



## **BLACK SASH REPORT**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

**During the period December 2010 and March 2011 ,the Black Sash KZN Provincial Offices facilitated the monitoring of SASSA services as part of their Community Monitoring Advocacy Project (CMAP).The implementation came after months of planning and consultation .Monitoring in this Province focused on the quality of services experienced by service beneficiaries at SASSA service and pay points.26 Community Monitors selected from community based organisations , advice offices and networks visited a total of 32 SASSA service delivery points of which 19 were pay points and 13 were service points in the following Districts : Amajuba,eThekweni ,Umgungundlovu,Sisonke,Ugu,and Umzinyathi.**

**The Black Sash KZN presented its findings in a report together with observations made by the monitors and recommendations made by service beneficiaries.**

**The report was circulated to all Districts and units of the Regional office for inputs/comments.**

**The following is Agency's response.**

### **SASSA'S RESPONSE:**

**The Agency welcomed the monitoring as it is very mindful of increasing access to social assistance to the most vulnerable groups and at the same time not lose sight of quality and high standard of service delivery .It subscribes to the principles of Batho Pele and would like to think that its staff are applying the principles in the**

day to day operations and that any short comings identified by Black Sash will be redressed within the given resources of the Agency.

The Agency herewith presents the issues as identified with proposed actions; without being defensive.

ISSUES	CURRENT STATUS	PROPOSED ACTION
<p><b>Key finds concerns:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beneficiaries arrived at the service and pay sites before 06H00 am</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is common practice for beneficiaries to stand in a queue outside the service and pay sites .In most offices ,the customer care practitioner or early risers as SASSA calls them is responsible for queue walking and pre -screening of customers to ascertain the kind of service the customer is seeking and direct them appropriately. The sick/old/frail are prioritized at this stage</li> <li>The arrival of customers before 6h00 is not encouraged for humanitarian and security reasons. However, if customers are already at the service points, the early risers start the pre-screening.</li> <li>Help desk officials constantly advise beneficiaries at the pay points on the starting times of payments which is 08H00, however beneficiaries still chose to come to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constant dissemination of information to beneficiaries in an attempt to sensitize them as to the fact that it is not really necessary to arrive at the pay point as early as 06h00..</li> <li>Marketing and communication to communicate this message during radio slots for benefit of beneficiaries.</li> </ul>

ISSUES	CURRENT STATUS	PROPOSED ACTION
	<p>the pay points early.</p> <p>.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneficiaries queue outside venue upon arrival of teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All paypoints where there are standing structures (community halls, churches etc.) beneficiaries are allowed to sit inside the hall while awaiting the payment teams.</li> <li>• Pay points where no such structured facilities exist have beneficiaries queuing outside</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiations with municipalities, NGO's ,churches and other stakeholders to avail structures that can be used as pay points so as to move the non compliant pay points to better resourced facilities where beneficiaries can sit indoors</li> <li>• To date SASSA has moved 173 pay points to better resourced facilities however we are currently struggling to obtain such facilities from various stakeholders</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate facilities (shelter, toilets, and seating) at the paypoints (poor service delivery) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mqatsheni,</li> <li>➤ Howick 1 and ,</li> <li>➤ Mbulwana</li> <li>➤ 510100(PMB paypoint) – toilets not opened (29/11/10),</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SASSA relocate paypoints to better facilities however there is a dependency on external stakeholders i.e. municipalities, FBO, Tribal authorities to assist in availing community structures.</li> <li>• <b>Maintenance of facilities:</b> SASSA has service level agreement with payment contractor which has a clause binding the contractor for the maintenance of facilities used for payments. Furthermore SASSA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder engagements to be strengthened (community leaders, Tribal authorities, municipalities, FBO's,) for available structures that can be used as pay points.</li> </ul>

ISSUES	CURRENT STATUS	PROPOSED ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mevana</li> </ul>	<p>signs Memorandum of understanding with responsible structures which stipulates terms and conditions.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety at paypoints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security is the responsibility of payment contractor as per SLA. Contractor must have four security guards which have successfully undergone the security training as per Security Industrial Regulator Authority. One must be grade C while others grade D. Furthermore, SASSA has established partnership with SAPS as the way of strengthening security at the sites for beneficiaries and officials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder participation need to be strengthen (community leaderships, paypoint committees, SAPS, etc.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time &amp; Venue :- Delay in opening four (4) payment sites:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 510100 : 45min late on 02/11/10,</li> <li>➤ 100112 : 2hr late on 25/11/10,</li> <li>➤ Howick 1 : 1hr / 30min on 01/12/2010</li> <li>➤ Mbulwana: 45min late on 08/02/11</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Early arrival at 04:00 am of beneficiary at Ndengezi pay point (62 year old),</li> <li>• Seating at Ekuphakameni pay point – delay for 420 min (85 year old),</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not all pay points are static pay points. Some are roving pay points where the payment teams have 3-4 pay points to pay on any one given day. From a security perspective it happens at times that the intended route has to be deviated from if a security threat exists.</li> <li>• Payments teams are to start at the nearby Police stations to await an escort to the pay point.</li> <li>• KZN has roving paypoints which the teams rotate in terms of starting times, this is done for security reasons.</li> </ul>	<p>These delays are not acceptable .as well as the long wait by an 85 year old is equally not acceptable .and will be addressed .</p> <p>It will be appreciated if SASSA could receive the details of this client ( 85 yr old ) so that alternate methods of payment could be explored for this client.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lamontville community hall opened at 09H20 due to the delay of help desk official</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average waiting time at paypoint being (3hours) before served</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In terms of calculating the average waiting time, this is from the time the payment team arrives at the pay point</li> <li>SASSA norms &amp; Standards allow the waiting time for two hours for 240 beneficiaries at the pay point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help desk officials to be vigilant in terms of the waiting period of beneficiaries and invoke the penalty against the service provider as defined in the SLA</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travelling distance for the beneficiaries has been noted at 7km and paid R18.75</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SASSA norms &amp; Standards allowed mobile pay point to be within reach in residential areas, and 20 km distance to a fixed pay point, Multi-purpose centres within reach, 40 KM Radius</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Mobile units of the agency to be deployed to areas where applications can be taken. An ICROP plan is in place for the Region .</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loan Sharks within the payment sites Mqatsheni, Dindi, Klug, pay points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SASSA help desk officials educate beneficiaries about financial management. The Region has further established partnership with Dept of Economic Development (Consumer Protection Unit) and NCR to educate beneficiaries on money management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Leaders to assist the agency in educating beneficiaries, SAPS participation in controlling the illegal micro-lenders,</li> <li>List of the paypoint to be shared with DED for compliant visits</li> <li>National strategy been worked on to address this issue</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merchant Stores (Boxer Store) with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merchant Acquiring System is an additional resource for beneficiaries to receive their</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beneficiary education has</li> </ul>

ISSUES	CURRENT STATUS	PROPOSED ACTION
<p>percentage to spend before being paid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Issue of Return visits</li> <li>• Attitude of Officials</li> <li>• Facilities Improvement</li> </ul>	<p>monies. Beneficiaries have registered paypoints which are allocated to them for payments. Terms and conditions stated in the merchant stores are not forcing beneficiaries to purchase at that store. Beneficiaries still have the choice to choose to withdraw or wait for the allocated date at the paypoint to receive full amount.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The observation and reporting by Black Sash on this is appreciated.</li> <li>• This is not acceptable</li> <li>• The Agency concedes that there is a need to improve on the norms and standards of shelter water and seating for customers</li> </ul>	<p>become critical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merchants to open the payment file simultaneously with pay points</li> <li>• The Region is taking urgent steps to address this problem – revisit and upgrade the screening procedure .</li> <li>• Immediate Retraining of officials and rotation of staff.to back office duties if not inclined to work with public in addition to disciplinary action against any identified official.</li> <li>• The Agency will address this as a matter of urgency.</li> </ul>

ACTING REGIONAL EXECUTIVE MANAGER

DATE: -----

MRS S.M SETLABA-----