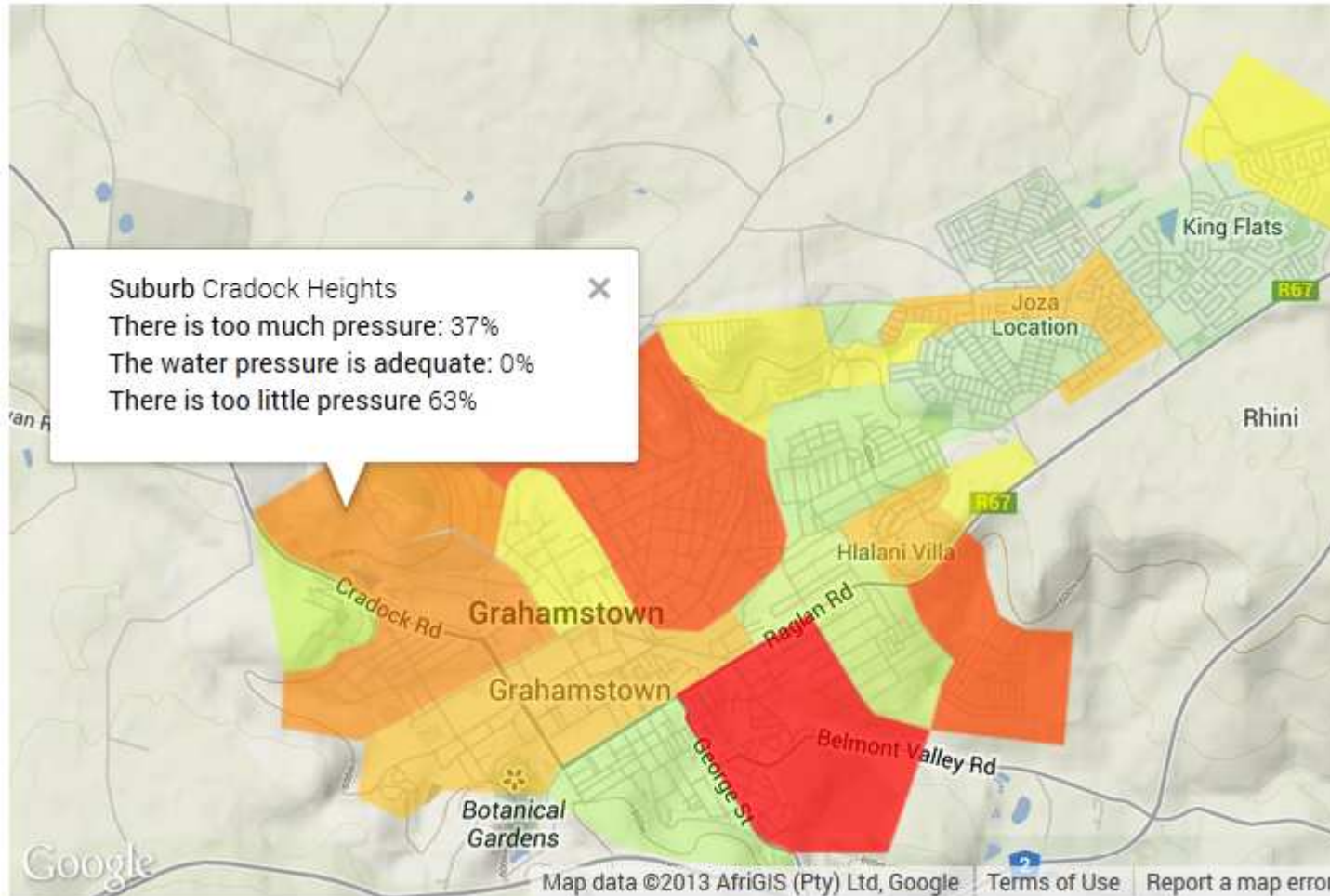
# Visualisations

Timeline for : Is your water pressure ok today?





# Visualisations



# Pilot in Grahamstown – original idea

- Mentor local newspaper house in SAM
  - Grocott's Mail municipal journalist monitors Makana Municipality
- Identify 2 – 4 planned service delivery projects
  - Citizens monitor implementation using MobiSAM application
- Media create platform for community-municipal dialogue
  - Report responses of residents (feedback loop)
  - Conduct citizen awareness-raising
  - Report municipal responses
- Analyse impact of application and publicise findings

# Revised Focus: Water

- Revised approach
  - Focus on a basic services for which municipality is responsible regardless of their plan/budget
- Water
  - Serious and persistent problems with water service delivery in Grahamstown
  - Residents' concern with water quality and frustration with water outages sparked numerous protests
  - Able to work with other stakeholders already working on water

# Revised Project: Water Communications

- Two-way communication between residents and municipality
  - Residents use application to report water problems or concerns
  - Municipality uses application to respond to residents and to inform them of planned / unplanned outages, etc.
- Programme records data on water service delivery
  - Indirect monitoring by residents and municipality

# Challenges

- Working with the Municipality
  - Initially, defensive and suspicious
  - After signing of MoU
    - Enthusiasm for application
    - Delays, missed meetings
    - Bureaucracy
    - Potentially, the quality and quickness of their response to residents' reports
- Getting residents to register and participate
  - Self-interest factor (registered users are kept in the know by the municipality)
- Keeping the SAM in MobiSAM
  - 'Partnering' with municipality means distancing ourselves from the SAM work of Grocott's Mail
  - Mentoring continues but independently of use of application
- Navigating the politics between organisations
- The limitations of a "Research Project"
  - Ultimate goal is improved water service delivery
  - Social action the responsibility of residents
  - Project makes information available and provides a platform for communication

# Learning from Others

- Daraja's Maji Matone programme
  - Using cellphones and media to create public pressure and increase local government accountability for water services in rural Tanzania
  - Challenges they faced in first phase of programme
    - Similar – motivating citizens to use technology
    - Dissimilar – rural vs urban population; sms vs data (and costs associated with that)
  - Their lessons are encouraging
    - Officials need information from residents
    - Opening up ways to communicate (not just 'monitor') are important for effective service delivery
    - Use of media to create pressure can be effective