



# NEWS

A NEWSLETTER FOR P<sup>3</sup> PARTNER MUNICIPALITIES & ASSOCIATIONS | 2010/2

PARTNERSHIP | PARTICIPATION | PROGRESS

## Legacy of Single Industry Towns – The Story of Arandis Town



**IN NAMIBIA**, mineral resource exploitation was the basis for the establishment of many towns. Mining towns such as Arandis, Tsumeb and Oranjemund are among those – and they tend to be small and mostly controlled by a single mining company. They were temporary residences but they have now become a permanent feature of the Namibian landscape.

These single industry dependent towns are adversely affected if their economic base is in any way threatened, whether by market fluctuations or resource depletion.

An ALAN P<sup>3</sup> Project partner municipality – the Arandis Town Council – is one such example. However, the story of Arandis goes much deeper. It deals with attitudes of a community towards their local authority, leading to a general lack of civic responsibility.

Arandis is situated in the Namib Desert, near one of the largest uranium deposits in the world. It was established in 1976 as a place of accommodation for its employees by the Rössing Uranium Mine – one of the world’s largest open-pit uranium mines.

Since establishing the town, the Mine injected massive

amounts of cash and support. All of the town’s infrastructure including roads, power, sports facilities, parks, housing, education, etc. were cared for and maintained by the Mine. However,

in 1992, forced by the decline of the demand for uranium and the subsequent collapse of the price of uranium, the Mine undertook a massive “downsizing exercise”, which led to the retrenchment of nearly half its workforce.

In 1994, the Mine donated the town to the then new Government of the Republic of Namibia – since then managed by the Arandis Town Council (ATC).

The transition from the control of the Mine to the Arandis Town Council has not been easy. Coming from a time where they paid almost nothing for basic services, the community’s sense of civic responsibility was low. Equally so, the leadership of the council were ill-equipped to adopt and devise proper strategies to plan for the future of the town beyond the possible closure of the Mine.

After the second major downsizing exercise in 1999, the economy of Arandis was in a poor state. By now other key service providers such as banks, retail outlets, the hospital, vehicle repair shops, etc. had all closed and the residents of the town were forced to travel to nearby towns for simple amenities.

The ATC estimates the town to have between 6500 and 7000 residents. It is believed that these residents spend about N\$9,3 million per year outside the town.

The town is confronted with the challenge of reclaiming the economy by (a) shaking off the image of the town as a purely uranium mining town by diversifying the local economy and (b) undoing the lack of civic responsibility by the residents, brought on by many years of dependence on the Mine.

To start with, Arandis is looking to adopt one of the P<sup>3</sup> Project’s LED Tools known as ‘Leak-Plugging’, which is essentially about inward investment in the local economy. The tool is advocating for increased interconnectedness within the local economy that increases the local multiplier effect.

Leak-plugging in the local economy is a bottom-up approach to economic development, and does not rely on experts who typically do not live in the area. It is a method of harnessing local knowledge and garnering people to take action to analyse and intervene in shaping their local economy.

Additionally, the ATC has developed the Arandis Sustainable Development Project (ASDP), an initiative to enhance the prosperity and sustainability of the town. The project is looking into a broad range of fields, including the demography, economy and social problems of Arandis; the resources and organizational capacity of the ATC; infrastructure development, human capital development, improved governance, service delivery and investment.

Every so often, the eminent closure of the Mine stares Arandis in the eye. However, as time continues, it is important that the changes that take place in these towns make them less dependent or more industrially diversified.

**P<sup>3</sup>** is a cooperation between the national associations representing local governments in Sweden, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana. Assisted by funding from the European Union and the Swedish International Development Agency, the cooperation focuses on the importance of transparency in the relationship between local governments and their communities. The cooperation is implemented through two projects during 2009–2011.

The P<sup>3</sup> Transparency and LED Projects work with partner municipalities to improve transparency and performance and to facilitate local economic development.

### PARTNER MUNICIPALITIES

<b>South Africa</b>	<b>Namibia</b>
Eastern Cape*	Mariental
Senqu	Otjiwarongo
Elundini	Walvis Bay
Intsika Yethu	Gobabis
Emalahleni	Arandis
	Omaruru
<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>Botswana</b>
Theewaterskloof	Kgatleng DC
Cape Agulhas	Lobatse TC
Hessequa	Southern DC
Mossel Bay	Chobe DC
<b>Free State</b>	Ghanzi DC
Naledi	North West DC
Kopanong	
Mohokare	
Setseto	

\* further partners to be confirmed



This cooperation is funded by the European Union and Sida

## Sparkling in the Desert – Succeeding Against All Odds



Emma and Florida

**IN THE SMALL TOWN OF ARANDIS**, Victoria Emma Noaxas is without a doubt one of the most established entrepreneurs and business personalities. She has successfully obtained major service contracts with 2 of the biggest uranium mines in Namibia. She is also active in the retail and agriculture sectors.

Emma, as she is commonly known, proudly notes that her “business career started in my primary school years”. As a young girl she would collect and sell 10kg bags of the Anaboom seeds (*Faidherbia Albida*). Over weekends, taking advantage of the always dusty streets of her home town she would collect shoes from people in the neighbourhood and clean them for fifty cents a pair. Income from these sources led to the “opening of my first savings account at the local Post Office”, she claims.

After high school, Emma found herself among the hundreds of unemployed youth without a clear future prospect in Arandis. Tired of the boredom brought on by unemployment, she got permission to re-open the old library. While working there, she enrolled for a Diploma in Business Management. This was an important turning point in Emma’s life. She obtained “very useful skills during the training and called on her entrepreneurial spirit and formed my own company”.

The company is called ‘Uibasen Services’, which means “achieve something for yourself”. Unfortunately Emma learned the hard way that the road from starting a company to having a successful business is not easy. She recalls many lost opportunities, shut doors, failed appointments and hard work. However, she has since then been granted contracts by the Rössing Foundation in 2007 and subsequently by both the Rössing Uranium and the Langer Heinrich Uranium Mines.

Emma now runs an established company, which employs 107 people from her community. The main business activities

for Uibasen Services are cleaning, office maintenance, laundry, car wash, gardening, refuse removals and general renovations.

In its quest to change the town’s image and confront the economic challenges, which beset them, the Town Council is assisting entrepreneurs like Emma by providing support to SMEs with business start-up information, low-rent office space, opportunities to expand their businesses and with tender applications. “The Town Council welcomes and appreciates innovative ideas, which can lead to economic growth, prosperity, income generation; diversification of economic activity and employment creation” says Florida Husselmann, the CEO. She further contents that “good business ideas are good for development” and that the “Council’s doors are always open for business plans or proposals”.

The P<sup>3</sup> Project Teams from Namibia, Botswana, South Africa and Sweden recently visited Arandis and observed firsthand this developing relationship between the Town Council. The visitors found this event with Arandis, a rather refreshing experience and found parallels in this story to what happens in their own countries. ●

### Steering for Success!



**The P<sup>3</sup> Project Steering Committee Meeting** was held recently on the 18th May, 2010 in Walvis Bay, Namibia. All partner associations were in attendance.

In her opening remarks, the Mayor of Walvis Bay, Mrs. Uilika Nambahu remarked that “there had been significant successes with the P<sup>3</sup> Project and that the Project is proving to be a formidable vehicle in dealing with municipal service improvements”.

“The Steering Committee Meeting is a great way for us to network and get a much broader perspective of the project. We hear what others go through as they implement the Project” said Mr. Kethlomilwe Moletane, the Executive Secretary of BALA.

The chairperson was Mrs. Åsa Ehinger-Berling, from SALAR and the meeting heard reports on specific project activities and challenges. The next SC Meeting is scheduled for November, 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa. ●

### From the editor



The P<sup>3</sup> Project is a unique opportunity for partner municipalities in Namibia, SA and Botswana to improve service delivery. Municipal officials who go through this experience will act as service improvement agents in their municipalities, supported by local authority councillors.

To achieve this ALAN, BALA and SALGA will work with the 25 partner municipalities to improve key service standards, budget processes, the local economy and public participation. Key service standards are those that matter most to citizens such as queuing time, the helpfulness of officials, how long it takes to deliver the outcome and the quality of the result. However, knowing what your customers want is only the first step in improving service standards. The saying to “under-promise and over-deliver” is therefore appropriate here.

A further important aspect of the P<sup>3</sup> Project is documenting best practices and lessons, which, together with the P<sup>3</sup> methods and tools, will become part of a Toolkit for all other municipalities in Namibia, Botswana and SA.

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