

Violence Prevention and Empowerment in the Township of Khayelitsha, South Africa

Khayelitsha, one of the largest townships of South Africa, did not see a gradual and well organised process of development and suffered serious consequences: overcrowding, inadequate services and rising security problems. A programme supported by BMZ/KfW combined transparency, mutual accountability, community participation and a process oriented approach to create security and empowerment.

The violence prevention programme also benefited from the City administration's commitment to the process. Moreover, the residents invested their time and effort, leading to skills development, improved income opportunities for selected groups, a general improvement in safety and better and more integrated service delivery to citizens.

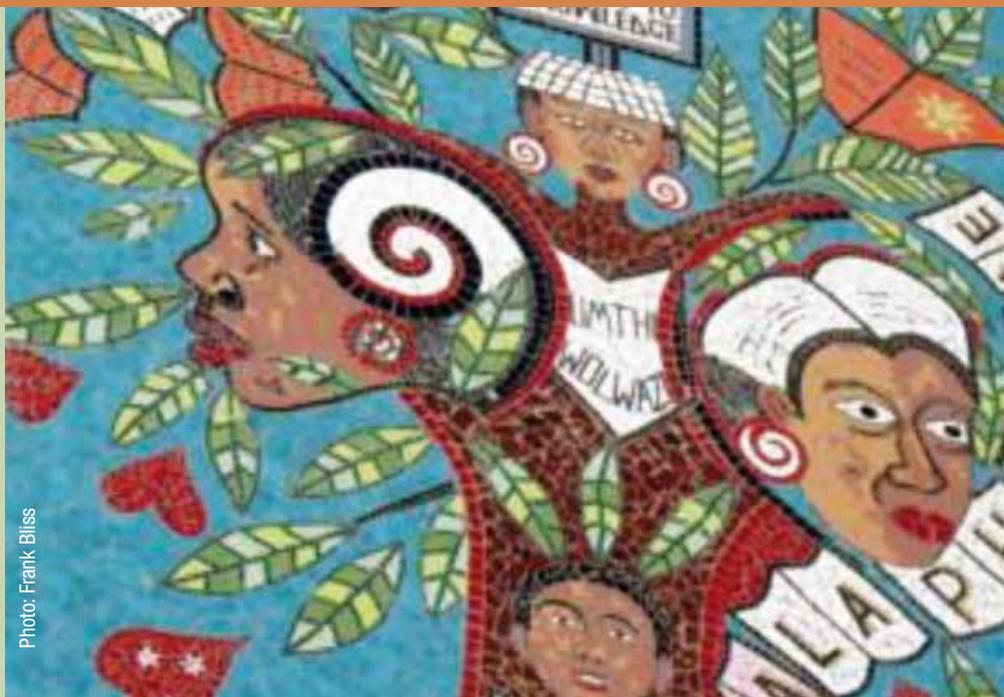


Photo: Frank Bliss

“ Many of the local people involved in the project are now integral to the NGO scene and the neighbourhood committees; in fact, it's impossible to imagine these without them. Some have also managed to become established in business, and several smaller social science research bodies have been set up. ”

— Cathy Stone, Cape Town's Spatial Planning and Urban Design Director

Khayelitsha – an Apartheid era 'Ghetto'

The township's story begins in the early 1980s, with the levelling of sand dunes close to the sea, around 30 km from Cape Town. Access roads were built and electricity and water supplies were developed. Narrow roads were built across the sand, and a prefabricated school and a health clinic were built at the centre. *“For us black South Africans and most coloureds, freedom to choose our place of residence had been abolished. Building land was allocated to us, and that was why Khayelitsha was planned and constructed in the 1980s,”* explains Loretta, the secretary of one of the Ward Development Forums. The resettlement, they believed, was how the Apartheid regime ensured that some black residents of Cape Town would be living too far to walk to the white areas of the city but close enough to commute to work every day.

In 1994 the new government continued to develop the area and introduced a state subsidy scheme for house building and transferred land to the owner, as part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme announced by President Mandela. Population pressure continued to overwhelm formalisation; the informal settlements at the fringes kept growing. Tens of thousands of 'matchbox houses' appeared in Khayelitsha from 1995 to 2005. In 2010 the township, planned for 250 000, had 600 000-800 000 residents.

Khayelitsha today has an estimated 200 000 families in an area of six square kilometres – one of the highest population densities in South Africa. Since 1994 several billion rand have been invested in infrastructural development, with electricity available almost everywhere, and even in the informal settlements a toilet for every five families and a water tap for every twenty – the 'essential service requirements' established in South African law. Waste collection is efficient and the quality of the asphalted roads is high. The problem, however, is the lack of social, cultural, institutional and economic opportunities for residents. Most residents, driven by economic hardship, had no choice but to settle here, they could not afford better. *“I am jobless just now”* or *“I am looking for a job”* are statements frequently expressed by young people.

Harare is a neighbourhood of about 40 000 people in Khayelitsha. Every morning the Metro Rail takes tens of thousands from the township to their places of work, and brings them back



Photo: Frank Bliss

“Community Participation is a Marathon, not a sprint! We work with the people for the people.”

— Sicelo Nkobla, community participation coordinator for VPUU

to their ‘dormitory town’ in the evening. Footpaths lead from the station through wasteland to the residential areas. Until recently the area was considered to be extremely dangerous. “*We are afraid for our children when they go to school,*” or “*People are constantly being assaulted and robbed in Harare,*” or even, “*Some weekends two or three people end up dead in the ward,*” are comments made in a survey undertaken in 2006. Alongside murder and robbery, domestic violence within families, especially against women and girls, was the third priority crime.

A Response

The City of Cape Town initiated the Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading project (VPUU) in 2005 in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Development Bank (KfW) and with the aid of several other stakeholders, aiming at social, situational, and institutional crime prevention while linking urban upgrading with a broad spectrum of social interventions.

“*Initially, the programme was based on developing a set of infrastructural improvements*”, says Michael Krause, an urban designer and team leader of the consulting team. “*But it soon became apparent that the massive problems could only be tackled through intelligent urban planning and neighbourhood management, and the concept of citizenship. It also became clear we needed far more than the planned 7.5 million Euros. So the City entered into strategic partnerships with South Africa’s National Treasury and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), which together cover around three quarters of the project costs.*” Strong links are also maintained with civil society groups - foremost the Khayelitsha Development Forum, operating since 1995. Additional partners are Simelela a network of 28 NGOs from Khayelitsha and Cape Town working on gender-based violence.

Active Boxes and Other New Physical and Social Structures

Architect Machiel Erasmus is responsible for coordinating the situational crime prevention component (construction of public facilities): “*One element is to improve safety on the streets with simple measures. They include the creation of well-lit spaces alongside the main pedestrian routes. At the intersections of these routes, we provided ‘Active Boxes’ small three-storey buildings which contain at a minimum a meeting room or public facility for the neighbourhood, a caretaker’s flat and a room for facility guardians*”.

There are facilities for youth, such as a football pitch at the Kwam Fundo School and the Love Life Youth Centre in Harare Square. The Active Box at Harare Metro station also includes mall shops rented out to street traders.

On Harare Square, a multifunctional building including a new library will offer numerous services, especially for children and young people.

The centrepiece library will be the most modern community library in South Africa and the fact that it is in Khayelitsha is a symbol of the township’s significance. Between 7 and 10 per cent of the budget of 2.3 million Euros, is being channelled to local businesses and artisans from Khayelitsha. “It has not been easy to find qualified artisans”, says Gerrit van Zyl, the main contractor. “*However, as part of the contracting process, we have provided advice and training to local small businesses.*” He is particularly proud of a team who produce perfect cement bricks. “*I will certainly be able to employ these people on the next contract, wherever that may be. The question is whether they will have time, as they are now well-established as producers of bricks for other building projects in Khayelitsha.*”

Chris Giles, psychologist, manages the programme’s social crime prevention interventions, considered as important as the ‘hardware’. Besides financing small projects by community based organisations (CBOs) and resident groups, the programme supports crime prevention activities “*Linked to the Active Boxes is the Neighbourhood Watch Project: 420 volunteers were trained in conflict prevention techniques and between 250 and 300 take part in unarmed patrols.*” The Anti Rape and Gender Violence Project involves NGOs working together to support victims, and the Legal Aid Project, advises families on legal problems, often concerning tenure issues.

A group of women participated in a trauma counselling workshop as part of the social crime prevention initiatives. The group developed such a strong bond that it convinced the whole neighbourhood to design positive public art to heal the trauma in the community and show the residents’ pride in the amenities financed by VPUU. This idea developed into an income generating initiative for the women. VPUU linked the group to well-known Cape Town artist, Lovell Friedman, and added some new members. The experiment proved a complete success: “*About twenty people attended a course, which introduced us to creating decorative mosaics from fragments of tile*”, says Ms Loza, 40, a single mother of four who lives in Harare. “*Together with the artist, we produced a draft design based on our own ideas. Three men and four women worked four weeks to create the mural. At the formal opening, the Premier, Ms Helen Zille, paid tribute to our efforts and shook our hands.*” A full wage was paid for the work on the project and the team produced other mosaics for the entrance to the new library and on 40 litter bins in the parks. Three of her colleagues recently left the team; they have been hired by a local company to decorate bus stops outside Khayelitsha with mosaics – the start of what will hopefully be a successful business venture.



Photo: Bruce Sutherland

Institutional crime prevention is the third element of the programme and promotes local economic development, skills training, the management and maintenance of spaces and places. The shops at Khayelitsha Metro Station are a way to promote economic development for street traders. After intensive business development skills training about 20 women and men gained the opportunity to rent these shops. Together with around 30 other small business owners from the local area, and with support from the project, a traders' association was set up. Cecilia is on the board. *"In the past I worked short-term assignments for other people. I decided to start my own business and I started a hair salon in a shack by the train station but one day my shack was gone! Fortunately, I had the chance to be a founding member of the Traders' Association. We received training on how to form and run the Association. When the shops were constructed I was able to get one room with water and electricity. Now I am more secure and four women work for me. These girls receive a basic salary plus commission, according to the number of customers they serve."* So in this small salon, of just 8.5 square metres, five relatively permanent jobs have been created. At each of the public facilities at least one permanent job is created via a general worker, who looks after the facility and ensures that the high quality environment is maintained. The workers are recruited from a volunteer pool of local residents who tirelessly work with the programme to make it their own, be it as patroller in the area, childminder, or in one of the facility management committees overseeing the use of facilities.

The Harare Urban Park, Neighbourhood Patrols and Proud Residents

Many activities associated with the programme are intended to reduce everyday violence. The Active Box at the urban park serves as a meeting point for the NGOs. Close to the building, under the caretaker's constant supervision, is a children's playground. Further from the building are football pitches used by teenagers all day. An astroturf field and a small building were donated by FIFA during the World Cup in South Africa.

Numerous training courses take place in the Active Box which is the base station for neighbourhood patrols. The VPUU patrol programme promotes voluntarism and rewards with skills development. Instead of payment in cash or kind, 'credits' are allocated for volunteering, which patrollers can convert into training programmes of their choice. Noludwe chose to take driving lessons: *"I converted the credits I earned through volunteering. I participated in a literacy programme and in conflict training. Today I am assistant administrator to the community facilitator in an informal settlement. I receive a salary and work days while patrolling during the nights."*

The VPUU measures have made significant improvements to safety and security: the murder rate dropped by 33%, the best in a low income area in Cape Town. The weekly household survey conducted by residents from Harare over the past five years reveals that people feel proud and increasingly safer in their public spaces. The open spaces are well-lit and far more vibrant than before.

Mr October, a local community leader, endorses the methodology of the programme. *"The programme always engages first with us as a community. Through the baseline we know what we have got in our area and through the community action plan we are made the drivers of the programme. See what we have done: a waste dump and place where people got killed has been turned into the most beautiful and safest park. I have a standing appointment with VPUU on Saturdays."* He refers to the monthly planning meetings between the professional team and the community members that regularly draws 120 people. During these meetings strategic decisions are taken, new plans are endorsed and performance is evaluated.

Sicelo Nkohla, community participation coordinator for VPUU, states with a laughing eye: *"Community Participation is a Marathon, not a sprint! We work with the people for the people"*.

Social Development Fund

The Social Development Fund has been an effective tool to bring home the idea of partnership development and ownership by the community. It provides grants between 500 and 5,000 Euros to fund community activities. There is a particular focus on children, young people and women. For example, Josephine, an unemployed young lady with good computer skills and a great idea, applied and was provided with 6 computers. She has now opened a computer club for children on a voluntary basis. *"The kids stand in line in front of my house after school, and it's a shame that we only have six work stations at present."* She earns her living as a secretary, working on her computer and taking on photocopying jobs.

In Monwabisi Park, the informal settlement next to Harare, Charlotte lives with her five children in extreme poverty. She keeps her head above water working as a childminder for her neighbours. She decided to make the best out of a difficult situation and, starting with the children in her care, set up a singing and drumming group for 6-14 year olds. The Social Development Fund provided instruments and outfits. *"We have had five or six major performances this year. The children are with me almost every day. It's fun for me too. And I know what my children are up to after school."* The Social Development Fund supports around 30 crèches, including the Ithembani Educational Centre. Here, 140 children receive full-day care. Six childcare

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workers are permanent employees. Without the crèches, many women would have nowhere to leave their children while they work – and the children are given a nutritious meal, paid for by the Provincial Government.

More Security, Higher Incomes, Increased Social Pride

Cathy Stone, Cape Town's Spatial Planning and Urban Design Director, views the outcomes of the first two phases of the VPUU in very positive terms: *"The project approach has been a familiar one in urban development theory. However, Khayelitsha is the first example of its application in South Africa. Khayelitsha accounts for a significant share of the Cape Town population – around 16% – and almost all are poor. If we can improve living conditions and the safety issue, then investment and more jobs in Khayelitsha are realistic goals. We are trying to transfer the positive experiences to other townships."*

Ms Stone is convinced that it is important to safeguard sustainability over the long term: *"Many of the local people involved in the project are now integral to the NGO scene and the neighbourhood committees; in fact, it's impossible to imagine these without them. Some have also managed to become established in business, and several smaller social science research bodies have been set up."*

The positive outcomes of VPUU are due to the interaction between numerous committed stakeholders and an area-based approach, with a major emphasis on community participation, social development, and operation maintenance and management of spaces. The programme is research based and promotes evidence based planning. KfW helped to set the programme in motion with a 7.5 million Euro grant. Due to the success of the programme, KfW doubled its contribution to 15 million Euros, which amounts to approximately 25% of the overall budget. The broad range of activities, however, would have been impossible without a national Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant from the National Treasury – an indicator of ownership and sustainability.

Among the stakeholders, the role of around two dozen local NGOs is particularly important. Without them, it would have been impossible to curb violence, and provide support for victims. Equally significant was the contribution of resident volunteers. Most volunteers also underwent conflict management techniques, some graduated into general workers or landscapers with some of them later taking over core elements of the programme.

Also critical to maintaining the positive momentum is the change in perception of municipal officials. Mr Noahmaan Hendricks, Director of Development Services, stresses: *"If we do not start meeting the community's most urgent needs, we will lose our legitimacy; and if we do not work in the most participatory way, we waste the most important capital we have: the dedication of the people and their will for change."*