

STUDY ON THE SOCIAL PROFILE OF RESIDENTS
OF THREE SELECTED INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS
IN CAPE TOWN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REPORTS:

SURVEY RESULTS AND STUDY FINDINGS -

- 1) HOUSEHOLD PROFILE*
- 2) PERCEPTIONS AND OPINIONS
OF RESIDENTS*

*Compilation of the 2004 study reports:
CAPE TOWN April 2005*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

This study was originally commissioned by the City of Cape Town to provide data to inform the upgrading of informal settlements in the Metro area. In particular, the requirement was for "the provision of temporary and rudimentary services in order to maintain an acceptable degree of health and hygiene" (*- City of Cape Town project brief.*)

Three informal settlement areas were prioritised by the City according to selected criteria, and these were selected for the study: Joe Slovo (adjacent to Langa), Nonqubela K-section (Khayelitsha), and Sweet Home (adjacent to Brown's Farm). Once underway, aspects of the study were broadened to incorporate the City's information needs particularly in relation to housing, as well as other aspects affected by the recent planning for the N2 Gateway redevelopment initiative.

Statistically representative samples of residents were interviewed in the settlements. The data are reliable within a margin of error of 1.4 % overall. In-depth interviews with residents and organisation representatives provided insights into expressed attitudes and perceptions.

Study results were presented on request by various City of Cape Town departments on 21st October, 11th November and 24th November 2004.

Format and contents of these reports are presented according to the requirements of the City of Cape Town brief, as specified by the Project Manager, Department of Strategic Information.

The following key results of the studies give an indication of the main issues to be considered in these shack settlement redevelopments:

(Note: in most cases, results with decimal points are rounded to the nearest whole number)

2. Household profile: demographics

2.1 Household structure

- Household size ranged from 1 to 12 members:
- The majority of households were made up of either 2, 3, or 4 members; about 10% and below were spread as larger households of 5 persons or more, up to a maximum of 12.
- A notable 10 % of households comprised one person, but in many cases these were work-seekers unlikely to remain alone for any length of time.
- Related to this is the important point that household size fluctuates in response to the economic survival strategies of close and extended families travelling regularly between Eastern Cape areas and Cape Town.
- Average household size was 3.4 members.
- The age profile of residents was skewed to job-seekers aged between 16 and 34 years, and young children under 5 years old. About one third of residents were dependent children.
- The necessity of catering for the youth is highlighted by the distribution of age within households: on average about 22 % were children up to 10 years; 30 % were youth aged 11 to 24 years; 40 % were mature adults; and the remaining 8 % were those over 45 years. (Only about 1 % of these were pensioners over 65 years.)
- Overall, the gender split across households was 50/50, but this varied significantly by age group and area.

2.2 Education

- Formal education levels were low, with only 16 % of adults with matric. Among the unemployed, less than 2 % had matric.
- One quarter of adults had only primary schooling as their highest level of education; for practical purposes (such as filling in forms, applications, understanding written contracts, etc.), adults with primary school as the highest level of formal education are regarded as 'functionally illiterate'.

- Children born in the Eastern Cape reportedly had difficulty being accepted into local schools due to absence of required birth certificates, as well as other marginalising factors. The survey recorded 32 school-age children (via spontaneous reports, i.e. the question was not asked), who were not placed in schools.

2.3 Health status

- Almost 600 households (23 %) had members suffering from tuberculosis; 450 (5%) of household members were described by respondents as 'chronically ill' with TB.
- Other notable illnesses that had required treatment over the previous 12 months, were hypertension / high blood pressure (9.3% or 240 households); asthma (8.7% or 224 households); and stomach ailments (7 % or 180 households).
- Only 43 households (1.7 %) reported members treated for HIV/Aids in the previous year; the actual statistic of affliction is likely to be much higher, indicated by discussions with focus group participants.
- Of 940 reported deaths in households, the major proportion reported TB as the cause of death in 140 cases; the next highest proportion was HIV/Aids, reported for 68 deaths.
- Disabilities affected members of 5 % of households. Overall, chronic illness and disability affected 20 % or 1800 households, an important factor to consider in the planning and design of the redevelopments.

2.4 Migration

- Most residents (92 %) were Eastern-Cape born (98 % isiXhosa first language speakers).
- The majority of respondents had moved, mainly among various informal settlements and adjacent townships, before living in their current place.
- Average length of time of respondents in the current informal settlement was 6.6 years.

- Average length of time living in the current shack was 5 years.
- Overall, average length of time lived in other provinces (including the 92 % born in Eastern Cape), was 20 years.

3. Economic profile

Degree of poverty

- The vast majority of households in the settlements were experiencing extreme poverty and were engaged in subsistence survival strategies as a matter of course.
- These settlements form impoverished enclaves equivalent to the poorest of all Eastern Cape municipal areas.

3.1 Employment

- Overall, 54 % of workers were employed full time; a high 36 % were underemployed in part-time or occasional work; and the remaining 10 % were self-employed – but largely in unsustainably small subsistence trading activities.
- The major proportions of employed residents worked in elementary occupations – generally low-skilled, low-paid jobs, such as cleaning and manual labour construction work.
- However, a significant 42 % were employed in semi-skilled occupations, and another 20 % (more than 1800 residents) worked in skilled positions: this is a valuable resource that should be acknowledged in the ongoing development process of these neighbourhoods.
- Overall, a total of 39.5 % of adult residents were unemployed and looking for work. The gender split of the unemployed was 34 % men and 66 % women.
- Highest rates of unemployment were in the age groups 16-24 (36 %) and 25-34 (40%). A very high 52 % of those unemployed had never worked in paid jobs before.

3.2 Informal trading

- In most cases of street trading activities, unemployed residents had resorted to micro-scale selling of foodstuffs and a limited range of other products, mainly within the local neighbourhood.
- Limitations on growing these subsistence livelihoods were obvious in terms of severe lack of resources.

The major support needs for micro-scale informal business include the following:

- Building business hubs providing shelter, storage, cleaning areas, electricity, sanitation;
- Support for transport of stock, such as fresh vegetables from the main markets;
- Business skills training;
- Mechanisms for access to credit and loans to stabilise micro-businesses;
- Strategy for accommodating animal husbandry including trade and butchering of livestock;
- Planning for and skills training in urban food gardening;
- Security support services.

3.3 Household income

- Average household income (for the three study areas), which was captured as the amount contributed monthly by household members to maintain the household, was R 1315 per month (- inclusive of state support grants, received by 41 % of households).
- This amount falls substantially below the Household Subsistence Level of R1900 per month. More than 80 % of the households fell into this category, indicating the depth of poverty experienced.
- 'Hunger' (defined in this survey as 'going to bed without having eaten any food at all for the day'), is a telling indicator of poverty. Overall, 54 % of households (4700 households) had times when they had no food at all for the day; and overall 61 % did not always have enough to eat.

4. Infrastructure and related conditions

4.1 Electricity

- Sweet Home had no electricity. Joe Slovo residents had 83 % formal electricity connections and 17 % informal; Nonqubela K residents had 45 % formal connections and 55 % informal.
- Residents were aware of the dangers of informal connections but cost was the major reason for arranging them.
- Use of paraffin as a cheaper energy source than electricity, was common for cooking and warmth. Education for awareness of fire risk and prevention was relatively low: highest at Joe Slovo, where 45 % of respondents (from 2552 households) had received awareness education; but overall only 36 % of residents had in all three areas. This remains an important concern.
- At the time of the survey (before the most recent devastating fire in Joe Slovo), over 2000 households had experienced severe losses due to fire in the settlements.

4.2 Water and toilets

- Grossly unhygienic conditions prevailed due to the lack of adequate sanitation, as well as heavy winter rains at the time of the surveys.
- Overall, 83% of residents experienced serious problems with flooding in and around their shacks.
- Existing rudimentary sanitation and water services were vastly inadequate, with an average of 30 people (theoretically) sharing one toilet cubicle.
- There were serious logistical and health drawbacks for residents in the sharing of rudimentary toilet cubicles located at a distance from the dwellings;
- The degree to which use is not made of these services by residents, due to the constraints, results in a prevailing and increasing effluent problem in the neighbourhoods.

5. Greening and open space management

- Cleaning up of the areas and most importantly, efficient regular removal of waste, were regarded as priorities. Each of the three areas had health-threatening unregulated waste dump sites, worst in Nonqubela K and Sweet Home.

Qualitative interviews emphasised the following issues:

- Greening of the areas was enthusiastically proposed and supported, for beautification and recreational purposes.
- Facilitation in establishing urban food gardens must be taken into account.
- Strategies, policies and planning for appropriate management of livestock in this urban setting is a complex and pressing issue that must also be incorporated into the area redevelopment process.

6. Social conditions and community development

6.1 Crime

- High crime rates generated fear and insecurity among residents: 90 % of respondents felt unsafe living in their settlement.
- A third of households had been subjected to crime during the previous 12-month period. Robbery was the major crime, experienced by 66 % of the victims.
- Only one third (34 %) of crimes were reported to police.
- Focus Group discussions indicated that rape was vastly under-reported in the survey, specified by only 36 survey respondents overall.
- Anti-social activities, including notably widespread and prevalent use of alcohol (and other substance abuse), was discussed with concern by focus group participants.

6.2 Organisation membership and other social support sources and mechanisms

- Formal membership of organisations and interest groups was very low among residents, corresponding with data from other city-wide surveys.
- (However, a number of local civic-interest organisations were active in each of the areas and representatives or spokespersons of these groups participated in focus group discussions.)
- Membership of faith-based groups (mainly various churches) and burial societies, was unusually high. These organisations play a most important support role for individuals as well as within the communities, relating to access to decent burials, personal dignity, spiritual upliftment, and general support in times of need.
- The unemployed were financially supported mainly by their family members; in particular, women were dependent on their male partners (38%, or 2551 households).
- A further 22% (1450 households) of those unemployed were reliant on state grants as a source of income.
- Other relatives supported the unemployed in 30 % of households (2005 households).
- The unemployed from only 5 households, in Nonqubela K, relied on supplies from food gardens.
- Unemployed or underemployed household members made significant non-monetary or in-kind contributions to their households: these included household maintenance tasks such as cleaning, cooking and laundry; other household and childcare responsibilities; contribution of household items such as furniture; and when possible, purchasing of groceries and payment of school fees.

7. Housing: Perceptions and preferences

Issues on housing were explored in more depth in the focus group discussions with organisation and interest group representatives. The main findings are as follows:

A single detached 'house on single plot' remained the preference in all cases. The main reasons given were –

- The single dwelling allows for extension of living space: family obligations take priority, and participants repeatedly mentioned "4-roomed" homes to house their families.
- Separate plots allow for greater privacy, storage space, space for parking vehicles, etc.
- Size of dwelling and number of rooms: the perception that a single dwelling offers space for the separation of adults from children, currently a major social problem in cramped living quarters.
- Security: the perception that the single dwelling allows for secure personal space by enclosing the private unit with fencing.

Notwithstanding these preferences, all groups were aware that, in view of obvious financial constraints, they were not in a position to choose what suited them. They mentioned being obliged to accept whatever accommodation was facilitated for them. However, the physical limitations and other problems of existing poor-quality subsidised housing were discussed with concern.

Residents mistrusted what they perceived as poor quality, space and configuration constraints of multi-storey apartment-style units, for the following reasons:

- Unable to extend multi-storey units, which are perceived as smaller than a house;
- Security: no control over what happens at ground level (e.g. theft and break-in of cars, personal safety threat, inability to control thoroughfare of strangers or intruders to the housing complex, etc.);

- Elderly and disabled are unable to use stairs;
- Difficulty in supervising children, at home and outside;
- Highly negative perceptions of known existing flats throughout Cape Flats suburbs.

Note on housing space requirements

- One of the most important challenges is the **fluctuating household size** associated with the historical and long-term social and economic interdependencies of the Eastern Cape – Cape Town 'dual household' family structure. Necessary ongoing 'circulatory migration' patterns between the areas are likely to remain in place for the foreseeable future.
- The range in household size of 1 to 12 members, highlights this aspect. The notable 10 % of single member households were usually work-seekers unlikely to remain alone.

7.1 Payment of housing loans and service fees

- Support was agreed in principle for the payment of housing loans, infrastructure and service fees; but this was qualified by valid concern about the inability of the unemployed to pay these costs.
- Where mentioned by group participants, costs were specified at 'flat rates' of service fees at R 14 per household per month; (perhaps reflecting the extent of the mismatch between municipal and community expectations in this regard.)
- Participants further mentioned acceptance of pre-paid electricity metres, and to a lesser degree, pre-paid water metres.

8. Concluding remarks:

Implications of the study findings for planning of shack settlement redevelopment:

8.1 Planning and design of housing form and type

- Many of the principles outlined here correspond with those of the extensive 2003-4 housing studies for the City of Cape Town, regarding design guidelines for medium-density clustered city housing. For example, the (family) detached single storey 'house on own plot' image remains the strongly preferred form of residence.
- However, in keeping with sound current City policy on building densification, the key to satisfying this preference is to include by design, the features or characteristics of the perceived lifestyle afforded by this image. This includes for instance, taking into account a sense of privacy and security, yard space or communal open space for relaxation, scope for personalisation of the unit and locale, etc. in the design of housing clusters and immediate surrounds.
- Close and extended family members are deeply obligated to accommodate each other in times of need and opportunity, and consequent variations in household structure and size need careful planning, design and management to allow flexibility and mitigate against overcrowding and social stress.
- Strategies should be devised to respond positively to the economic impact of these existing lifestyles, facilitating possible new options such as temporary rental accommodation for families 'in transition'; strengthening of small business opportunities, including those linked to the constant movement of residents on the Eastern Cape – Cape Town route; and directing ongoing urban development around circulatory migration lifestyles in the most strategic and sustainable ways possible.
- Planning proposals for the areas should include a process of public presentation and information workshops, to explain and discuss the rationale for appropriate densification of the formalised residential neighbourhood in delivering positive 'quality of life' outcomes.

- In the case of the informal settlements, particular attention should be paid to property adjoining existing formal development, with a view to long-term integration with the broader suburb. To this end, a gradation and variety of compatible housing types and support facilities, including options for the non-subsidised market, should be incorporated in the development plans.
- Community centres and various related buildings for public benefit (or non-profit community-based organisation) activities, should have their role strengthened and incorporated where existing (- such as the Ulwazi Youth Centre in Langa, adjacent to Joe Slovo), planned for, and encouraged in adjacent 'buffer area' properties between communities of differing class or culture.
- The connecting spaces can provide opportunities for 'bridging' or neutral social mixing. This includes densified business hub clusters, which should be designed on peripheries such as roadways, junctions or entrances to delineated housing precincts, and not within the residential domain.
- 'Business hub' design servicing the redeveloped shack settlement areas should include basic facilities that support micro home-based industry and marketing, e.g. in the form of storage and packing rooms, sales and order outlets, cleaning and cooking areas, etc., depending on the most practical requirements negotiated in liaison with the prospective participants.

In summary, redevelopment of the informal settlement environment from a social perspective includes the following critical considerations in the design and planning processes:

- Experience has shown that even where shack settlement clearance was accompanied by adequate relocation programs, the re-housing of residents in relatively decent low cost units did not solve other equally pressing problems such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, etc.
- There is a crucial need to complement physical service delivery with social support programmes that focus on the many existing and potential local initiatives and the felt needs of the community.

- The social and economic indicators explored in the study, highlight the fact that the majority of the residents have no 'disposable income' and are unable to make ends meet even with regard to basic needs.
- Although residents expressed their support for making payments for housing and services, they raised valid concerns about the burden of any additional payments to their current living expenses, in relation to the problem of unemployment.
- With the formalisation of the informal settlements, associated costs for housing and services, however low, will further financially debilitate households and result in conflict over inability to pay.
- A standard business 'cost recovery' approach to repayments for this segment of the population is inappropriate. Application of alternative, innovative financial mechanisms is necessary to ensure the financial viability of these social housing projects.

8.2 Management implications

In light of the study findings, the following options for sustainable management of the redeveloped social housing environment should be explored:

- ⇒ Establishment of formalised consortiums or agencies for the redevelopment of shack settlements, as dedicated **Community Development Partnerships**, able to grow incrementally according to changing needs with the development:
- By establishing a strategy of investing matching public and private funds, managed in a manner that generates profits with which to subsidise and regulate low-income social housing estates for the urban poor on an ongoing basis.
 - These 'township neighbourhood partnerships' can offer permanent platforms for effective management of necessary financial and administrative controls of the formalised social housing neighbourhood, with essential support of accompanying community- and social facilities and services.

- The roles, relationships and responsibilities of development partners must be clarified at both policy and implementation levels.
- The Development Partnership provides a platform for facilitating –
 - 1) local initiatives through community organisation methods that stimulate community participation in 'taking ownership' of the neighbourhood
 - 2) reduction of chronic unemployment by facilitating training and skills development
 - 3) extension of essential social services and programmes
- Simultaneous development of a range of necessary public facilities and amenities in the new development, is essential.
- The foundational 'pillars' or components supporting successful social urban environments must be integrated at the outset of a project:
These are 1) housing, 2) commercial and retail facilities, 3) community, social and cultural amenities, and 4) managed and conserved public open space.

An overarching management plan incorporating all relevant roleplayers to further entrench the integration of these components, must be put in place.

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