

# “Living for the Sake of Living”

## *Partnerships between the Poor and Local Government in Johannesburg*

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## Acronyms

<b>AIDS</b>	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
<b>ANC</b>	African National Congress
<b>CBO</b>	community-based organization
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organization
<b>GDP</b>	gross domestic product
<b>GEAR</b>	growth, employment and redistribution
<b>GJMC</b>	Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council
<b>GVA</b>	gross value added
<b>HIV</b>	human immunodeficiency virus
<b>ICDA</b>	Interfaith Community Development Association
<b>IDP</b>	integrated development plan
<b>JDA</b>	Johannesburg Development Agency
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>NPO</b>	non-profit organization
<b>R</b>	South African rand
<b>RD</b>	Reconstruction and Development Programme
<b>SACN</b>	South African Cities Network
<b>SANCO</b>	South African National Civic Organisation
<b>UNRISD</b>	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
<b>UNV</b>	United Nations Volunteers

## Acknowledgements

This paper uses two case studies to critically review the complexities of creating partnerships between civil society organizations and local government structures to provide substantive benefits to the poor. The paper also analyses how – if at all – things have changed since 1996, when the initial research was carried out and the case studies were first presented at the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

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## Summary/Résumé/Resumen

### **Summary**

South Africa's democracy, brought about through grassroots mobilization, is just a decade old. The struggle against apartheid mobilized hundreds of thousands of South Africans not simply around the political goals of freedom and equality, but around their exclusion from decision making and service delivery at the local level. Civic associations, which played a prominent role in the 1980s, mobilized people around slogans such as "one city, one tax base", and used consumer and service payment boycotts to force local authorities and businesses to negotiate around service delivery. Freedom, equality and the end of apartheid were obviously the primary goals, but they were undergirded by community struggles around participation in local development.

Apartheid ended as a result of negotiation rather than an overthrow of the incumbent regime; as a result, a host of concessions had to be made to both the ruling regime and to local and international capital. Dramatic redistribution of wealth was impossible for a host of reasons. As a result, the African National Congress and its allies, which formed the government after 1994, had to adopt a long-term view in which redistribution and growth could occur simultaneously, requiring a national framework that would guide investment on the basis of equity. But partnerships rely on communities having the space and resources to generate and pursue their own ideas and goals. This requires the state to manage a balancing act between ensuring that its policy goals inform development and simultaneously make space for people-driven development.

Following the end of apartheid, the racially demarcated landscape was reshaped into nine provinces and, in 1995, into 843 elected transitional units in the local sphere. The first full democratic local elections were held in 2000, after the Municipal Demarcation Board consolidated the local sphere into 284 local government units, comprising six metropolitan municipalities, 47 district municipalities and 231 local municipalities. Put simply, intergovernmental relations are just 10 years old in South Africa, and the local sphere—the rock face of delivery and community participation—barely a toddler.

The context for examining partnerships between organizations for the poor and local government is an evolving and changing one. The governance model is being developed, and civil society is changing as well. South Africa has a rich and diverse non-profit sector, with an operating expenditure of R9.3 billion in 1998. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) played a key role in the anti-apartheid struggle, and although their relative importance has declined since 1994, the non-profit sector as a whole remains a defining feature of South African society.

In this paper, David Everatt, Graeme Gotz and Ross Jennings focus on two areas: (i) the Johannesburg inner city; and (ii) Tladi-Moletsane, a suburb of Soweto. The City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality oversees the largest number of residents of any municipality in Gauteng province. Poverty indicators show that the constituency of this area includes both affluent, well-served communities and impoverished, disadvantaged communities. While the existing levels and quality of service delivery need to be maintained, the real challenges lie in the extension of services and infrastructure to all residents of Johannesburg.

In meeting these challenges, the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality is guided by national legislation as well as local dynamics. In particular, fiscal constraints at the local level have led city authorities to adopt an approach that is cognizant of the need for democratic, participatory governance, but is primarily concerned with generating economic growth.

The question is whether this approach is workable. Are there inherent tensions or contradictions in the application of an approach that is underpinned by participatory principles, while at the same time being governed by an economic bottom line?

Local government is located at the centre of government's rural and urban development strategies. Partnerships between the poor and their structures, on one hand, and local government, on the other, are as fundamental for "developmental local government" at a theoretical level as integrated development plans—required of all local authorities—are at a practical level. The policy terrain has never been more conducive for local-level partnerships.

On the ground in Tladi-Moletsane, however, the situation is very different. Politics and activism have come to be seen as avenues for the ambitious, and not mechanisms for effecting change. Disinterest and apathy are widespread. Politics is still dominated by a golden clique of more affluent residents; but even here there are problems, with fewer affluent people actively involved in local affairs.

Class differences are reflected in local organizations. The formal areas have a local civic association, which barely relates to and does not actively support the civic associations set up by those living in the Tladi informal settlement. The local councillor replicates these differences, having a warm relationship with local businesses and using a junior staff member to tour the formal areas, but bypassing the informal settlement.

Ten years of democracy provided some tangible benefits to the residents of Tladi-Moletsane: shared taps and toilets for the informal settlement; houses and tarred roads for residents of the formal areas. Expectations were probably unrealistic, and some observers may be correct in detecting more continuity than change from "urban apartheid" to "postapartheid". Either way, the general attitude in Tladi-Moletsane is despondent.

There is some evidence of local action by small local community-based organizations (CBOs) and concerned individuals. Formerly prominent structures such as the local civic association have faded into the background or closed down; and there is some evidence that local government structures are seen as a tool for leveraging change. The Tladi informal settlement dwellers, for example, established their own ward committee to concentrate on water, sewerage and electrification. While sceptical about their chances of success, it is important that they are trying to use the mechanisms made available to them as part of democratizing local government. The authors of this paper found no evidence of partnerships with larger CBOs or NGOs, nor with the council. The policy terrain may be favourable, but a great deal of grassroots mobilization and education is urgently required if policy is to translate into substantive and sustainable reality.

By contrast, in the authors' Johannesburg inner city case study, we see how the declining fortunes of city-community partnerships illustrate how the shifts in city management and community organization impact the prospects of future partnerships. A rapidly changing economic and social environment has put pressure on the city authorities to manage the inner city in ways less conducive to partnerships, as well as on conventional voluntary sector initiatives and organizations that, in the increasingly contested, fluid and inscrutable inner city, have little incentive to function as voluntary groups have in the past.

According to the authors, the future of partnerships appears gloomy, and they argue that it is difficult to predict the impact that further changes in the inner city may have in making future partnerships more meaningful and viable. Presently, the most successful partnerships seem to be project-based and focused on specific geographic locations, involving government-facilitated opportunities for existing organizations with defined mandates to provide new services to their communities.

David Everatt and Ross Jennings are partners in Strategy and Tactics, a development research agency based in South Africa. Graeme Gotz is an independent researcher and consultant, focused mainly on local government and urban development.

## **Résumé**

La démocratie sud-africaine, résultat de la mobilisation de la base, a juste dix ans. La lutte contre l'apartheid a mobilisé des centaines de milliers de Sud-africains, qui se sont rassemblés non seulement autour des objectifs politiques de liberté et d'égalité, mais aussi autour de la prise de décision, dont ils étaient exclus, et des services, dont ils étaient privés au niveau local. Les associations civiques, qui ont joué un rôle de premier plan dans les années 80, ont mobilisé les populations autour de slogans tels que "une ville, une base d'imposition" et se sont servies du boycott des consommateurs et du non-paiement des services pour forcer les autorités et les entreprises locales à négocier sur la prestation de services. La liberté, l'égalité et la fin de l'apartheid étaient manifestement les objectifs essentiels mais leur réalisation passait par des luttes communautaires pour la participation au développement local.

La fin de l'apartheid a résulté de négociations plutôt que du renversement du régime en place; il a donc fallu faire de multiples concessions à la fois au régime et au capital local et international. Il était impossible, pour diverses raisons, de procéder à une redistribution radicale des richesses. Le Congrès national africain (ou ANC pour African National Congress en anglais) et ses alliés, qui ont formé le gouvernement après 1994, ont dû consentir à reléguer à la fois la redistribution et la croissance dans le long terme, ce qui exigeait une politique nationale d'investissements guidée par un souci d'équité. Mais pour que des partenariats se mettent en place, il faut que les collectivités aient l'espace et les ressources nécessaires pour produire leurs propres idées et objectifs et les traduire dans la réalité. L'Etat, de son côté, doit trouver un juste équilibre entre son action et celle de la population et veiller à ce que le développement soit conforme à ses propres objectifs politiques tout en laissant la population en être le moteur.

Après la fin de l'apartheid, le pays, naguère divisé en régions raciales, a été réorganisé en neuf provinces et, au niveau local en 1995, en 843 circonscriptions transitoires élues. Les premières élections locales vraiment démocratiques ont lieu en 2000, après que le Conseil chargé du redécoupage des municipalités eut refondu le pays en 284 autorités locales comprenant six municipalités métropolitaines, 47 municipalités de district et 231 municipalités locales. Pour employer une image simple, si les relations intergouvernementales ont juste 10 ans en Afrique du Sud, les autorités locales, pierre angulaire de la prestation de services et de la participation communautaire, savent à peine marcher.

Le contexte dans lequel évoluent les partenariats entre organisations pour les pauvres et autorités locales est en constante mutation. Le modèle de gouvernance se cherche encore et la société civile change, elle aussi. Les organisations sans but lucratif forment en Afrique du Sud un secteur dynamique et diversifié, dont les dépenses d'exploitation s'élevaient en 1998 à R9.3 milliards. Les organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) ont joué un rôle capital dans la lutte contre l'apartheid et, bien que leur importance relative ait décliné depuis 1994, le secteur sans but lucratif, dans son ensemble, reste un trait majeur de la société sud-africaine.

David Everatt, Graeme Gotz et Ross Jennings se concentrent ici sur deux zones géographiques: (i) le centre de Johannesburg et (ii) Tladi-Moletsane, une banlieue de Soweto. La Municipalité métropolitaine de la ville de Johannesburg est, de toutes les municipalités de la province de Gauteng, celle qui compte le plus grand nombre d'administrés. Les indicateurs de pauvreté montrent que cette agglomération est composée à la fois de quartiers riches et bien desservis et de quartiers pauvres et défavorisés. S'il importe de maintenir les niveaux et la qualité des services actuels, le vrai défi consiste à étendre les services et l'infrastructure à tous les habitants de Johannesburg.

Pour relever ces défis, la Municipalité métropolitaine de Johannesburg se laisse guider par la législation nationale autant que par les dynamiques locales. Des contraintes budgétaires au niveau local, en particulier, ont amené les autorités municipales à adopter une démarche certes consciente de la nécessité d'une gouvernance démocratique et participative, mais surtout attentive à produire de la croissance économique.

Reste à savoir si cette approche résistera à l'épreuve des faits. N'est-ce pas s'exposer à des tensions ou à des contradictions que d'appliquer une approche qui, tout en reposant sur des principes de participation, obéit à des impératifs économiques?

Le pouvoir local est au centre des stratégies de développement rural et urbain du gouvernement. Les partenariats entre les pauvres et leurs structures, d'une part, et les autorités locales, de l'autre, sont aussi essentiels, au plan théorique, à un "gouvernement local axé sur le développement" que les plans de développement intégrés, que l'on demande à n'importe quelle autorité locale, le sont au plan pratique. Le terrain politique n'a jamais été plus propice aux partenariats au niveau local.

Sur le terrain à Tladi-Moletsane, cependant, la situation est très différente. La politique et le militantisme sont perçues comme des filières d'avenir pour les ambitieux, et non des moyens de faire changer les choses. Le désintérêt et l'apathie sont généraux. La politique est encore dominée par une clique huppée dont les membres se recrutent parmi les habitants les plus nantis mais, même là, il y a des problèmes, et ceux qui s'investissent dans la vie de la communauté locale sont moins nombreux que par le passé.

Les différences de classes se retrouvent dans les organisations locales. Les zones viabilisées ont une association civique locale mais elle n'a guère de contact avec ses homologues créées par les habitants des bidonvilles de Tladi et ne leur apporte aucun soutien. Le conseiller municipal reproduit ces différences; il a des relations cordiales avec les entreprises locales et charge un jeune membre de son personnel de visiter les zones viabilisées, mais contourne les bidonvilles.

Dix ans de démocratie se sont soldés par des avantages tangibles pour les habitants de Tladi-Moletsane: des robinets et des toilettes publics pour les bidonvilles, des maisons et des routes goudronnées pour les habitants des quartiers formels. Les attentes n'étaient sans doute pas réalistes, mais certains observateurs, qui voient plus de continuité que de changement entre "l'apartheid urbain" et "l'après-apartheid", pourraient bien avoir raison. Quoi qu'il en soit, l'humeur générale à Tladi-Moletsane est au découragement.

Il semblerait pourtant que de petites organisations communautaires locales et quelques personnes intéressées ne restent pas inactives. Des structures qui avaient auparavant pignon sur rue, comme l'association civique locale, ont disparu ou ont été reléguées à l'arrière-plan. Il semblerait aussi que les pouvoirs locaux soient considérés comme le moyen d'opérer des changements. Les habitants des bidonvilles de Tladi, par exemple, ont créé leur propre comité de gestion, qui s'occupe de l'eau, de l'évacuation des eaux usées et de l'électrification. Bien que sceptiques sur leurs chances de succès, il est important qu'ils essaient de mettre à profit les mécanismes mis à leur disposition dans le cadre de la démocratisation du pouvoir local. Les auteurs de ce document n'ont relevé aucun partenariat avec de grandes organisations communautaires ou ONG, ni avec le conseil municipal. Le terrain politique est sans doute favorable, mais il faut consentir sans tarder à un énorme travail de mobilisation et d'éducation de la base si l'on veut que les principes politiques se traduisent par des réalités tangibles et durables.

En revanche, l'étude de cas sur le centre de Johannesburg montre en quoi le déclin des partenariats entre ville et population illustre la façon dont les changements touchant à la gestion de la ville et à l'organisation communautaire se répercutent sur les perspectives de futurs partenariats. Un environnement économique et social en mutation rapide a poussé les autorités de la ville à gérer le centre-ville de manière moins propice aux partenariats et a pesé aussi sur les initiatives et organisations du secteur bénévole classique qui, dans le milieu instable, insondable et de plus en plus livré à la contestation qu'est le centre-ville, est peu incité à travailler comme il le faisait par le passé.

Selon les auteurs, l'avenir des partenariats est sombre et il est difficile de prévoir quelles répercussions aura l'évolution future du centre-ville sur les partenariats et si elle contribuera à les rendre plus fructueux et plus viables. A l'heure actuelle, les partenariats les plus réussis sem-



blent être ceux qui portent sur un projet, situé en un point géographique donné, et impliquent des organisations en place, mandatées pour fournir, avec l'aide des autorités, de nouveaux services aux populations.

David Everatt et Ross Jennings sont associés dans *Strategy and Tactics*, organisation sud-africaine de recherches pour le développement. Graeme Gotz, chercheur et consultant indépendant, s'intéresse surtout aux autorités locales et au développement urbain.

### **Resumen**

La democracia de Sudáfrica, consecuencia de la movilización popular, apenas ha cumplido diez años. La lucha contra el apartheid movilizó a cientos de miles de sudafricanos, que se unieron no sólo en torno a los objetivos políticos de libertad y igualdad, sino también para luchar contra su propia exclusión de la toma de decisiones y la prestación de servicios en el plano local. Las asociaciones cívicas, que desempeñaron un papel destacado en el decenio de 1980, movilizaron a la población en torno a lemas como "una ciudad, una base fiscal", y recurrieron al boicoteo de los consumidores y del pago de los servicios para obligar a las autoridades y a las empresas locales a entablar negociaciones sobre la prestación de servicios. La libertad, la igualdad y el final del apartheid eran evidentemente los principales objetivos, pero fueron logrados a través de luchas comunitarias para conseguir la participación en el desarrollo local.

El apartheid terminó más a consecuencia de las negociaciones que del derrocamiento del régimen imperante; por lo tanto, tuvieron que hacerse numerosas concesiones tanto al régimen en el poder como al capital local e internacional. La redistribución drástica de la riqueza era imposible por muchos motivos. Así pues, el Congreso Nacional Africano y sus aliados, que constituyeron el gobierno después de 1994, tuvieron que adoptar una visión a largo plazo en la que la distribución y el crecimiento pudieran tener lugar simultáneamente, lo que exigía un marco nacional que orientara la inversión sobre la base de la equidad. Sin embargo, las asociaciones dependen de que las comunidades tengan el espacio y los recursos necesarios para generar y lograr sus propias ideas y objetivos. Para ello es necesario que el Estado maneje un justo equilibrio entre garantizar que los objetivos de sus políticas estén dirigidos hacia el desarrollo y, simultáneamente, hacer un espacio para el desarrollo impulsado por la población.

Tras finalizar el apartheid, el panorama racialmente delimitado se organizó en nueve provincias y, en 1995, en 843 unidades transitorias elegidas en la esfera local. Las primeras elecciones locales realmente democráticas se celebraron en 2000, después de que el Consejo Municipal de Demarcaciones reorganizara el país en 284 unidades de gobierno local, incluidos seis municipios metropolitanos, 47 municipios de distrito y 231 municipios locales. En otras palabras: si las relaciones intergubernamentales existen apenas desde hace diez años en Sudáfrica, podemos considerar que las autoridades locales—piedra angular de la prestación de servicios y la participación comunitaria— apenas se están desarrollando.

El contexto para analizar las asociaciones entre las organizaciones para la población pobre y las autoridades locales está evolucionando y cambiando continuamente. El modelo de gobierno está elaborándose, y la sociedad civil también está cambiando. Las organizaciones sin afán lucrativo en Sudáfrica constituyen un sector dinámico y diversificado, cuyos gastos de explotación ascendieron a R9.3 mil millones en 1998. Las organizaciones no gubernamentales (ONG) desempeñaron un papel fundamental en la lucha contra el apartheid, y aunque su importancia relativa ha disminuido desde 1994, el sector no lucrativo en su conjunto sigue siendo una característica primordial de la sociedad sudafricana.

En este documento, David Everatt, Graeme Gotz y Ross Jennings se centran en dos zonas geográficas: (i) el centro de Johannesburgo, y (ii) Tladi-Moletsane, un barrio periférico de Soweto. De todos los municipios de la provincia de Gauteng, el municipio metropolitano de la ciudad de Johannesburgo es el que cuenta con un mayor número de habitantes. Los indicadores de la

pobreza muestran que esta zona se compone tanto de comunidades acaudaladas y bien atendidas, como de comunidades empobrecidas y desfavorecidas. Si bien es necesario mantener los niveles y la calidad de los servicios actuales, el auténtico desafío radica en hacer extensivos los servicios y la infraestructura a todos los habitantes de Johannesburgo.

Para hacer frente a estos desafíos, el municipio metropolitano de Johannesburgo se orienta tanto por la legislación nacional, como por la dinámica local. En particular, las limitaciones fiscales en el plano local han conducido a las autoridades de la ciudad a adoptar un enfoque que contemple la necesidad de un gobierno democrático y participativo, pero que principalmente se centre en generar crecimiento económico.

La cuestión que se plantea es si este enfoque es factible. ¿Existen tensiones o contradicciones inherentes a la aplicación de un enfoque basado en principios participativos que se rijan al mismo tiempo por imperativos económicos?

El gobierno local se ubica en el centro de las estrategias de desarrollo urbano y rural del gobierno. Las asociaciones entre la población pobre y sus estructuras, por una parte, y las autoridades locales, por otra, son tan importantes, en el plano teórico, para un “gobierno local centrado en el desarrollo”, como los planes de desarrollo integrados—requeridos de cualquier autoridad local—en el plano práctico. El terreno político nunca ha propiciado tanto las asociaciones locales.

Sin embargo, la situación real en Tladi-Moletsane es muy diferente. La política y el activismo se han llegado a considerar vías para los ambiciosos, en lugar de mecanismos para lograr cambios en la situación. El desinterés y la apatía se han generalizado. La política sigue estando dominada por un clan selecto cuyos miembros pertenecen a la alta sociedad; pero incluso en este caso hay problemas, y la población rica participa cada vez menos en los asuntos locales.

Las diferencias de clase se reflejan en las organizaciones locales. Las zonas acondicionadas cuentan con una asociación cívica local, apenas relacionada con las asociaciones cívicas creadas por los habitantes de los suburbios de Tladi y a las que no apoyan activamente. El asesor local reproduce estas diferencias, al mantener buenas relaciones con las empresas locales y utilizar a un miembro joven de su personal para visitar las zonas acondicionadas, pero evitando los suburbios.

Diez años de democracia proporcionaron algunos beneficios tangibles a los residentes de Tladi-Moletsane: grifos y retretes públicos para los suburbios, y casas y carreteras alquitranadas para los habitantes de las áreas favorecidas. Las expectativas probablemente no fueron realistas y tal vez tengan razón los observadores que perciben más una continuidad que un cambio de “apartheid urbano” a “postapartheid”. En cualquier caso, la actitud general en Tladi-Moletsane es desalentadora.

Sin embargo, existe alguna evidencia de iniciativas locales emprendidas por pequeñas organizaciones comunitarias locales y por personas interesadas. Estructuras que anteriormente habían sido predominantes, como la asociación cívica local, habían desaparecido o se habían relegado a un segundo plano; asimismo, también hay evidencia de que las estructuras del gobierno local se consideran como el instrumento para introducir cambios. Los habitantes de los suburbios de Tladi, por ejemplo, crearon su propia comité de barrio que se encarga del agua, el alcantarillado y la electrificación. Aunque se muestran escépticos con respecto a sus posibilidades de éxito, es importante que estén desplegando esfuerzos por utilizar los mecanismos que se les ha facilitado en el marco de la democratización del gobierno local. Los autores de este documento no han identificado ninguna asociación con organizaciones comunitarias u ONG más grandes, ni con el consejo municipal. El terreno político puede ser favorable, pero urge llevar a cabo una movilización y una educación en el plano local para que la política se transforme en iniciativas tangibles y sostenibles.

En cambio, el estudio de caso del centro de Johannesburgo nos muestra cómo los recursos económicos en declive de las asociaciones entre la ciudad y la comunidad ilustra en qué medida los cambios dentro de la administración de la ciudad y la organización comunitaria pueden afectar

las perspectivas de futuras asociaciones. Un entorno económico y social en rápida mutación ha obligado a las autoridades de la ciudad a administrar el centro de la ciudad de un modo menos propicio para las asociaciones, y ha influido asimismo en las iniciativas y organizaciones del sector voluntario convencional que, en los barrios cada vez más polémicos, inestables e inescrutables que constituyen el centro de la ciudad, hay poca motivación para actuar como lo hacían antaño.

A juicio de los autores, el futuro de las asociaciones parece pesimista y es difícil prever las consecuencias de futuros cambios en el centro de la ciudad para el establecimiento de asociaciones más fructíferas y viables. En la actualidad, las asociaciones de mayor éxito parecen ser las relacionadas con proyectos basados y dirigidos a zonas geográficas específicas, aprovechando las facilidades ofrecidas por el gobierno para organizaciones ya establecidas con la finalidad de prestar nuevos servicios a sus comunidades.

David Everatt y Ross Jennings son socios en Strategy and Tactics, organismo sudafricano de investigación para el desarrollo. Graeme Gotz es investigador y consultor independiente, centrado fundamentalmente en el gobierno local y el desarrollo urbano.



## Part I: Contextual Overview

### *Introduction*

In 1996, three South African case studies were used to analyse the complexities of creating partnerships that can provide real benefits to the poor. This research formed part of a project, co-sponsored by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), called Volunteer Action and Local Democracy: A Partnership for a Better Urban Future. The goal of the project was to identify the successes of, and constraints on, collaborations between community-based organizations and volunteer organizations on one hand, and local governments on the other, in designing, implementing and evaluating social and economic policy at the local level, and to use this information to initiate and inform a dialogue among local actors about concrete ways of enhancing future collaborations of this kind (Westendorff 2001). The research also made a contribution to the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul in June 1996. The three South African case studies were among 20 such studies conducted in São Paulo, Brazil; Mumbai, India; Lima, Peru; Jinja, Uganda; Chicago, United States; East St. Louis, United States; and Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam.

The three 1996 South African case studies, all drawn from Johannesburg, were located in the Johannesburg inner city, Alexandra township to the north of Johannesburg and Tladi-Moletsane in Soweto. In this update paper, we return to the inner city and Tladi-Moletsane in order to briefly assess what, if anything, has changed since then.

The paper begins with an introductory overview of Gauteng province and the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, where both case study sites are located. Part I, the contextual overview, highlights the main issues and challenges facing both the province and the city. In parts II and III we turn to the case studies, looking in detail first at Tladi-Moletsane in Soweto, and then the Johannesburg inner city. The paper ends with a brief conclusion that draws together the main arguments.

### *Gauteng province*

A brief overview of Gauteng is provided in order to locate the particularities of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality (see figure 1). Gauteng is the smallest of South Africa's nine provinces, covering 17,010 square kilometres or 1 per cent of total land area.

**Figure 1: Municipalities of Gauteng province**



At 97 per cent, urbanization is the highest of all the provinces. There are three main cities legally constituted as metropolitan municipalities: (i) Pretoria, South Africa's administrative capital and governed by the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality; (ii) Johannesburg, the largest city in Southern Africa and governed by what is now known as the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality; and (iii) a tight cluster of urban cores that together constitute the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. However, to the south and west of these centres are other secondary cities, notably Krugersdorp in the West Rand District Municipality and the Veereniging-Vanderbijlpark complex in the Sedibeng District Municipality. Altogether, these centres form a virtually continuous urban region as big as some of the world's largest cities.

Data from the 1996 national census (Statistics South Africa 2001) put the population of Gauteng at 7.3 million, or 18 per cent of the total South African population. This was distributed across 2.1 million households, with an average household size of 3.8. By 2001, the Gauteng population had grown to 8.8 million, or 19.7 per cent of the total population, across 2.6 million households, with an average household size of 3.2 (Statistics South Africa 2001). Table 1 shows the population, number of households and average household size for each municipality according to the data of the Municipal Demarcation Board (2003). Note that the aggregate population figures for all the municipalities that make up Gauteng province do not align exactly with the totals for the province itself. This is because, in the South Africa administrative geography, municipalities can be demarcated to cross provincial boundaries. In Gauteng, three municipalities cross the provincial boundary, which means that a fairly large population falling within the Gauteng municipalities strictly speaking reside outside the province of Gauteng, giving rise to differences in totals.

**Table 1: Population, number of households and household size by municipality**

Municipal area	Population, 1996	Population, 2001	Number of households, 1996	Number of households, 2001	Average annual population growth, 1996–2001	Average annual household growth, 1996–2001	Average household size, 1996	Average household size, 2001
Johannesburg	2,639,110	3,225,812	728,304	1,006,932	4.10%	6.69%	3.6	3.2
Ekurhuleni	2,026,807	2,480,276	539,796	744,935	4.12%	6.65%	3.8	3.3
Tshwane	1,682,701	1,985,983	429,187	562,652	3.37%	5.56%	3.9	3.5
Sedibeng	717,472	794,605	181,887	225,098	2.06%	4.36%	3.9	3.5
West Rand	658,767	744,155	151,106	207,673	2.47%	6.57%	4.4	3.6
Metsweding	112,780	159,890	29,050	44,391	7.23%	8.85%	3.9	3.6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7,837,637</b>	<b>9,390,721</b>	<b>2,059,330</b>	<b>2,791,681</b>				
<b>Averages</b>					<b>3.68%</b>	<b>6.27%</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.4</b>

Source: Municipal Demarcation Board (2003).

As of 2001, the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality had the largest population at over 3.2 million residents, the largest number of households and an average household size of 3.2 individuals.

Although the smallest of South Africa's provinces, Gauteng is an integrated industrial complex and South Africa's economic powerhouse, generating more than a third of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). During 2000, this equated to economic activity worth approximately R300 billion<sup>1</sup>, larger than the output of all other Southern African states, and outstripping the continent.<sup>2</sup> In 2002, the three metropolitan municipalities alone had a combined estimated gross value added (GVA) of R208 billion, of which Johannesburg contributed an estimated R101 million (SACN 2004). GVA is equivalent to GDP, excluding the value of government taxes and subsidies.

<sup>1</sup> In mid-2002, the exchange rate was 10.11 South African rand (R) to the United States dollar.

<sup>2</sup> See the Web site of the Gauteng Economic Development Agency, [www.geda.co.za/default.asp?index=133](http://www.geda.co.za/default.asp?index=133), accessed on 4 April 2004.

### ***City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality***

Beall et al. (2002) have highlighted the shift that has taken place around the responsibilities of local government in South Africa, moving beyond traditional service delivery to include concerns of poverty reduction, public-private partnerships and enhanced participation by citizens. Beall et al. (2002) argue that the extent and complexity of poverty, inequality and social exclusion in Johannesburg are often underestimated, limiting the understanding and subsequent interventions of those concerned with developing the area. We provide a brief snapshot of poverty in Johannesburg, focusing on both personal circumstance and infrastructural variables, in order to contextualize the case studies.

The Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality incorporates affluent, formerly white suburbs such as Houghton, Rosebank and Sandton as well as more impoverished townships, including Alexandra, Ivory Park and Soweto.

The 2001 population of 3.2 million comprises a slightly higher proportion of whites (15.9 per cent), coloureds (6.4 per cent) and Indians (4.1 per cent) than most provinces; the remainder comprise Africans (73.4 per cent). The South African average for white residents as a proportion of the population is 11 per cent.

In comparison with the total South African population, Johannesburg has a roughly equal proportion of women to men. According to the 2001 population census (Statistics South Africa 2001), women made up 52 per cent of the South African population; in Johannesburg they accounted for 50 per cent. In part, this reflects the effect of migrant labour in the city. There are considerably more men than women in the typically in-migration age group of 15 to 34. However, 38 per cent of Johannesburg's households are female-headed, compared to an average of 35 per cent in a comparably sized city like Cape Town.

If South Africa is a "rainbow" nation, then Johannesburg is a cosmopolitan microcosm of the rainbow, with the added impact of Africans from the rest of the continent. As a result of the level of economic activity, Johannesburg has a large inflow of work-seekers from other South African cities, poorer provinces in the country and the rest of the African continent. Between 1996 and 2001, 364,792 people migrated to Johannesburg from other parts of the country. This meant that 11.3 per cent of its 2001 population was newly migrant (SACN 2004), although Gauteng also lost almost 200,000 to out-migration. Precise numbers of foreign immigrants remain highly contested, but the 2001 population census suggests that 7 per cent of Johannesburg's population was not born in South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2001).

To provide an overview of poverty, we use the newly released *State of the Cities Report 2004* (SACN 2004), results from Statistics South Africa's 1997 October household survey<sup>3</sup> and the 2001 population census (see figure 2). Specific circumstantial variables, including illiteracy, rate of unemployment and household expenditure are important. The following definitions are used.

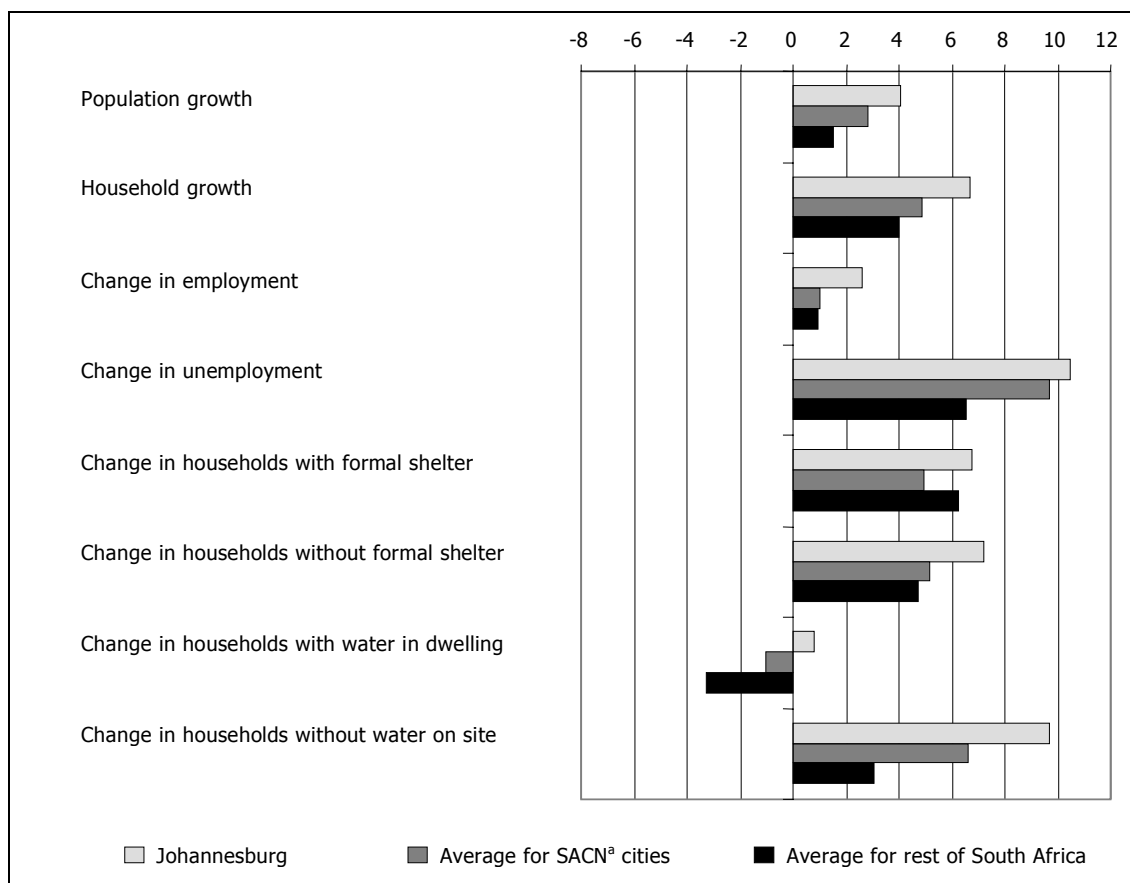
- Illiteracy is the proportion of the population aged 15 or older that had not completed standard five/grade seven (that is, the end of primary level schooling).
- Rate of unemployment is defined under the expanded definition of unemployment as those people within the economically active population who (i) did not work during the seven days prior to the interview; and (ii) want to work and are available to start work within a week of the interview. The rate of unemployment is calculated as the proportion—expressed as a percentage—of the economically active population who are unemployed.
- For household expenditure, we focus on those households that had spent less than R1,000 in the previous month.

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za), accessed on 15 September 2004.

The 1997 October household survey estimated that one in seven (14 per cent) residents of Johannesburg aged 15 or older had not completed standard five/grade seven, slightly lower than the provincial average at 16 per cent. The 2001 population census showed that 4.7 per cent of children aged 10–14 were not attending any kind of educational institution and 7.25 per cent of Johannesburg’s residents over the age of 20 had no schooling. A remarkable 57.5 per cent of residents over 20 had not completed their secondary schooling, although this was lower than the average across comparable South African cities at 64 per cent (SACN 2004).

**Figure 2: Key Johannesburg statistics in comparative perspective, 1996–2001** (annual percentages)



<sup>a</sup> South African Cities Network **Source:** SACN (2004).

According to the February 2002 Labour Force Survey, Johannesburg’s rate of unemployment stood at 32 per cent. The ratio of dependents to income earners was 2.97 to 1, better than other South African cities, but still high (SACN 2004).

Finally, more than half (52 per cent) of households in Johannesburg had spent less than R1,000 in the previous month, compared with less than half (48 per cent) of all households in the province. Although no official minimum living wage has been calculated for Johannesburg, some trade unions have called for R1,500 per month in large cities.

If we look briefly at some infrastructural variables, we find that more than one fifth (22.5 per cent) of households in Johannesburg occupy informal dwellings—including dwellings in informal settlements as well as informal shacks in the backyards of formal dwellings. In 2001, 15 per cent of households had no access to electricity for lighting purposes, 13.4 per cent had no flush-



ing toilet in the dwelling or on site, 15.5 per cent had no access to tap water in the dwelling or in the yard, and 42.3 per cent had no telephone in the home.

Africans in Johannesburg occupy a disadvantaged position, directly bequeathed to democracy by apartheid. The rates of illiteracy and unemployment were highest among Africans. In 1997, it was estimated that more than two thirds (68 per cent) of African-headed households typically spent less than R1,000 during the previous month, a substantially higher proportion than households headed by coloureds (28 per cent), whites (10 per cent) or Indians (9 per cent).

Whereas 85.22 per cent of white commuters in the city got to work or school by private car – either as driver or passenger – only 13.27 per cent of African residents did. And 29.3 per cent of African-headed households lived in informal dwellings either in informal settlements or the backyards of other properties, while a minute 1.5 per cent of white households did so. African-headed households were also far more likely to be without access to electricity, sanitation or water. Only 36 per cent of African-headed households had water inside their dwellings, compared to 90 per cent of white households (Statistics South Africa 2001).

This brief overview reflects some of the challenges facing the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council in extending basic services and infrastructure to all residents in the area, while expanding economic growth and seeking to create a “developmental state” that is responsive to the poor. We now turn to the legal and policy context in which these challenges are to be addressed.

### ***Policy context at the national level***

Our analysis is situated in the legislative and policy context within which the transformation of local government is taking place. Over the last eight years there has been much progress in defining a new local government system for South Africa. In 1995 and 1996, “interim” democratic councils were elected across the country, intended to eventually give way to a “final” form of local government as required by the new South African Constitution. This final form was put in place with the redemarcation of local government in 1999–2000 and the elections of new municipal councils in November 2000.

A consistent theme running throughout this policy and legislative process has been the demand for local government to become more developmental, which has come to represent a range of principles and approaches to local government, and while there is some ambiguity, it usually implies the involvement of the community in the affairs of municipalities.

Section 152 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic (Government of South Africa 1996) set the tone when it defined the objectives of local government as follows:

- to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;
- to promote social and economic development;
- to promote a safe and healthy environment; and
- to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government.

The *Local Government White Paper* of March 1998 was the first widely consulted policy statement to include developmental local government and defined it as “local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives” (Department of Constitutional Development 1998).

Elaborating its understanding of this ideal, the White Paper presented democracy and accountability as a characteristic, core outcome as well as a key tool of developmental local government,

noting some primary characteristics. “Democratizing development, empowerment and redistribution” proposed that municipalities move away from simply controlling or regulating citizens’ behaviour, and move toward supporting “individual and community initiative” and directing “community energies into projects and programmes which benefit the area as a whole”, and urged municipalities to adopt “inclusive approaches to fostering community participation, including strategies aimed at removing obstacles to, and actively encouraging, the participation of marginalized groups in the local community” (Department of Constitutional Development 1998).

Community empowerment was seen as a key outcome of developmental local government – as it had been in the election manifesto of the African National Congress (ANC), the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (ANC 1994) – and it was proposed that local government contribute to this by enhancing the ability of the poor to make their needs known and take control of their own development process. This could (only) be done by supporting community organizations with funding, technical skills or training.

Cooperation between councils and communities was a key tool, suggesting that to realize development, municipalities had to build relations with citizens in various ways:

- as voters, able to ensure accountability of the elected political leadership;
- as citizens, able to express their views and ensure that policies reflect community preferences;
- as consumers and end users, who expect value for money, affordable services and courteous and responsive service; and
- as organized partners involved in the mobilization of resources for development.

Various legislative items have now entrenched this vision of local government in law. For example, the Municipal Structures Act (1998)<sup>4</sup> provides for a system of ward committees in municipalities (see box 1). These are convened by a ward councillor, and comprise up to 10 people drawn from communities of the ward, with the act stating that the local council must make provision for “a diversity of interests in the ward to be represented”.

The most important piece of legislation was the Municipal Systems Act (2000)<sup>5</sup>, with a new definition of a municipality that made the community formally part of the municipality, stating that it consists of both the political structures and administration of the municipality as well as the community in the municipality. The act also described a new set of relationships between the council and communities, and obliged municipalities to supplement the formal system of representative government with a system of participative government.

Among many clauses defining the rights of communities and the duties of councils and administrations to involve communities, the Municipal Systems Act states that a municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance. For this purpose, it must:

- encourage and create conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, including:
  - prepare, implement and review its integrated development plan (IDP);
  - establish, implement and review its performance management system;
  - monitor and review its performance, including the outcomes and impact of such performance;
  - prepare its budget; and
  - make strategic decisions relating to the provision of municipal services;

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<sup>4</sup> See [www.local.gov.za](http://www.local.gov.za).

<sup>5</sup> See [www.local.gov.za](http://www.local.gov.za).

- contribute to building the capacity of:
  - the local community to enable it to participate in the affairs of the municipality; and
  - councillors and staff to foster community participation.

### **Box 1: Ward committees**

The object of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government.

If a metro or local council decides to have ward committees, it must establish a ward committee for each ward in the municipality. A ward committee consists of the councillor representing that ward in the council, who must also be the chairperson of the committee, and not more than 10 other persons.

A metro or local council must make rules regulating the procedure to elect the members of a ward committee, taking into account the need for women to be equitably represented in a ward committee and for a diversity of interests in the ward to be represented.

The circumstances under which these members must vacate office and the frequency of meetings of ward committees must be taken into consideration. A metro or local council may make administrative arrangements to enable ward committees to perform their functions and exercise their powers effectively.

A ward committee may make recommendations on any matter affecting its ward (i) to the ward councillor, or (ii) through the ward councillor, to the metro or local council, the executive committee, the executive mayor or the relevant metropolitan subcouncil. A ward committee has such duties and powers as the metro or local council may delegate to it.

**Source:** Municipal Structures Act (1998).

### ***Policy context at the local government level***

While the legal environment for municipal–civil society engagement has never been friendlier, this does not guarantee the commitment of local government to participatory approaches. Anecdotal evidence indicates that many municipalities consider their task of facilitating participation as achieved once their 10-member ward committees are established, and that they have yet to engage with the more complex process of utilizing the committees as a vehicle for interacting with a broader community. Many ward committees are likely to be highly contested, and there is evidence that majority-party-dominated councils will define the operation of committees in ways that mute potential opposition. The same dynamics are likely to be seen in many of the other mechanisms that municipalities establish to involve communities in budgeting and planning processes.

There is some concern about the trend toward “new public management” approaches in the structuring and management of municipal administrations. A severe financial crisis in Johannesburg led to a three-year process of institutional restructuring. At the start of 1999, after 18 months of trying to manage the crisis by simply cutting expenditures, Johannesburg embarked on a major restructuring exercise, known as iGoli 2002, which saw the solution to Johannesburg’s crisis as the financial ring-fencing of most of the city’s service delivery operations and then the establishment of an array of utilities, agencies and corporatized units. It was envisaged that these arm’s-length alternative service delivery structures would help contain costs by forcing the application of business principles, and would also encourage new infrastructure investments and improve the lines

of accountability between elected representatives and officials. As metro-wide structures, they would also conveniently integrate the disparate service delivery departments across the councils as Johannesburg transformed into a unicity.

The imperatives of this institutional change strategy included the following:

- the institutional separation of policy formulation and delivery responsibilities, following the principle established in Thatcherite Britain, of needing to ensure a “client-contractor split”;
- the commercialization of service delivery, in part to re-attract capital in a virtually stagnant municipal debt-finance market;
- minimal cross-subsidies between parts of the administration to force commitments to financial and operational efficiencies by all staff; and
- a “management by contract regulation” approach to governing the city, whereby all staff are locked into meeting inflexible service delivery targets fixed by performance contracts, service-level agreements, utility licenses, etc.

Many have seen iGoli 2002 as antithetical to the interests of the poor, and the strategy has been strongly opposed by community and labour groups. Thus, arguments levelled against the plan include that it is profoundly “undevelopmental”. Subsidization of tariffs paid by poor residents will be sacrificed to the profit imperatives of water and electricity utilities; staff over-adherence to tightly regulated service-level agreements and performance measures will discourage flexibility and innovative problem solving; and fragmentation of the administration into cost units will restrict opportunities to apply creative cross-sectoral strategies to complex challenges such as the social exclusion of migrant populations. Many have also argued that all this will inevitably mean a City of Johannesburg poorly equipped and unwilling to engage community organizations in mutually beneficial collaboration.

Whether this is true remains to be seen, and there is some evidence to the contrary. For example, considerable attention is currently being given to the establishment of participatory “user forums” within the water and electricity utilities that include community organizations, suggesting that the new structure may in fact provide new opportunities for more directed and meaningful engagement with civil society.

### ***Sociopolitical context***

South Africa is a multiparty, democratic state with a highly progressive Constitution. Engagement in the electoral process at the local level, however, appears to be waning. In the municipal elections of 2000, national voter turnout was only 48 per cent. This may be high when compared to local government election turnout in countries such as the United Kingdom or United States, but domestically the trend is distinctly downward from the national elections of 1994 and 1999 and the local elections in 1995.

There are 217 councillors in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, and the municipal elections of 2000 saw the ANC win 59 per cent of the vote, followed by the Democratic Alliance (34 per cent), the Inkatha Freedom Party (4 per cent) and a clutch of tiny parties that shared the remaining 3 per cent of the vote.

While it is commonly accepted that a strong opposition is a necessary part of democracy, opposition parties to date have failed to make significant inroads into the support base of the ANC, whose dominance is likely to continue for the “second decade of freedom”. Opposition parties have failed to articulate their ideological differences with the ANC as it has pursued a social democratic approach to governance coupled with a neoliberal approach to economic policy, thus occupying the central ground in political debates.

Given the ANC's dominance and an increasingly fragmented formal opposition, the role of civil society has become more important in keeping democracy vibrant. In the view of many commentators, however, it has failed to play this role, other than in specific sectors. The end of apartheid removed the *raison d'être* for many community-based organizations (CBOs), whose main purpose was to bring about political change in South Africa. Much has been written about post-1990 civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in particular, and the problems and weaknesses facing the sector, including many predictions of its imminent implosion or collapse.<sup>6</sup> Kraak (2001) summarized the key challenges facing civil society as follows:

- lack of sound research on the sector, along with the persistence of significant knowledge gaps and the negative impact this has on policy formulation;
- difficulties with long-term sustainability;
- difficult legislative and fiscal context in which the sector operates;
- apparently deteriorating relationship with government;
- problems within the South African National NGO Coalition in providing national leadership and direction for the sector and its alleged neglect of the provinces; and
- poor leadership and lack of organizational capacity in many organizations.

A recent survey of the South African non-profit sector (Swilling and Russell 2002), however, painted a picture of a rich and vibrant sector. Although the data have yet to be analysed provincially, most CSOs are found in Gauteng. Key findings are listed below.

- South Africa has a larger non-profit sector than all but a handful of developed countries. There are 98,920 non-profit organizations (NPOs) across all sectors, the largest being culture and recreation (20,587), social services (22,755) and development and housing (20,382).
- Civic advocacy and environment may appear limited but are comparatively large. Issue-based and value-driven organizations in the environment and civic/advocacy sectors are significant, including civil rights organizations (5 per cent of the non-profit workforce) and political parties (14 per cent).
- The majority (53 per cent) of NPOs are less-formalized CBOs concentrated in poorer communities.
- The non-profit sector is a major economic force and is larger than some formal economic sectors. The total operating expenditure of all South Africa's non-profits was R9.3 billion in 1998–1999, or 1.2 per cent of the 1998 GDP. It is a major employer, with 645,316 full-time equivalent staff employed, and 9 per cent of the formal non-agricultural workforce.

The non-profit survey results contradict those analysts who had predicted the imminent demise of civil society. The results also suggest that the sector could be more assertive in its relationship with government in particular. It is a major economic force and could flex its muscle as required, particularly in putting pressure on government—at all levels—to meet the basic needs of many of Johannesburg's residents.

### ***Meeting the challenges?***

The Johannesburg Metropolitan Council oversees the largest number of residents of any municipality in Gauteng. Circumstantial and infrastructural indicators of poverty show that the council constituency includes both affluent, well-serviced communities and impoverished, disadvantaged communities. While existing levels and quality of service delivery must be maintained, the real challenges lie in the extension of these services and infrastructure to all residents of Johannesburg.

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<sup>6</sup> See successive annual reviews in *Development Update*, a journal published by Interfund in Johannesburg since 1997.

In meeting these challenges, the council is guided by national legislation as well as local dynamics. In particular, fiscal constraints at the local level have led the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council to adopt an approach that is cognizant of the need for democratic, participatory governance, but is primarily concerned with generating economic growth.

The question is whether this approach is workable. Are there inherent tensions or contradictions in the application of an approach that is underpinned by participatory principles, while at the same time being governed by an economic bottom line? In attempting to address these questions, this paper provides two case studies—the Johannesburg inner city and Tladi-Moletsane in Soweto—to situate the issues in a grounded context.

## **Part II: “Living for the Sake of Living” in Tladi-Moletsane<sup>7</sup>**

*We cannot leave our children the heritage of shacks...we cannot age in shacks...things have not changed, we are living for the sake of living.*

### **Introduction**

Tladi and Moletsane are western suburbs of Soweto, formerly the main labour pool for Johannesburg, separated and underdeveloped by apartheid, and now falling under the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality. Moletsane comprises formal housing, predominantly typical matchbox houses, some of which also have backyard subtenants. Tladi, however, is divided into two sections (i) one with small formal houses and backyard tenants like Moletsane; and (ii) the other an informal settlement, commonly referred to—not always pejoratively—as a squatter camp. Tladi and Moletsane flow seamlessly into each other, jointly forming the bulk of Johannesburg’s electoral Ward 21, and in general are treated as a single entity in this paper.

Tladi-Moletsane has a rich history as the birthplace of some of the leaders of the 1976 Soweto revolt such as Kennedy Mogami, a participant in the Soweto 11 trial; Khotso Seathlolo, former president of the Soweto Students Representative Council; and Ish Mkhabela, former president of the Azanian Peoples’ Movement. The parents of Reverend Frank Chikane, current director-general of the office of the president, live there. The area has produced political and other leaders, such as Norman “Pangaman” Sekgapane, the South African boxing champion, and leading local musicians Papa and Blondie Makhene.

Tladi-Moletsane boasts one of the best sports complexes in Soweto. There are three high schools catering to scholars from various parts of Soweto, and a number of primary schools spread across the area. Significantly, however, there are no schools in the Tladi informal settlement and most of the schools in Tladi-Moletsane are in poor condition.

Since 1990, Tladi-Moletsane—like black townships everywhere—has seen its more affluent and many of its younger residents leave for suburbs formerly restricted to whites. Poverty is widespread, if often hidden behind the walls of formal houses, garages and outbuildings that seem better off than the tin and plastic shacks of the squatters. Tladi-Moletsane is a quietly decaying Soweto suburb, with its past, located in a common history of struggle and deprivation, clearer than the uncertain future it faces.

### **Tladi-Moletsane in 1996**

In 1996, Tladi-Moletsane revealed the multilayered differentiation of poor metropolitan communities, comprising an unserved informal settlement, a formal section of permanent dwellings—typically owned by residents themselves, and a large number of tenants living in backyard structures. Infrastructure and services were unevenly distributed. The formal area boasted

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<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise attributed, all quotes are from interviews conducted in Tladi-Moletsane in 2001–2002.

running water, electricity, sewerage—though not always enjoyed by those in backyard dwellings—and some paved roads, while the informal settlement lacked these and other amenities and services. Residents in the informal settlement lived in an environment characterized by dirt, violence, social stigmatization and spatial differentiation.

The three groupings experienced different levels of residential security and wielded contrasting levels of economic, social and political power in the community. Formal homeowners constituted the most powerful social and economic group in the area, dominating most local organizations including the local civic association and ANC branch, being “in the loop” of most development initiatives and usually the only group actively engaging the local councillor.

Residents renting backyard shacks or out-rooms were next in the pecking order, subordinate to the whims of their landlords but intensely aware of being a few rungs higher up the ladder than squatters. Political activity was avoided, lest it taint backyard residents and lead to their eviction. Their tenuous respectability distinguished backyard dwellers from people living in the illegal informal settlement, who made up the most vulnerable group socially and was ostracized by other residents and lacked any political or civic mouthpiece.

Residents of the informal settlement generally felt alienated from mainstream township life. Many had voted in the 1995 local government elections but could not identify any tangible benefits from the new democratic order. The local civic association did not operate in the informal settlement, whose residents were cut off from information and power by their spatial and social and economic situation. They in turn had succumbed to clientelism, relying on a local leader to act as their benefactor in return for a fee. Among informal settlement residents—the poorest of the poor—the most common sentiments were a deep sense of estrangement and betrayal.

The lines of difference, authority and social and economic power challenged the ability of local organizations, especially civic associations, to represent the community as a whole.

Many residents of informal settlements or backyard dwellings suffer high levels of exploitation from their (black) landlords. Those same landlords, together with shop owners, teachers, and others from the petit-bourgeoisie, commonly comprise the local leadership of the ANC, the local civic association, church elders, and so on (Everatt 2000).

All residents could clearly articulate their needs, which reflected the following characteristics:

- a passive and expectant attitude toward delivery, waiting for government to furnish resources and establish appropriate mechanisms for local development;
- an endemic ignorance of local government’s powers and functions, compounded by unfamiliarity with and the seeming inaccessibility of councillors;
- a widespread tendency to regard government as an omnipotent but abstract phenomenon located “somewhere out there”;
- a failure to accurately locate local government in the complex of the state machinery;
- a tendency to view local government structures as mere interlocutors for central government; and
- a near-universal reliance on central government for delivery, with local government having little relevance.

The case studies carried out for Habitat II in 1996 highlighted the social differentiation among the poor and warned of the dangers of treating the poor as a homogenous group. It made the same point about local organizations, many of which continued to organize as they had during the anti-apartheid struggle. The challenge facing local organizations and others seeking partnership to help the poor has been summarized thus:

The challenge for the civic, the local council and the ANC is to transcend the divisions by actively working for the interests of all residents—a task more easily urged than performed. Inclusive and sustainable development processes based on local partnerships require that gateways be established between the groupings to cultivate the shared interests that could become the basis for common action—or, at the very least, reduce the alienation and seclusion of the least privileged groupings. Practical changes do seem possible. For example, the civic could set up a new branch or extend its field of operations into the informal settlement. A starting point could be to create street committees there. Or other local organizations could be used as a vehicle for mobilizing common interests. Churches appear to be well placed in this regard (Community Agency for Social Enquiry 1998).

In this paper, we revisit these and other issues in order to assess changes that had occurred half a decade after Habitat II.

### ***Methodology and limitations***

This paper is meant to provide a brief overview of changes in the five years following Habitat II. Neither the same amount of time nor resources were available for the update as for the original 1996 study, and this paper relies on considerably less primary data than its predecessor; where focus groups were used in 1996, this paper relies on in-depth interviews with key respondents, coupled with analysis of secondary material. Katiso Lengane conducted the interviews in 2002, as he did in 1996, providing a measure of continuity, and respondents are listed at the end of the paper.

There are also key information gaps: the 1996 Soweto survey has not been repeated and Soweto remains both underresearched and in many areas unknown. However, there have also been some significant advances. Where information about the non-profit sector was mainly informed guesswork in 1996, we are now assisted by the publication of *The Size and Scope of the Non-Profit Sector in South Africa*, the South African component of the global study led by Johns Hopkins University (Swilling and Russell 2002). Ongoing work by Beall et al. (2002) offers a fascinating overview of governance in Johannesburg as it unfolds.

Given the reliance on a limited number of in-depth interviews, this paper does not claim to be representative of the views of the broader Tladi-Moletsane population.

The UNRISD project focused on the efficacy of partnerships between local government and organizations representing the poor in large metropolitan areas around the world. The purpose of the present paper is straightforward: to establish whether issues, organizations and problems identified in 1996 remain the same or have changed; and if changed, in what ways.

This operates at two levels. First, there are locale-specific issues and struggles to be described and analysed. Second, there are deeper common themes, such as the impact of globalization, the primacy of neoliberal economic policies and the possibilities of global-level partnerships emerging. This paper deals with both sets of issues, although some of the latter are beyond its scope.

### ***Tladi-Moletsane in 2002***

According to official statistics from South Africa's Municipal Demarcation Board (2003), the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality comprises 109 wards with 217 councillors, covering a total of 1,644 square kilometres. Within the municipality, Ward 21 incorporates Tladi, Moletsane and parts of neighbouring Naledi. Also according to the Municipal Demarcation Board (2003), Ward 21 has a population of 29,857 people in 6,781 households. There are similar numbers of females (15,273) and males (14,559). Using the racial classifications of Statistics South Africa, the area is overwhelmingly African; of the 29,857 residents, there are 62 coloureds, four Indians and two white residents.



The area is predominantly youthful, as is the South African population as a whole, with 57 per cent of residents aged from 0 to 29. This contradicts the way some local residents understand Tladi-Moletsane. The local councillor described Ward 21 thus: "The community is made up predominantly of older people, the area is underdeveloped and faces a problem where young people do not attend to important issues regarding the area." A local self-employed businessman shared this perspective: "A lot of people in Tladi are...living on pensions, that is why some of the shops are closing down."

Official statistics record that 7,955 people are aged 15 years or younger and not economically active. Of the remainder, 5,964 are unemployed and 7,855 (57 per cent) are employed. The employment profile of Ward 21 is mixed, with one in 10 employed in managerial or professional jobs, while skilled and semi-skilled categories each comprise a third (34 per cent) of workers in the area. Unskilled workers make up the remaining 22 per cent. With 43 per cent of people older than 15 unemployed, it is not surprising to find that poverty – measured by income – is widespread:

- 672 households have no source of income;
- 736 households have less than R6,000 per annum;
- 825 households have between R6,001 and R12,000 per annum;
- 2,144 households have between R12,001 and R30,000 per annum;
- 1,341 households have over R30,001 per annum.

#### Infrastructure and services

The limitations of census data are apparent when analysing access to services in Tladi-Moletsane. For example, the 1996 population census recorded all residents of Ward 21 having access to some form of sanitation, but residents of the more than 300 shacks in the Tladi informal settlement shared public toilets, which were frequently in a state of disrepair. The situation remains unchanged from 1996, with squatters using limited public facilities, occasionally being given permission to use private facilities, or simply utilizing nearby open spaces. Similarly, informal settlement residents access running water at public taps in the street, as in 1996.

In the formal parts of Tladi-Moletsane, 96 per cent of households have flush toilets, 4 per cent use pit latrines and only five households use bucket latrines. Most households have access to water on site, with 38 per cent piped to their dwelling and 59 per cent to their site, and 3 per cent of households accessing water from a public tap. Almost all households (96 per cent) have access to electricity provided by the local authority. Among the remainder, 189 households (3 per cent) use candles and 79 households use paraffin as a source of energy. In the informal settlement, two residents have installed solar panels and no other shacks have access to electricity.

#### The poor in South Africa

Apartheid ensured that the overwhelming majority of South Africans lived in poverty, and eradicating poverty lay at the centre of RDP, the ANC's 1994 governance blueprint (ANC 1994). After almost a decade of democratic government, however, poverty is at best unchanged while inequality, now more class- than race-based, is deepening (Everatt 2003; see box 2).

### **Box 2: Poverty in South Africa**

One in 10 Africans are malnourished. One in four African children are stunted. Just less than half the population (45 per cent, or 18 million people) live on less than \$2 per day. Differing poverty “lines” have different results, suggesting that 45 per cent to 55 per cent of all South Africans live in conditions of poverty—some 20 to 28 million people.

Poverty has a stark racial dimension: 61 per cent of Africans are poor, compared with just 1 per cent of whites. Poverty is also gendered: the poverty rate among female-headed households (60 per cent) is double that of male-headed households. Poverty also has a spatial dimension: 50 per cent of the South African population lives in rural areas, as do 72 per cent of South Africa’s poor. Current data suggest that a minimum of 15 per cent of all households suffer from chronic—as opposed to transitory—poverty. Researchers have found that no matter what indicator was used, child poverty is extensive. Some 60 per cent of South African children live in the poorest 40 per cent of households (measured by income); three-quarters of all children living in poverty can be found in rural areas; and 97 per cent of them are African.

**Source:** Everatt 2003.

The government’s commitment to poverty eradication is not, we believe, in question, but the methods chosen for doing so are debatable. The government regards economic growth as central to the success of its policies and programmes, and argues that its macroeconomic policy of growth, employment and redistribution (GEAR) is an “attempt to strike the necessary relationship between accelerating economic growth, on one hand, and social service delivery and job creation, on the other”.<sup>8</sup> GEAR requires that economic growth precede poverty eradication, but the low level of economic growth since 1994 has limited the impact on South Africa’s high levels of unemployment.

During the 1990s, a left-wing critique saw commentators and activists arguing that the ANC’s primary concern was with the development of a national bourgeoisie, and that this was accorded policy and resource preference over poverty alleviation, with which it is fundamentally incompatible. Ongoing poverty is seen as a direct result of the government’s macro-level economic policy and its micro-level manifestations, such as user charges for water schemes; “GEAR caused cholera” was a recent and not uncommon contention (Mngxitama 2001).

In October 1999, South Africa had 26.3 million people aged between 15 and 65—the cohort considered to be potentially economically active in any given population. Applying the expanded definition of unemployment—where the unemployed are defined as those people within the economically active population who did not work during the seven days prior to the interview and who wanted to work and were available to start work within a week of the interview—South Africa’s rate of unemployment overall was 36 per cent, and far higher for African females (52 per cent) than any other group (see table 2). Employment data from the 1996 and 1999 October household surveys<sup>9</sup> show an increase in unemployment from 34 per cent to 36 per cent. Furthermore, while the actual number of people employed during this time grew from 9.1 to 10.0 million (an increase of 14 per cent), the number of unemployed people also grew by 26 per cent, from 4.7 million to 5.9 million.

<sup>8</sup> [www.gov.za/yearbook/2001/overview.html](http://www.gov.za/yearbook/2001/overview.html), accessed on 15 September 2002.

<sup>9</sup> See [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za), accessed on 15 September 2004.

**Table 2: Unemployment in South Africa by race and sex, 1999** (*per cent*)

	Male	Female	Total
African	37	52	44
Black	19	28	24
Indian	18	24	20
White	6	7	7

**Source:** 1999 October household survey; see [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za), accessed on 15 September 2004.

In 2001, the government launched two key new anti-poverty strategies, the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme and the Urban Renewal Programme. Both strategies place local government at the centre of integrated development for selected rural and urban nodes that are simultaneously impoverished and exhibit growth potential. But, as we have argued elsewhere (Everatt 2003), there is a major flaw underlying all of the government's anti-poverty work: the continuing failure to develop a shared definition of poverty. Poverty – in both its urban and rural manifestations – is defined differently by ministers, across government spheres, departments and parastatals, and in policy and strategy documents. In the absence of a clear and common definition, anti-poverty programmes lack a shared focus – reflected in the shared but undefined objective of helping the poorest of the poor – which in turn limits the government's ability to select appropriate policy instruments.

The government has enacted a number of pro-poor measures, such as providing a quota of free water to help poor households, with significant impact for many. However, even a measure such as this has a design flaw: the poorest of the poor – in Tladi-Moletsane as elsewhere – are mainly found in informal or traditional dwellings, which do not have piped and metered water supplies. Therefore, the provision of free water has no impact on those who do not have access to water other than by carrying it in buckets.

Finally, we should note that this is not restricted to government. Human rights NGOs are working with township-based structures such as the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, in order, *inter alia*, to write off existing service payment arrears. These and other rights-based struggles are important in testing the boundaries of the socioeconomic rights entrenched in the South African Constitution, but they too will be of little help to the poorest of the poor who lack formal housing and services. These are some of the nuances that should be borne in mind in analysing partnerships to help the poor in Tladi-Moletsane.

#### Has anything changed in Tladi-Moletsane?

*I haven't seen much change in the past, besides that it is cleaner. The community has been doing something about the cleanliness. There are a few shebeens [taverns] but they have restrictions. We played a role as a community, not so much as a political organization. ... There are academics here, and illiterate people; you find Christians here, and criminals. We know each other very well.*

Asked about changes in Tladi-Moletsane, responses were predominantly negative, although probes allowed a slightly more nuanced picture to emerge. Negativity was most evident among backyard dwellers and those from the informal settlement; formal homeowners were not positive, but merely less negative.

Most local residents appeared unhappy with what they regarded as the slow pace of delivery of services, while some saw regression rather than progress, and a situation of stasis, regarding de-

livery and decaying infrastructure. Others were less negative: respondents living in formal dwellings expressed less pessimism than others. The youth representative in the local ward committee felt that “things are worse than they were before”, and went on to say:

I do not think that Tladi-Moletsane has very bad people. There are youth who are hopeful and are involved in some clubs, although they are a minority. I think that people have lost hope and are demoralized. ... There are youth who are trying to make it happen, they really want to be something...but I do not think anything is getting any better.

Other respondents living in backyard structures shared a thoroughly unhappy perspective: “People are unemployed. Drugs are being sold. Children don’t go to school because of drugs. Tar roads are in bad shape.”

Another, a woman living in a garage in Tladi, stated:

Our standard of living is still the same. We still live in the same matchbox houses. There’s no quality improvement. There’s no money. You find people with eight members of the family in a four-room house. The infrastructure is the same. We have too many *shebeens*. People drink too much. We don’t have playing facilities for children.

This negativity was shared by those in the Tladi squatter camp, where the situation is little different from that described in 1996. One resident told us that “there’s nothing good about the place”, while another noted the high level of disputation: “We fight each other. If I say *voetsek* [bugger off] to you, then you call the police.”

Housing is obviously a priority among shack dwellers. Those we spoke to in the Tladi informal settlement repeatedly stressed the fact that none of the promises made to them by the local council about housing have materialized. This has compounded their unhappiness over the fact that the informal settlement still has very limited services, despite its longevity. According to a male resident of the Tladi settlement:

They don’t clean this place. If every individual had their own toilet and taps, things would be better. Now what makes it worse is that we have to travel to get water...when you have a bowel problem at night you are in trouble. I have three children; it’s unsafe to leave them at night with my wife to go to the toilet. It’s dark and totally unsafe.

While asking poor – including extremely poor – people to describe what has changed in their lives over the past five years invited negative responses, respondents acknowledged certain positive changes – some local, others national – albeit grudgingly. A typical observation mixed good and bad: “The roads are bad. But at least I saw the hall in Naledi was renovated.” Other changes included the following:

- building a sports complex in Tladi-Moletsane;
- tarring of some roads in the formal parts of Tladi and Moletsane;
- renovation of Tladi comprehensive high school, swimming pool and clinic;
- provision by the Department of Social Development of child support grants to destitute families with young children;
- issuing title deeds to residents; and
- some improvements regarding the provision of water.

A female tenant living in Moletsane told us that “things are getting right but at a slow pace... temporary jobs are there but still very scarce”.

### Observed changes

During fieldwork, we noted that overall little had changed since 1996, but some incremental improvements were visible, as mentioned by residents, such as tarring roads and building a sports complex. In addition, some houses have been built in both Tladi and Moletsane. The informal settlement has grown to some 300 shacks and now includes a few brick dwellings as well. The Johannesburg Metropolitan Council has provided public toilets and taps for residents of the informal settlement, an important gain, although obscured by generally negative attitudes regarding development. An attempt was also made to provide electricity to the area, but levying user charges on a desperately poor population rendered this fruitless. Unable to pay for electricity, some resorted to illegality: We were told that "residents tried stealing electricity from the main box at the location because ESKOM [the national electricity utility] was not providing them with electricity and they needed it", and that "some people used to connect electricity from the box and it was destroyed...no one has fixed it and since then there is no electricity".

Perhaps the major change is demographic: many informal settlement residents are migrants from neighbouring Zimbabwe and Mozambique. In the 1996 study, we warned of the dangers posed by the then very high levels of xenophobia directed at Africans from other countries. Research for the present paper indicates that the non-South African Tladi squatters had fewer complaints about the settlement than their South African counterparts. In contrast with the 1996 research, they stated that they had no problems with ordinary citizens, but did have considerable problems with members of the South African Police Service, who allegedly extract bribes in return for letting them live in Tladi.

Sadly, poverty has not changed in its spread or the particular venom with which it affects squatters. One woman from the Tladi informal settlement, a mother of six, described her situation thus:

Sometimes I stay three days without food. My children don't have enough to wear. I reuse used coal to warm us up. My children don't even go to school. ... I have tried to put them in school but they throw them out because I cannot pay the school fees. I do laundry for people but the jobs are scarce...even at that my priority has to be food. Today in particular I managed to get *mielie-meal* and meat but it was only enough for one day. I do not know what they will eat tomorrow. That's why I am saying that I am the poorest of the poor. Whenever I show my face without saying anything, people tell me they don't have any *mielie-meal* because they know I will ask.

The local teacher made a similar point, noting that teachers had instituted a feeding scheme at school "because we realized that children were not concentrating because of hunger". Partnerships may or may not be evident, but local action clearly is occurring.

### Main issues cited by residents

All Tladi-Moletsane residents interviewed for this paper agreed that unemployment, crime and service delivery are priorities. Other issues included:

- high rentals;
- sanitation;
- recreation centre and library;
- housing;
- water; and
- HIV/AIDS awareness and education campaigns.

These mirror the issues raised in 1996. The exception is HIV/AIDS, which was scarcely mentioned in 1996, but the increase in both HIV infections and AIDS deaths has made it inescapable. Since 1998, South Africa has had one of the fastest growing epidemics in the world with an

estimated 1,500 new infections each day. The National Department of Health (2000) estimated that one of nine South Africans, or 4.7 million people, was infected with HIV by the end of 2000, and the pandemic threatens to reverse many developmental gains made since 1994. This was reflected in concrete terms by a nurse from the local clinic, who noted that, while crime levels in Tladi-Moletsane have dropped so she sees fewer victims of crime and violence, the clinic remains full: "The community is peaceful, there are less trauma cases brought to the clinic...[but] now there are more AIDS patients".

While the intention of the government of Thabo Mbeki that assumed power in 1999 was to enhance delivery of public services including infrastructure provision, this case study suggests that delivery is slow but inclusive, as both formal and informal areas have benefited unevenly from government programmes. However, government at all levels faces a massive threat from HIV/AIDS, which will deepen poverty in South Africa and poses a threat that the country is not in a position to respond to adequately.

### The social fabric

Moving away from statistical descriptions, Tladi-Moletsane is a complex, living community. The 1996 study noted:

The class differences within Tladi are partly formed by and reflected in the places its inhabitants live. Formal dwellers are at the top of the heap economically and socially, and also dominate political structures. Those in backyard structures, with a toehold in the formal sector, anxiously try to keep their landlords happy so that they are not thrown back into the mass of squatters. The squatters are near the bottom. Below them all are the 'foreigners', blacks from other African countries, who are accused of stealing South African jobs, women and houses, of drug-dealing, crime, spreading HIV/AIDS, and other social ills (Everatt 2000).

We have already noted—and queried—lower than expected levels of xenophobia in the area, despite the growing number of foreigners in the Tladi informal settlement. Other attitudes remain similar to those in 1996. Squatters know they are at the bottom of the pile, and respondents from other areas repeatedly told us that the squatter camp was "the bad side of Tladi". Some squatters, such as an elderly man living in a leaky zinc shack, have internalized these views: "Those who live in houses, they are better than us."

Formal and backyard dwellers continue to regard squatters in negative terms, highlighting the importance attached to minute degrees of respectability that segment the poor.

### Class and "voice"

The 1996 study found a clear correlation between class position and access to political and civic structures. Our data are limited and unrepresentative; but they suggest that the nexus of control—comprising formal homeowners, ANC and civic leaders, and the local councillor—remains in place, but with a far smaller support base among formal homeowners. At a general level, this is the result of widely shared disillusionment with what is seen as the slow pace or absence of delivery, leading to disengagement from political and civic activities. Politics, we were told by respondents from all parts of Tladi-Moletsane, is an avenue for individual ambition rather than a mechanism for leveraging change.

Some respondents noted that the former tradition of communal organization and action has been replaced by individualism. A member of the local ward committee stated that people were only interested in initiatives that would enrich them personally, not those seeking to develop the area more generally.

Many respondents living in formal and backyard dwellings confessed that they did not know much about what was happening in Tladi-Moletsane because they no longer attend community

or other meetings. On the positive side, they were more likely to know the identity of their local councillor than in 1996; on the negative side, however, they were considerably less knowledgeable about developments in their area, true of sociopolitical issues as well as the implementation of development projects.

Formal homeowners remain at the apex of local politics, but their involvement is less robust than previously. This should not be taken to mean that power is shifting or that other social groups are filling the gap. Rather, there is a more widely shared apathy. Respondents from all parts of Tladi-Moletsane told us they no longer see the point of attending meetings.

Backyard dwellers confirmed what we had found in 1996: their focus was narrow, their main complaint was the high rentals they had to pay, and their attitudes toward the informal settlement remained negative and judgemental. Residents of the informal settlement sense that they are virtually invisible to those in power. As a result, they continue to treat politics with resignation, expecting only formal homeowners to benefit from any changes that take place. As one explained:

The council practices segregation. Right now if houses are built, first preference will be given to people of the location – not us who live in shacks. For the past 10 years they have been preaching to us about one thing – getting out of here to houses – but nothing has happened.

### Passivity

Passivity is widespread. Asked about the outlook for Tladi-Moletsane, some respondents told us that “things will be fine”, but did not see an active role for themselves in making things better. Rather, as in 1996, people are waiting for “government” – which for many is a distant, near-omnipotent entity – to deliver.

Further research is needed to understand the complex web of variables that underpin this kind of passivity, which seems to emanate partly from the sense of being left behind in a township while wealthier residents have moved to formerly white suburbs, an aspirational perspective particularly evident among petit-bourgeois elements.

### ***Partnerships, and people’s awareness of organizations working in Tladi-Moletsane***

The 1996 research sought evidence of partnerships between CBOs and local government that targeted the poor; the latter included the area as a whole as well as the informal settlement dwellers, the poorest residents of a poor area. It attempted to assess respondents’ knowledge of organizations working with the poor in Tladi-Moletsane, before focusing on the local council and councillor, the civic and local businesses. Virtually no evidence of such partnerships was found in Tladi-Moletsane, and few insights could be offered into what makes for productive partnerships that benefit the poor.

In 1996, Tladi-Moletsane, as most urban townships, was dominated by the ANC and the local civic association, affiliated with the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), which in turn had just formed an election pact with the ANC. Other organizations included *stokvels* (savings clubs), burial societies and church groups. In the informal settlement, an older male resident (Mr. K) had emerged as an unofficial spokesperson, but the settlement lacked any organization or structure. The 1996 study took place in the context of a strong tradition of community organizing in impoverished communities. The newly elected local councillors came from the fold of CSOs, mainly the ANC and civics. The challenge lay in creating a dynamic and developmental synergy between the council and civil society structures.

Residents of Tladi-Moletsane were clear that the poorest of the poor could primarily be found in the Tladi informal settlement. Few, however, knew of organizations working to improve the situation of their neighbours in the settlement, and their ignorance of organizations working in the area extended to the whole of Tladi-Moletsane. Some were embarrassed and felt the need to

explain that “the problem is when you come home from work you stay in the house and around weekends you go to church and societies [where] we do not discuss local issues”.

Some respondents told us that social workers brought food parcels to destitute households and that the clinic also provided food to the destitute. Others vaguely recalled some individuals running projects for the poor, such as establishing a creche. This supported the research finding that the typical South African NPO is small, not formally registered, heavily reliant on volunteers, commonly working in the areas of welfare or development, and located in a poor community. Lack of profile may also be a defining characteristic, since people are aware that something is happening but do not know precisely what and have almost no idea of who is involved.

Just three local NPOs were mentioned by respondents:

- Tsosanang youth group, providing HIV/AIDS awareness for schools;
- a woman’s development forum operating in Moletsane; and
- Tladi Youth Development Initiative, which has been operational since 2001.

Local organizations have failed to work in tandem, and the youth representative explained that “the civic organization, youth formations and other NGOs are trying to establish themselves (and work together) but the relationships do not bear fruit”.

We were unable to reach any definite conclusions as to how many NPOs work in the area, or what they do. The same is true of NGOs: no respondents were aware of local work undertaken by any of Johannesburg’s plethora of professional NGOs and, significantly, neither were churches mentioned.

### ***The local council and councillor***

The council has created a local ward committee, comprising local sectors including churches, women and youth, and chaired by the ward councillor. Still relatively new, this should become an important vehicle for forging partnerships and giving voice to local residents. At the heart of government’s development strategy lies the IDP, which all local authorities are obliged to produce, meant to be the result of widespread local consultation to identify and prioritize needs; the local authority then identifies providers to meet local priorities.

No respondents in Tladi-Moletsane mentioned the IDP, although one respondent told us that “there have been meetings where people were asked about their needs; nothing has become of these processes”.

The local councillor began by visiting the ward every week in order to keep in touch with the community; this responsibility was subsequently delegated to a clerk who checks local infrastructure needs such as leaking pipes. Significantly, however, the informal settlement is not visited; as one resident put it, “they seem not to know about those living in shacks”.

### ***Negative views***

National government has introduced “developmental local government”, a highly ambitious goal given the capacity and resource constraints facing the country and local government in particular. A cornerstone of developmental local government is active participation from citizens, a requirement in direct contrast with the declining levels of local participation and compounded by passivity.

For some, government remains a powerful external agent that should not be irritated and, if left alone, will eventually deliver. Others are more willing to complain about government’s failure to deliver, but adopt a similarly passive waiting stance while doing so. Neither group sees any role for itself in making change happen.



### **"Squatter" versus councillor**

There is an ongoing dispute between the residents of the informal settlement and the councillor over previous promises to move them to formal houses. This provides a useful insight into local-level relations, tensions and blockages.

Respondents living in the informal settlement were particularly angry:

We were promised that we would leave [the informal settlement] after the elections and stay in homes in Dobsonville [a suburb of Soweto]. ... Although there have been meetings where people are asked about their needs, nothing has become of these processes.

When these complaints were put to the local councillor, the response was instructive. It began with the conventional argument about limited resources and multiple needs.

There's limited resources to satisfy a lot of needs and people seem to be disillusioned. It goes according to the budget of council—that this time we'll budget more for this area and next time they will focus on other areas—and we need to understand this. Also there are new areas that are emerging. ... Those who have access to tar roads are the ones who become vocal and say, 'no, we are not being served well'.

When the councillor was probed further regarding the unhappiness of Tladi's informal residents because they were still living in a site that had been declared unfit for residential purposes, the response suggested that (some) councillors lack the capacity to be productive, let alone proactive. He noted that "experts" were dealing with the problem:

You will understand that from time to time there are people dealing with town planners. Last year when I began to pursue this issue I was told that there are people from overseas who can convert that area into a residential area. So I was convinced.

Asked what plans were made to ensure that people who worked locally would not be inconvenienced—assuming development occurred and they had to be moved—his response became even hazier:

For now that issue [transport] will be addressed, but for the future I don't know. Probably their environment will change drastically. Probably they might find employment in their area.

These statements reflect the way in which the local councillor sees the role, which contradicts any notion of local government being developmental.

My role is to facilitate and monitor. We have been told that we need not get involved with the 'nitty-gritty' because I might be implicated in corruption...

More detailed research would be needed to examine the factors whose combined impact induced in the councillor such passivity toward some of the constituents.

As far as informal residents are concerned, the answer is clear—they are merely voting fodder whose support is only required at election time and whose poverty sidelines them at other times

These people talked about change to win votes, now that they have achieved what they wanted they no longer care for us.

This view is not restricted to residents of the informal settlement. Many respondents from other areas echoed the sentiment and rejected the notion that the council works in the interests of the poor. As a male homeowner in Tladi stated:

Council does not cater for the poor. They do not do their job. We do not see anything that they are doing...they must develop this area for us...they only care for themselves.

### ***Positive views***

A significant number of respondents revealed a clear understanding of local government as a distinct and important sphere of government.

Whatever provincial government does is channelled through local government; the same applies to national government.

Initially we had social workers. There are no longer social workers that deal with cases, now they are dealing with issues of poverty and joblessness. These are the issues of Johannesburg City Council<sup>10</sup>. Also, there are projects being established that are funded by the council. There is also a local development department, which intends to assist the poor and small micro-enterprises.

Also on the positive side, respondents were more likely to know their councillor than their 1996 counterparts. Some sympathized with the government, noting that it too faced struggles in achieving delivery. A number of local respondents were critical of themselves, noting their own failure to take part in local affairs.

We do not stand for our rights...we don't do anything about our situation and chances are that it will become worse. If the community doesn't stand as one then we are lost.

The local councillor echoed this point, complaining that people expected government to deliver but were inactive at the local level.

People do not attend to important issues regarding the area. If community members can get organized and develop an understanding of government, things would improve.

It is clear that local government faces enormous challenges in playing the multiple roles given it by the national government, including educating councillors and their constituents and somehow rejuvenating the whole area of local politics.

### ***The local civic association***

If any organization can rejuvenate the local sphere, it is the civic movement. In 1996, we described the significance of civic associations and how they linked effective mobilization around local issues with national goals. We also noted the declining fortunes of the national body, SANCO, resulting in no small part from its electoral pact with the ANC.

Since 1996, the civic movement has continued to decline, at least as a national presence. SANCO leaders have talked of a crisis, the movement has suffered splits and divisions at the branch and other levels, and SANCO's investment wing has experienced crises and reported scandals.

Citing two case studies, Cherry et al. (2000) argue that the crisis may be more perceptual than real at the local level and that civics remain active and important on the ground, regardless of the media profile given to SANCO's problems. Participation of backyard or informal dwellers in civic meetings was rare, reflecting their recent alienation from established, traditional structures. Neither the local civic nor the local ANC branch had much influence among the poor in Tladi-Moletsane, among whom a mood of resignation and despondency prevailed along with—and possibly resulting from—little or no evidence of local mobilization or organization. The

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<sup>10</sup> The Johannesburg Metropolitan Council was formerly known as the Johannesburg City Council.

poor—in an already poor area—exhibited the powerlessness and lack of voice now regarded as integral aspects of poverty (Kanbur and Squire 1999).

Importantly, Cherry et al. (2000) note that “the relationship between councillors and civic activists is...a competitive one”, complicated by the fact that “many of the civic leaders who remained outside of local government nonetheless harboured aspirations to selection and election in the future”.

While a comprehensive overview of the Tladi-Moletsane civic associations cannot be provided here, there are two key points. First, residents of the Tladi informal settlement have formed their own civic association—or committee, as it is known locally—which is issue-specific, focusing on water and sanitation. Its members are fatalistic, telling us that, whatever they try to do, they expect the reaction to be that “there is no money”. Moreover, respondents from the settlement noted that their civic association has received little or no support from the Tladi-Moletsane civic association. As a result of our 1996 research, we recommended that the latter body form a branch in the informal settlement as the first step toward creating a unified civic association; it appears that its preference for working in formal areas continues unabated.

Second, respondents from formal and backyard dwellings scarcely mentioned the local civic association, a stark contrast with the situation in 1996. Given the disinterest and inactivity at the local level, it appears that local residents are turning more toward local government and away from the civic movement in order to meet their local needs.

### ***Business***

Given the importance of black economic empowerment to the transformation of South Africa and the considerable resources allocated by government to the small, medium and micro enterprises sector in particular, the role of local businesses in local affairs was analysed—this was not done in 1996—with disappointing results.

Some local businesses are members of the African Growth Network, which has provided some training at the local community centre. Apart from that, no respondents knew of any local initiatives involving local businesses, which were commonly regarded as self-absorbed and cut off from residents’ day-to-day concerns.

The local councillor, with his own warm relationship with local businesses, had done nothing to inspire them to local action. As he put it:

With a focused and organized business sector, things could only improve immensely. However, they are still fighting among themselves, they do not want to attend meetings and are always complaining. ... Business is the most disorganized section.

## **Part III: The Inner City<sup>11</sup>**

### ***Structure and focus***

This part of the paper examines the changing relationship between the municipality and voluntary groups in the inner city of Johannesburg, exploring key trends in the inner city and how they impact the basis for the relationship.

While this is not a comprehensive mapping exercise, evidence suggests that while an increasing number of small voluntary groups and associations are flourishing, their nature and core mission are blurring. They are less formal and more fluidly intertwined with social formations that would usually fall within the ambit of a conventional definition of voluntary activity. This means that it

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<sup>11</sup> Unless otherwise attributed, all quotes are from interviews conducted in the Johannesburg inner city in 2001–2002.

is neither possible, nor productive, to try to account for the activities of all voluntary groups within the inner city. A scan of some voluntary associations is provided and important contrasts with the field of voluntary group activity first mapped in the mid-1990s are drawn out to highlight the changing nature of voluntary sector activity, within the shifting environment of the inner city and the changed context of relationships with the municipal authority.

A case study of voluntary action, in relation to the City of Johannesburg, is offered in a particular precinct of the inner city. The research carried out for Habitat II in 1996 highlighted the significance of various residents' initiatives and, in particular, the work started by some organizations to assist residents under threat of eviction to purchase and self-manage seven derelict buildings in the inner city, which became known as the Seven Buildings Project. This project gained momentum, first through the establishment of an adjacent neighbourhood office under the auspices of the Western Joubert Park Precinct Pilot Project, and then through the Hillbrow/Berea Regeneration Initiative. Community-level voluntary activity and partnering with the city has seen both successes and failures.

### ***Methodology and limitations***

It was not possible to survey a majority of inner city voluntary organizations for the present paper, thus anecdotal evidence from interviews with a few key informants from the voluntary sector is used along with a series of interviews with key city officials. The intention in this paper is to extend the analysis begun in the 1996 study by highlighting organizational initiatives, events and processes indicative of the current relationship between the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality and voluntary organizations.

### ***Overview of the Johannesburg inner city***

The Johannesburg inner city is located centrally in the area that makes up the Johannesburg metropolitan area, and is the historical core or central business district of the city with the largest concentration of office space in the country, surrounded by an extensive area of light industry to the east, south and west and a small but densely populated area of high-rise apartment blocks along its northern extent known as Hillbrow.

The inner city falls into Region 8 of the 11 administrative regions of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality and includes other areas, although most of the policies and programmes for the region assume the inner city proper as their primary focus.

There is currently debate about whether the inner city can still be regarded as the core business district of the city. Previous occupants, some of them the largest companies in the country, have moved offices to areas north of the inner city, or out of Johannesburg altogether. However, a significant new business sector, usually smaller and more informal but no less an important generator of economic wealth, has moved in, as a city representative explains:

Central city is home to the head offices of three of South Africa's largest commercial banks. With other large employers as well as smaller businesses, it still offers employment to a significant number of workers. It has become a vibrant African centre, a magnet for people from throughout the continent and important as a place of emerging economy and trade. However, it no longer functions as the economic heart of the city, deterioration having negatively influenced investment.

Various statistical indicators give a sense of the character of the inner city as a significant business location.

- As of May 2002, the area had 8,704 recorded formal businesses. Metropolitan local government in South Africa has the power to tax the turnover of businesses at a prescribed rate, and such revenue from the inner city areas suggests an annual turnover of some R87 billion in 2001.

- A further 10,000 informal traders occupy the inner city, many based in the streets. Despite informal traders being viewed negatively, this is a significant economic sector, and a recent study estimated its turnover at R4.2 billion a year.
- A City Centre Development Framework estimated seven million square metres of floor space available, with the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) in 2002 estimating that three million square metres of this was formal office space, representing 57 per cent of the combined total office space of South Africa's next three largest cities, Durban, Cape Town and Pretoria. According to the South African Property Owners' Association, there are approximately 2.15 million square metres of prime grade office space, next to a current 1.06 million square metres in Sandton, the other major site of office space concentration in Johannesburg. Office buildings represent a R19 billion investment, and the area provides 23 per cent of the rateable property value across the metropolitan area.
- Estimates of jobs retained in the inner city vary, with some estimates as high as 160,000, others as low as 50,000.

The head offices of many of South Africa's premier legal and financial institutions are located in the inner city, and it is also a point of connection and transaction for numerous business activities as well as the focus of primary transport interchanges. So-called tourist-traders and shoppers from across the subcontinent number 400,000–500,000 visitors each year, while 800,000 daily commuters pass through the inner city each day. Apart from businesses, it has about 42,721 dwelling units, with an approximate R1.2 billion capital investment in housing. The population is estimated at 200,000–220,000, but it is difficult to establish exactly, as the area is also a temporary home to many people such as first-arrival illegal foreign migrants and youth from South Africa's townships and rural areas staying with friends or family on an interim basis.

City statistics estimate unemployment at approximately 16 per cent, half the provincial average. Jobs are commonly in the white-collar sector, with most being employed in low-wage, low-skill positions such as security guard, clerk, secretary, cashier or salesperson, or in semi-professional jobs such as nurse, technician, teacher or journalist (Tomlinson and Rogerson 1999:23). An estimated 58 per cent of households earn less than R3,500 per month.

The 1996 study noted that during the 1980s most inner city residents were white, but that by 1992 the racial breakdown comprised 46 per cent African, 21 per cent coloured, 20 per cent white and 14 per cent Indian. Current data could not be obtained, in part because "population group" is less of a concern in postapartheid demographic surveys; but there is a general impression that a large part of the white population, besides pockets in Yeoville and Berea, has left the inner city. The Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality's information on Region 8 suggests that over the past few years, higher-income residents and whites have moved away and been gradually replaced by a lower-income population of blacks.

### ***Major socioeconomic trends and their consequences***

The 1996 study noted the "flight from the inner city"; the departure of large businesses to more modern office blocks in the north of Johannesburg. This is linked to the idea that urban management in the inner city must focus on restoring an urban environment that will "bring business back to the area".

The fact that traditional large business, usually corporate head office operations, left the inner city in the course of the 1990s is not in dispute. It is significant that the inner city no longer provides Johannesburg's established traditional business with its primary site for economic decision making, commercial exchange and financial transaction. It has "changed hands", and is now the focus of a different kind of economic activity. In their review of its economy, Tomlinson and Rogerson correctly raise the question "Whose inner city?". Their analysis suggests that, whereas before the urban economy "belonged" to established business predominantly owned by wealthy white residents from Johannesburg's northern suburbs, it is now

the primary centre for many of the two million or so people living in southern Johannesburg, many of whom work and shop in the inner city and own and operate enterprises, large and small, in the inner city (Tomlinson and Rogerson 1999:24).

The inner city now also serves as an increasingly important economic migrant community. It has always been a first entry point for many immigrants, especially those from Eastern and Southern Europe in the 1970s and 1980s who settled in Hillbrow. At that time, however, the area was a launching pad into a formal economy, with plentiful employment in the office sector or its surrounding light industrial zones. Today, migrants are largely from Africa, and while many are highly skilled, they have little chance of accessing the formal economy. Consequently, migrant communities have become adept at using the inner city for a variety of trading activities. Tomlinson and Rogerson explain:

Migrant traders have turned Johannesburg into the centre of a trading network reaching throughout sub-Saharan Africa and are adding enormously to the retail turnover in the inner city (Tomlinson and Rogerson 1999:24).

While the changing economic use of the inner city is most obvious in the increasing density of small, informal traders on the streets and the different goods on offer, there are also less visible features of the change. In parts of the city, for example, office blocks have been quietly transformed into small factories or trading establishments for low-end retail goods. These changes have given rise to urban management concerns on the part of city management that may have impacted on partnerships with voluntary sector organizations.

### Social trends

A comparison with social data presented in the 1996 research reveals some interesting points. First, information presented in the 1996 study was based largely on two separate surveys, one conducted by Crankshaw and White in 1992 and the other in 1996 by Rule et al., which together showed a rapidly changing population size. The first survey reported that the inner city had a population of approximately 60,000 living in some 25,000 dwelling units, while the second estimated that the population had doubled within the space of four years, to 120,000–128,000. Recent figures indicate that the population has increased still further to 200,000–220,000, a significant rate of growth.

Second, the two surveys quoted in the 1996 study both provide extensive detail on the age, origin and employment profile of residents. For example, the second survey stated:

Of [the population], 93,000 are in the 20 to 65 year-old category, reflecting the economic attraction the city provides. Importantly, the population is also dominated by men, who form 59 per cent of the inner city population but only 48 per cent of the national population (Rule et al. 1996)

In 2001–2002, there was little information on the issues of population age, education, employment distribution, gender balance and racial composition. This is not to suggest that this data is impossible to acquire, but rather that this information is not available because no one has sought to collect it, for the simple reason that the inner city is so fluid the information would be out of date as soon as it becomes available.

There are key social trends to be observed in the inner city. It has come under enormous population pressure in the last few years, since a fourfold increase in the population of any area is likely to have catastrophic effects, and more so in an inner city area where existing development allows little opportunity for expansion of the residential stock. In 1992, 25,000 dwelling units accommodated 60,000 people (a ratio of 2.4 to each dwelling). By 2002, the dwelling units had increased to some 42,000—many on the basis of subdivision of apartments—but the same space accommodated 200,000 people (a ratio of 4.7 to each dwelling) excluding temporary inhabitants.

Densities vary, with some Hillbrow apartment blocks, where space is at a premium, being subdivided to accommodate up to four families.

It is difficult, there is no discipline at all; we also share in these buildings, up to four people in one flat, but they stay up to 12 or 19 people in one flat sharing and if they move into another flat, they leave broken doors, taps and the management of the building will do nothing to fix the flat. When you are a new tenant, you find yourself fixing the damages, the locks, door handles, taps, basin, sinks, you do them by yourself, even paint the flat (cited in Wooldridge 2001:11).

The growing population has not only meant competition for space, but also contesting of relatively reduced economic opportunities. The inner city has become a zone of intense economic and social competition by multiple groups, all desperate to escape poverty through various pursuits, making it almost a frontier territory, where survival is a competitive struggle for moments of temporary advantage against other residents. Tomlinson and Rogerson (1999) capture the core dynamic best:

For many thousands the inner city also serves as an 'economic refuge'. There are many people for whom the market has ceased to serve their most basic needs and who also no longer look to government for much support. ... Nowadays the inner city offers the best opportunities for survival, albeit that this often occurs through bending the rules in one way or another. ... The inner city serves diverse groups whose economic and social interests most often reach far beyond the inner city itself. These groups might co-exist in fragmented and often unforeseen ways, working in proximity to, but apart from, one another. But equally often these groups can intrude on one another, as when informal retailers inconvenience office workers and diminish the sales of formal retailers, and when taxi groups suppose that they might take over a particular street, spur informal retailing, and drive out the activities that formerly were located there. Contestation over 'turf' easily becomes violent when, for example, people perceive migrants threatening 'their' trading area, or 'their' taxi rank is being used by another taxi service. ... It is apparent that the inner city, more than any other area in the Johannesburg metropolitan area, is an area of contestation. This was brought home to one consultant when one well-organized and rather small constituency urged that 'we want to control the projects arising from this consulting programme'.

The rapidly growing population and increased competition has resulted in heightened social "fluidity" and "inscrutability". For most, the inner city is not a place of neighbourhoods where residents envisage their futures in comfortable settings and in which they are therefore prepared to invest energy and resources for the long term; rather, it is a place to be used for whatever it can give, a temporary way-station on a journey elsewhere, to be left as soon as maximum benefit at the least cost can be extracted. This means that the turnover of people is very high, and that, for the most part, residents prefer not to take stands or make their presence felt. A place not regarded as worthy of investment lends itself to activities and formations that prefer to operate "off the radar screen" of authorities (Gotz and Simone 2003).

Livelihoods in the inner city are often dependent on clandestine activities, and the area has gained a reputation as a haven for criminals. Crime lords run once-attractive high-rise flats in Hillbrow as private fiefdoms, and are locked into an intricate social structure that distributes fixed pieces of criminal activity to different nationalities of migrants such as Congolese, Mozambican and Zimbabwean. The criminal networks are meshed with community organizations, associations and private companies used as fronts for the exchange of drugs and guns, the exploitation of poor immigrants or the laundering of funds.

## Life in the inner city

A recent study (Wooldridge 2001) of social exclusion and migration in four locations around Johannesburg, including Hillbrow, painted a grim picture, and focus groups of residents revealed a social and economic context in which:

- residents felt intense insecurity, largely due to the presence of criminal networks operating in the area, and petty crimes;
- residents experienced a poor and declining urban environment;
- the metropolitan municipality seemed unconcerned with administrative justice, despite the difficult circumstances under which many people lived; and
- city authorities seemed unable to maintain services and quality of life.

The following comments drawn from the focus groups are indicative (Wooldridge 2001).

You can't feel free in Hillbrow. There is no freedom, your life is not secure even in your own flat or house.

Here people get killed for just R10.

You can't go out and feel comfortable, especially on the weekend. There is always a body lying dead in the morning, or blood on the street.

I wouldn't stay. Since 1990 in Hillbrow the place is stinking, the alley has a lot of dirty water.

Our main problem in Hillbrow is the owners of the buildings are out of the country and some other people will come and tell you they own the buildings and there at the municipality they don't know about this person. ... In my flat the water was cut off for three or four days. We tried to contact the municipality on our own. The manager was less concerned. The municipality closed the water because the bill was not paid. They even showed us on the computer screen and for that month the bill was R964 without electricity for one unit. What happens in our flat [is that] the water bill comes in one whole and the manager divides it equally into four units.

The parks are dirty and unsafe, and are often occupied by the homeless and unemployed, and are sometimes used as places to sell drugs and home-brewed alcohol. Apart from the parks, there are no free recreational facilities in the area.

The economic and social trends reviewed here have led to a new set of concerns and interests for both city authorities and voluntary sector formations. We now review how city councillors and officials have chosen to respond to the increasingly complex urban environment of the inner city, and then discuss how the terrain of voluntary action has been reshaped by the more economically competitive and socially fluid context. Each section ends with some thoughts on the implications each reaction holds for possible partnerships between city and voluntary groups.

### ***Urban management policies and practices in the inner city***

A rapidly changing economic and social landscape has thrown up a series of urgent urban management challenges for the city, which has had little choice but to focus on a particular set of concerns that do not appear to concede the importance of developmental partnerships with voluntary groups.

The still substantial financial investment of property owners, corporate head offices and retail businesses in a rapidly changing economic zone makes local government—itsself extremely sensitive to declining property tax revenues—susceptible to pressure from the private sector. Rentals in the inner city have dropped sharply, too fast for the city's property valuation roll to keep pace. This has led to a development bottleneck. Whereas the Carlton Centre, the inner city's



largest and most prestigious office tower, remains valued at approximately R57 million, independent valuers have pegged it at little more than R30 million. While rentals in the building have plummeted, property rates remained artificially pegged to the official valuation. The adjustment lag, felt in buildings across the city, limits the extent to which the property owners can drop rentals in order to attract new clients, and acts as a disincentive to investment in the city, given that municipal charges represent 39 per cent of office operating costs in the city centre, compared to 27 per cent in decentralized areas.

This places the city under pressure from the business community to either reduce its valuations, or address the factors driving down the value of property in the inner city. City authorities are compelled to remove elements perceived by the established business community as contributing to "crime and grime", such as the street traders who are in violation of municipal by-laws.

The huge influx of people has put pressure on available residential space and on service infrastructure. Unscrupulous landlords have sublet many high-rise residential apartments, and today an average of four families occupies space designed for one. Spaces designated for commercial or industrial use are being converted into indoor cities of corrugated iron and cardboard shacks, and there is a widespread deterioration in urban service infrastructure.

Many residential buildings experience disruptions in water and power supply, which are not reported for fear of drawing the attention of building control and public health officials. Poor levels of payment of rates and service charges exacerbate the situation. Since the by-laws prohibit the complete cut-off of water to blocks of flats because of the danger of fire, non-paying residents faced with cut-offs in their individual apartments have vandalized fire hydrants in the buildings to obtain water, further impacting safety.

#### Competing urban management philosophies

Officials have differing interpretations of the pressures to manage the inner city effectively. While some subscribe to new urban management strategies and vibrant new projects as well as improved control and firm policing, others believe that simply regulating the influx of people cannot address the complexity of the problem, and could exacerbate it.

Our background investigations for the Park City intersite development indicate, for example, that some 500 taxis leave the Noord Street rank between 16:00 and 18:00 every Friday. We just don't understand the informal system that makes this possible, but we want to redemarcate and reorganize the rank to our specifications. Everything suggests that our plans simply won't work if we don't try to mimic the system that already exists (Reid, interview, March 1997).

One proposed approach was to divide the inner city into clearly demarcated precincts, each with its own character, functional features and development opportunities, and to set up specific projects and programmes within the parameters of the overall vision for an integrated, functional urban unit. The new political dispensation had greater legitimacy and could begin to implement difficult decisions when required with regard to illegal immigrants, informal trading, homelessness and vagrancy.

If you don't even attempt to register or regulate illegals or informal traders this will impact on every attempt to develop the city. We must formalize these people if we hope to control their spin-off effects on the urban system. ... The biggest problem is the lack of reliable information. If you can't trace people how can you control them? You simply can't plan for a population you don't know. We have no idea whether Johannesburg has eight or 10 million residents. There are rumours that 20,000 people are coming into the city each month but we don't know who they are or where they are. In advanced cities in Germany, if 4,000 new residents register in a year, alarm bells start to ring because of the added pressure on services. ... Here we can't even begin to plot

a demand curve with the information we have. We must start quantifying or we will be facing our worst nightmare (Alley, interview, March 1997).

There was concern that the Department of Home Affairs could not manage the influx of illegal immigrants into the city, and it was suggested that the city could assist in confronting this. As a first step, informal traders could be registered and subjected to a levy for excessive cleansing expenses incurred on over-traded streets, or alternatively, structured into the cleansing function as street-level agents with specific responsibilities. However, while the one approach recognized the insufficient understanding of how the informal processes operated and that this limited the potential for control, the other view was that it was imperative to try and control and manage the processes. The latter approach appears to be more widely implemented.

#### The philosophies in practice: An inadequate basis for partnerships?

The JDA is responsible for managing economic development projects separate from the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality and drives some of the most innovative urban renewal projects, using the approach of first understanding and then working with and through existing street-level social arrangements and systems wherever possible, often regardless of whether these are popularly regarded as the source of crime or disorder. The following projects demonstrate this approach.

1. *Jack Mincer taxi rank and retail facility*: The construction of a R18 million taxi rank and associated retail facility to accommodate short-distance taxis in the area around Western Joubert Park. The physical rank development entailed the redesign and upgrading of an underground parking garage. Previously conflicting taxi associations were included in the management of the rank and in ensuring financial self-sufficiency of ongoing operations and maintenance. A rank committee comprised two representatives from each of six taxi associations, responsible for levying user fees on each taxi using the rank and for managing security, cleansing, repairs and capital replacement from user fees and a lease agreement with a garage on the site (Arnott-Job, interview, March 2000).
2. *Better Buildings Programme*: Many “problem buildings” in the inner city show arrears in rates and service charges, which can exceed the market value of the property and result in a negative trend toward existing owners liquidating companies, substantial financial loss for the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, and a reluctance for potential new owners to purchase and invest in upgrading deteriorating building stock. The Better Buildings Programme uses innovative mechanisms to attract new investment for upgrading, writing down or discounting of debt owed to the council (into line with the market value of the property), and debt structuring to allow the purchaser to pay from the operating profits generated by the refurbished building. The council acts as a facilitator of sales, assists with repairs and upgrades using national and provincial government housing subsidies, and agrees a payment plan for the purchase price (paid out of future operating profits). Tenants’ associations in the affected buildings, wishing to become economic players in their own right, have primarily supported this project.
3. *Garment industry district and hub*: This is a local economic development project as part of the Inner City Spatial and Economic Framework approved in mid-1999 (City of Johannesburg 1999) and carried forward by JDA. The clothing sector is one of the key growth points in the emerging inner city economy and includes markets, suppliers, wholesalers, training facilities and production and sales space for emerging small-scale clothing manufacturers (Reid, interview, March 2000).
4. *Precinct management and the “clean it up and sort it out” approach*: While the importance of flexibility in approaching the city’s problems is acknowledged, many feel it is equally important to provide security – above all else – for business and residents. The challenge is to focus on the basics, and to get building control and public health inspection back on track. “Chasing prestige projects in an inner city where enforcement has not been sorted out is like putting icing on a cake that has flopped in the hope that this will make it edible” (Interview, confidentiality of respondent maintained, November 2000).

The inner city's spatial development framework (City of Johannesburg 1999) is based on the precinct approach, where the character of the area is determined in advance and the urban landscape slowly improved until it approximates the ideal of an integrated area conducive to particular sets of compatible and appropriate functions. It is the primary challenge of Region 8 to tackle the problem of urban blight, reverse it, and help turn Johannesburg into the great African city it aims to be. As has happened successfully with other cities worldwide that suffered the degeneration of their central business districts, efforts are being made to reinstate Region 8 as a thriving urban centre. Notable are initiatives reduce crime, especially on the streets of the central area, and the regeneration of Newtown as a cultural hub. Most of the key issues to be tackled relate to the decline and transformation of the inner city:

- high levels of crime and lack of security;
- flight of office and associated uses to suburban nodes;
- physical degradation of the public environment due to litter and untidiness;
- decline in rentals and property values;
- rapidly increasing illegal occupation and land invasion in residential suburbs and vacated buildings; and
- increasing presence of immigrant entrepreneurs and associated xenophobia.

Many inner city voluntary organizations have picked up on what they see as a hardening of attitudes of city officials toward them, under the banner of the new approach, and refer to instances of councillors talking about last-resort measures to restore urban safety regardless of the impact this is likely to have on carefully woven agreements about how to develop particular sections of the inner city in the interests of residents.

### ***Voluntary action in the inner city***

The economic and social context of the inner city has impacted on the voluntary sector, with the crowded and competitive environment holding disincentives for voluntary activity conducive to engagements and partnerships with city authorities.

### **The fate of organizations identified in the 1996 research**

The 1996 research highlighted that there were surprisingly few community organizations relative to the size of the population, and those had had only limited success in challenging local government plans for, and private sector interests in, property-led development in the area.

Various organizations were identified in four broad bands:

- private sector voluntary initiatives, most notably the Central Johannesburg Partnership dedicated to involving business in urban upgrading initiatives, *inter alia*, through the development of City Improvement Districts in which businesses agree to be levied over and above the property rate in exchange for dedicated security and cleansing services;
- various housing organizations, such as the Inner City Housing Upgrading Trust and ActStop, focused on residential building conversion or upgrading and tenants' rights;
- outreach programmes of various established churches; and
- street-level residents' initiatives, most notably the Seven Buildings Project.

### **Mixed fortunes, but little long-term success**

Most of the private sector initiatives were still functioning in 2002, driven by increasing concern over inner city decay, and many churches still operated their outreach programmes. However,

few of the community organizations and residents' initiatives identified in 1996 had maintained their presence and original character.

Many of the organizations identified in the 1996 research no longer formally exist. For example, ActStop, a key tenants' rights NGO, evolved into the inner city branch of SANCO, which, reflecting its mixed fortunes in other parts of the country, now has limited formal presence there.

Some organizations have run into difficulties as their institutional character has shifted, and once-thriving local democratic initiatives have been caught up in the competition for economic and social space. The Seven Buildings Project, for example, has become increasingly exposed to commercial imperatives and risks, along with mismanagement.

Over 500 tenants of the Seven Buildings Company, which has properties in the Johannesburg inner city and faces liquidation, marched outside the Johannesburg High Court on Tuesday morning protesting against their eviction. This follows an application by the Inner City Housing Upgrading Trust to liquidate the company owned by 2,000 families living in 446 residential units. The residential units are in the Johannesburg inner city suburbs of Hillbrow, Joubert Park and Berea. The liquidation came as a result of the company's failure to pay back more than R3.6 million it borrowed from the Trust to upgrade residences. Company spokesman Sphiwe Gumede said Seven Buildings had also received more than R6 million in the form of an institutional housing subsidy from the government in 1996, and might lose this money because the Trust was demanding over R3 million (South African Press Association 2001).

The head of the Central Johannesburg Partnership explains what happened in harsh words:

Ongoing and escalating dissension between tenant committees and tenants, procedural changes to the Board, alleged malpractice including the opening of an unauthorized bank account, disunity between the different buildings, dispensation of the services of the individuals and agencies who were seeing to the proper management of the affairs of the company—all combined to lead to the project renegeing on its agreement. Besides not repaying the capital, it failed to maintain interest payments on the loan and built up an arrears on rates and services due to the council of nearly R2 million. After numerous attempts by the company to recover its moneys it has been forced to apply for the liquidation of the Seven Buildings Company. The irresponsible and destructive behaviour displayed by the so-called leadership of the Seven Buildings Project negatively impacts on all our efforts to stabilize and revitalize the inner city and makes a mockery of trying to redress the injustices of the past (Fraser 2001).

Some organizations identified in the 1996 research have maintained some presence, including the Interfaith Community Development Association (ICDA), which has entered into partnership with the city to run community initiatives in one of the most troubled neighbourhoods. However, where these organizations have continued to engage government, it is often within the framework of urban development projects initiated by the city itself rather than within terms of struggle set independently by communities. In the case of ICDA, for example, involvement in a project initiated by the city gave it new opportunities to define, on its own initiative, a host of community development initiatives, but only within the broad framework of the city's project.

### ***An overview of current voluntary sector organizations***

The waning fortunes of most organizations and initiatives identified in the 1996 research exemplify a new institutional milieu in the inner city to be discussed in more detail below. However, it is important to highlight that the last few years have also seen the emergence of a number of new initiatives and organizations.

There are two main types of new voluntary sector activities. The first type is recognizable as following in the footsteps of many earlier initiatives, with activities that are public in that they are based on the coordinated activity of a large group of people; formalized into one or other form of organization, association or campaign; and follow a traditional logic of mobilization around a public development concern, which may be formal or informal. The second type, increasing prevalent, comprises small social formations and projects started by individuals or loose clusters of a few people, sometimes for patent self-interest, and often with short-term and very local motivations and goals. The following organizations, among others, currently have some profile in the inner city:<sup>12</sup>

- Joubert Park Development Association, a formal not-for-profit company, set up to drive and manage development work in the Joubert Park Precinct Pilot Project.
- Joubert Park Co-ordinating Forum, which coordinates the activities of a wide variety of formal and informal community organizations and initiatives in the Joubert Park area.
- Youth Empowerment Network, which conducts intensive youth development programmes in various areas, including the Johannesburg inner city.
- Lapeng Child and Family Resources Service, an organization forged out of the Joubert Park Precinct Pilot Project and Neighbourhood Office, which focuses on early childhood development issues, offering training to community childminders and caregivers, and coordinating childcare groups
- MES Aksie, a formally incorporated not-for-profit company that provides integrated development service to inner city communities and focuses mainly on homelessness, job creation and training, childcare, the provision of basic health care, and sports and recreation.
- Hillbrow Community Policing Forum, a structure that mirrors others set up across the country, that aims to enable a structured engagement between local police stations and communities.
- South African Tenants' Association, with a membership of approximately 300, which serves about 50 buildings in the inner city; also holds broader community meetings focused on issues of housing and, in particular, conflicts between tenants and landlords.
- Alliance for Street Children, an umbrella body for all street child shelters in the inner city with 33 member organizations, which caters for children up to the age of 20 living on the street.
- Hillbrow Community Health Partnership, an ad hoc alliance providing a common forum for various organizations directly or indirectly concerned with health issues, including People Against Women Abuse, Twilight Children, StreetWise, and the local branch of the ANC; the Provincial Department of Health is formally part of the partnership which meets four times a year.
- Hillbrow Community Partnership, a community-to-university collaboration that provides technical college and university student volunteers with in-service learning opportunities focused on community development, including a women's desk, a choir and a public health initiative.
- Steps against Violence South Africa, a network organization comprising the Hillbrow Community Policing Forum, the Community Health Partnership and various schools, focused on addressing the root causes of violence among inner city youth and providing conflict resolution skills.
- Hopes Exchange, an old concept being reapplied in the inner city, based on the vision of a cashless pay-it-forward-based society in which community labour is rewarded, and generated wealth is kept within the community; under the con-

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<sup>12</sup> The following scan is based on interviews with a range of stakeholders and observers including AbdouMaliq Simone, independent researcher, August 2002; Katherine Cox, Central Johannesburg Partnership, June 2002; Vernon Openshaw, Community Development Practitioner in the Hillbrow/Berea area, September 2002; Vanessa Black, Greenhouse Project, Earthlife Africa (as part of a Joubert Park Co-ordinating Forum meeting), August 2002; and various city officials.

sensual arrangement, assistance to one another is remunerated with “hopes” that can be recouped elsewhere through an equivalent level of labour, for example, fixing a household appliance in exchange for childcare.

- Greenhouse Project, initiated within Western Joubert Park by Earthlife Africa, is a prominent environmental NGO that focuses on the rehabilitation of the turn-of-the-century greenhouse in the park in the hope of making it a community resource.
- Lutheran Church Outreach Project, an outreach project focused around using visual and performing arts to build communities.
- Cameroon Association, a Cameroonian immigrants’ group with approximately 400 members, and whose membership extends beyond the inner city.

### ***Self-start-up social formations and projects***

In addition to the organizations listed above, a large number and variety of small, self-starting voluntary projects, health organizations (mostly focused on HIV/AIDS), theatre groups, community newspapers and churches have been identified as emergent. The Hillbrow/Berea Regeneration Initiative, discussed below, set out to map some of these institutions as part of its community development efforts.

There is a great deal of fluidity within Hillbrow/Berea. Organizations form and reform, and contact people and numbers change. Even in the short duration of this project, the numbers of some organizations changed or became inactive. In addition, many of these organizations are not listed in formal telephone directories. A number of the organizations listed here were identified through fieldworkers walking around the area, or by word of mouth, in and outside workshop situations. For this reason we have decided to include the names of organizations that we heard mentioned but were unable to uncover contact details for, as these entries alert the Council to the potential existence of such a group. ... The Directory will need constant updating. Left in its static form, it will be obsolete within a short period of time (Hillbrow/Berea Regeneration Initiative 2002).

The institutional scan conducted by the Hillbrow/Berea Regeneration Initiative identified the following small sample, among many others:

- Inthuthuko community development projects;
- Lethukukhanya Health Institute, which sets up community health committees among inner city communities;
- Aidsbuster, which provides education and training on HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, testing and counselling;
- Hlalanathi Community Theatre Project, which uses drama productions to explore community issues, and promote community cohesiveness and positive attitudes and behaviours;
- Iso Lomphakathi, a partnership of community theatre groups established as part of the Hillbrow/Berea Regeneration Initiative;
- Self-Help Christian Refugee Association, which has approximately 30 refugee members;
- The New Africans, a community newspaper aimed at the refugee community, which carries community service news and lobbies for refugee interests;
- African Evangelical Church;
- Berea Christian Tabernacle Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, a church that also runs a creche service for inner city mothers;
- Brethren in Christ, an African independent church; and

- Avax SA, a business consultancy organization that helps community organizations with research and the writing of funding proposals.

### ***Current initiatives and concerns: An adequate basis for partnerships?***

A number of conclusions flow from the description and analysis of current voluntary activity. First, in the heightened competitive environment of the inner city, much voluntary action is simply the disconnected attempts of individuals to establish a presence. Where voluntary social collaborations arise, these are often highly fragmented and transitory clan- or gang-based formations, subject to intense internal political contestation and geared primarily toward competition with identified economic and social competitors. The fate of the Seven Buildings Project is indicative of this trend.

In general terms, this suggests an institutional milieu that is increasingly flexible, with specialized community formations taking advantage of momentary opportunities, and thereafter, like businesses having lost a temporary market niche, transforming into something else equally unstable but momentarily useful. In these contexts, it may not be useful to highlight an ideal-type community organization or government-community partnership. A mafia-style association today may be part of a development structure tomorrow, and vice versa. In short, there is a lack of true "public space".

Hillbrow has a disparateness about it. I've never seen so many new churches. And you won't believe the proliferation of preschools started by people looking for something to do. Just about everybody I meet says, 'I was thinking of starting a project...'. In our context, volunteerism is all about business (Openshaw, interview, September 2002).

Second, many of the organizations, initiatives and partnerships currently forming within the inner city are not focused on changing the rules of the demographic game, and even less focused on altering the social and political frameworks for the current distribution of economic opportunities. Most of the organizations are instead focused solely on self-help and community development matters. Partnerships with local and provincial government are sometimes sought, but there is as much a sense that these initiatives hope to keep government at arm's length.

Third, even where residents may not be motivated by illegal activities, many are naturally inclined to circumvent laws and regulations designed to protect the public interest. For example, illegal immigrants have no interest in putting themselves up for public scrutiny in voluntary groups when doing so may expose them to the risk of deportation. Where invisibility or low profile equals survival, community-based formations avoid exposing themselves to officialdom. This makes stable partnerships, based on clear identification of respective interests and risks, virtually impossible.

In the fluid, contested and shifting environment of the inner city, generalized government-community partnerships are hard to conceptualize. Most notably, intense competition for resources makes true public space difficult to sustain, and opportunities for ongoing dialogue and common action around shared development goals are reduced. Instead, there is an increasing emphasis on short-term self-help goals, and there is little incentive for community groups to confront government when invisibility is necessary for survival. Functional community interactions around small issues are thus unlikely to be scaled up or institutionalized into mass-based, formalized, volunteer-based organizations.

### ***Partnering: A promising start goes awry***

The Western Joubert Park Precinct Pilot Project was the first precinct development and management project to be designed for the inner city. Western Joubert Park is a one-square-kilometre area of downtown Johannesburg, centred on a park adjacent to the Johannesburg Art Gallery and surrounded by residential apartment blocks. The precinct has experienced severe physical deteriora-

tion and serious social problems, and, since the early 1990s, substantial demographic shifts with an influx of immigrants from West Africa and Mozambique have caused tensions with locals. Residential buildings have fallen into decay, and many apartment blocks have become contested political spaces, with evidence of turf battles between tenants' organizations and outside political movements. In the mid-1990s, the park became notorious for petty crime, informal trading on the pavements of the precinct was uncontrolled and taxi routing through the area led to congestion. The council has been unable to maintain regular cleansing of the area due to a lack of capacity.

A multifaceted strategy was developed to tackle problems in the park, with nine working groups established to drive different aspects of the renewal process, each team coordinated by a council official and comprising elected representatives, technical experts and non-council stakeholders from the project area.

Working Group 7 is the most interesting for our purposes. It had a broad mandate, ranging from facilitating financial incentives to encouraging private sector involvement in upgrading buildings, including soliciting council guarantees to lending institutions to combat red-lining, and restructuring council's rates rebate policies. Its key focus, however, has been the establishment of a precinct office or neighbourhood centre—the terms are used interchangeably—run by a suitable development agency drawn from the local NGO community.

From the earliest documents defining the project, the importance of improving council-community interfaces through the precinct was emphasized. It was envisaged that the precinct, through a precinct office, would provide information and education services about both council and non-council services and opportunities. An office was also seen as vital to facilitate community involvement in projects to be undertaken in the precinct, in maintaining and improving the area, and in new activities and ventures that unlock development energies.

Established in February 1999 under a development agent agreement with a local CBO, ICDA, the neighbourhood centre became a focal point for precinct activities in the Western Joubert Park area, many of these defined and developed by ICDA without direction or sanction from the city. Some of the key activities of the partnership included:

- an anti-crime whistle campaign among street photographers;
- establishment of a community notice board;
- establishment of the Landlord and Tenant Advice Office;
- publication and dissemination of a bimonthly precinct newsletter;
- running a series of small events, such as a gardening day, at the precinct office;
- establishment of the Joubert Park Community Development Forum as a means of consulting local residents and businesses, and disseminating information on various subjects;
- establishment of a sustainable Safer Precinct Project and Project Officer;
- establishment of the Public Amenities Maintenance Office, System and Programme;
- upgrading of the bus lane in Joubert Park;
- development of the Alternative Cleansing Methods Pilot Project;
- coordination of a children's holiday programme;
- establishment of the Volunteer Bureau;
- establishment of the Criminal Justice Initiative, with emphasis on victim empowerment;
- establishment of the Community Trust to achieve economies of scale in attracting donor income; and



- selection and training of Parks Ambassadors, who would be skilled in security and the defusing of conflict situations, childcare, environmental monitoring and intracommunity liaison.

The initial success of the neighbourhood centre saw the lead organization considering the possibility of using Western Joubert Park as a launching pad to a more ambitious community development initiative in Hillbrow/Berea, which experienced many of the same social and urban environmental challenges as Western Joubert Park, with the added consideration that the area is the epicentre of drug-lord and criminal gang activity in Johannesburg.

Through a confluence of circumstances and fortunate connections, the then Johannesburg Inner City Office received a grant from the United States Agency for International Development to support a government-community planning collaboration in the Hillbrow/Berea area.

The project, named Facilitating Participation in the Hillbrow/Berea Regeneration Initiative, explicitly set out to foster a renewed sense of community in the area by mobilizing community groups in an ambitious participatory planning exercise. Through a method recognized in European cities, Planning for Real, project drivers had to generate a strategic vision for development in the area; establish a set of thematic groups to address key issues such as landlord and tenant relations, or crime; enable residents to graphically represent their desired neighbourhoods on specially constructed scale models of the area; and turn suggested priorities from the vision, thematic groups and modelling into a widely agreed local area action plan.

A tender was issued, and a consortium of organizations proposed the following objectives for the project in their bid:

- using discussion of local development issues to build community and a sense of citizenship, and to encourage civic behaviour;
- creating a partnership for the development of Hillbrow/Berea, between government – both the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council (GJMC) and Gauteng provincial government – and local stakeholders in the area, including CBOs, NGOs, individuals and businesses;
- building linkages and facilitating ongoing relationships between the range of different initiatives in the area;
- developing, in close consultation with the GJMC, a local area action plan allocating roles and responsibilities to different stakeholders for the development of the Hillbrow/Berea area as a safe, secure and quality living environment (Openshaw, interview, September 2002).

Over a period of two years, the Western Joubert Park neighbourhood centre provided a community-based people's centre able to claim many successful projects and initiatives, including a consortium of community organizations that successfully negotiated a complex project to deliver a comprehensive report of recommendations to the city.

Of interest is the present status of the Hillbrow/Berea Regeneration Initiative and the Western Joubert Park Precinct Pilot Project, which, despite the obvious energy and resources devoted to both projects and their early successes, have flagged. In the case of Hillbrow/Berea, nothing has come of the submission of an elaborate and carefully consulted report to the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality. Vernon Openshaw, project coordinator for the initiative, explained that the report was submitted to the relevant city committees, which noted its existence, and appear to have forgotten about it. Attempts to work with ward councillors in the area, or directly with city officials, to reinstate recommendations and carry them forward into implementation have been met with continued disinterest.

The reversal of gains in the Western Joubert Park project is more serious. The precinct office has shut down, as the City of Johannesburg has opened its own Regional People's Centre in the building housing the offices of Region 8. Few of the infrastructure development commitments facilitated by the pilot project's various committees have been realized. While community representatives have tried to remind city officials of the urban upgrades and associated developments that were recommended and approved at the political level by the city's own planning documents, the response is that these are no longer a priority. What has happened instead is the recent fencing off of Western Joubert Park in its entirety, with access to the park now restricted to two small entrances. Community representatives explain that the fencing makes access to the park difficult, and erodes the symbolic importance of open public space for community development. City officials have responded that fencing of all the city's parks was essential to contain crime on public grounds.<sup>13</sup>

Openshaw, in analysing the losses in these key city-community partnerships, admits that many weaknesses in the Western Joubert Park project were due to internecine conflicts between community organizations in the area: "We never really could get everyone to work together on the most important issues." In Openshaw's view, however, this was not the reason for the closure of the office.

They confused the idea of a precinct office and a people's centre. When Makda [the head of Region 8] shut us down, he said, 'Why should I pay an NGO to house my staff in a building that I own?' I can see this point, but he misunderstood what we were about. The office was like a modem – it made connections between organizations wanting to get things done on their own. The people's centre they have set up in Loveday Street is quite different. It's a place where residents can go to pay their bills and get council tenders. It's not about strengthening the local community. The city is completely wrapped up in the issue of service delivery now. They don't see the importance of community partnerships that help communities work better. They've taken it all back because of a 'we-know-best' attitude (Openshaw, interview, September 2002).

The current state of the relationship between the city and community organizations in the Joubert Park and Hillbrow/Berea areas was graphically illustrated in a Joubert Park Co-ordinating Forum meeting in August 2003. Voluntary organizations had been told that Region 8 was in the process of finalizing an IDP for the area and wanted input from community organizations. The ward councillor responsible for communicating the request had not done his duty, and the organizations heard about the invitation very late. With only two days to discuss and prepare a detailed joint proposal for Region 8 officials, the organizations attempted to formulate a hasty input. The partnership between the city and these structures, once so promising, had been reduced to an impossible deadline and a sense of betrayal.

How were we supposed to know about this earlier? ... The ward committees were supposed to communicate, but didn't. ... Its just the council doing its usual quick-consultation-for-the-sake-of-it thing. Council thinks it's doing public participation and community partnerships, but they don't understand it in the right way...<sup>14</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Local government has faced consistently increasing responsibilities in the first decade of democracy. Many of the key urban challenges are thrown into sharp relief through our analysis of the challenges facing the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, which oversees the largest number of residents of any municipality in Gauteng. Indicators of poverty present a council whose constitu-

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<sup>13</sup> Discussion in Joubert Park Co-ordinating Forum, August 2002.

<sup>14</sup> Discussion in Joubert Park Co-ordinating Forum, August 2003.

ency includes both affluent, well-serviced communities and impoverished, disadvantaged communities. While existing levels and quality of service delivery must be maintained, the real challenges lie in the extension of these services and infrastructure to all residents in Johannesburg.

In meeting these challenges, the council is guided by national legislation as well as local dynamics. In particular, fiscal constraints at the local level have led the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council to adopt an approach that is cognizant of the need for democratic, participatory governance, but is primarily concerned with generating economic growth.

The question is whether this approach is workable. This paper has considered two case studies, Tladi-Moletsane in Soweto and the Johannesburg inner city, in order to ascertain inherent tensions or contradictions in the application of an approach that is underpinned by participatory principles, while at the same time being governed by an economic bottom line.

Local government lies at the centre of government's rural and urban development strategies. Partnerships between the poor and their structures on one hand, and local government on the other, are as fundamental for developmental local government at a theoretical level as IDPs are at a practical level. The policy terrain has never been more conducive for local-level partnerships.

On the ground in Tladi-Moletsane, however, politics and activism have come to be seen as avenues for the ambitious, not mechanisms for effecting change. Disinterest and apathy are widespread. Politics is still dominated by a golden clique of more affluent residents; but even here there are problems, and among the affluent fewer people are actively involved in local affairs. Class differences are reflected in local organizations. The formal areas have a local civic association, which barely relates to and does not actively support the civic associations set up by those living in the Tladi informal settlement. The local councillor replicates these differences, having a warm relationship with local businesses, using a junior staff member to tour the formal areas, but bypassing the informal settlement.

Ten years of democracy have provided some tangible benefits to the residents of Tladi-Moletsane: shared taps and toilets for the informal settlement, houses and tarred roads for residents of the formal areas. While expectations were possibly unrealistic, the general attitude in Tladi-Moletsane is despondent nonetheless.

There is some evidence of local action by small local CBOs and concerned individuals. Formerly prominent structures such as the local civic association have faded into the background or closed down; and there is some evidence that local government structures are seen as a tool for leveraging change. The Tladi informal settlement dwellers, for example, established their own ward committee in 2002 to concentrate on water, sewerage and electrification. While sceptical about their chances of success, it is very important that they are trying to use the mechanisms made available to them as part of democratizing local government. We found no evidence of partnerships with larger CBOs or NGOs; nor with the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council. The policy terrain may be favourable, but a great deal of grassroots mobilization and education is urgently required if policy is to translate into substantive and sustainable reality.

In the inner city, the declining fortunes of city-community partnerships in the Joubert Park and Hillbrow/Berea projects illustrate how shifts in both city management priority concerns, and in the nature of community organization, impact on the prospects of future partnerships.

A rapidly changing economic and social environment has put pressure on both the city authorities and on conventional voluntary sector initiatives and organizations. The former must respond to internal and external expectations that it "clean up" the inner city to "restore" it to its original status as the country's premier business centre, which seems to have inclined it to manage the inner city in ways less conducive to partnerships. The latter are adapting to an increasingly contested, fluid and inscrutable environment, which offers incentives to organizations that exist to appropriate maximum economic advantage for entrepreneurial groups of individuals. Voluntary

groups that have the broader interest of the community at heart, or who are inclined to engage or work with the city in ways that benefit the public at large do exist, but they do not thrive.

The future of partnerships thus appears less positive, and it is difficult to predict the impact that further changes in the inner city may have in making future partnerships more meaningful and viable. Presently, the most successful partnerships seem to be project-based and focused on specific geographic locations, involving government-facilitated opportunities for existing organizations with defined mandates to provide new services to their communities.

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- Constance Magwaza, nurse, Poly Clinic, Tladi
- Moses Makhubo, ward councillor
- Cylest Mannuel, immigrant from Maputo, Tladi informal settlement
- Sam Modiba, Head, council liaison
- Teboho Moeletsi, youth, Tladi
- Michael Mokubela, tenant, Tladi
- Josiah Moloko, local businessperson, Tladi
- Bonny Morakile, backyard tenant, Moletsane
- Rebone Nkomo, teacher, Tladi
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