

Abstract

Setswetla, Alexandra is an informal settlement which is situated in Johannesburg and characterized by dilapidated make-shift housing, inadequate sanitation and a lack of grey water treatment systems. The latter has led to the streaming of soiled water across the settlement, which could have severe health implications for the population. A constructed wetland has been proposed as the plausible solution to this problem and although these are easy to build as they do not require displacement of the population, contextual information about the patterns of water use are crucial for the functioning of the wetland. Therefore, this study aimed to collect contextual information about the water acquisition, storage, use and disposal patterns of the Setswetla population such that it could be used as feed information for the design phase of the project. Secondary to this, the study also sought to gain a greater understanding of the social factors that influence water use in Setswetla. The research found that a large portion of the sample collected water from communal taps in the Settlement and stored water in 20l buckets. Majority of the sample alluded more to indoor water use as opposed to outdoor water use and ranked laundry as the activity for which they used most of their water. The sample also mentioned that they disposed of their water and their solid waste in the streets. Lastly crime and unemployment were observed as the two core social factors that influenced the use of water in Setswetla.

Key words: informal settlements, water acquisition, water use, water disposal, solid waste management, constructed wetland, consumer behavior