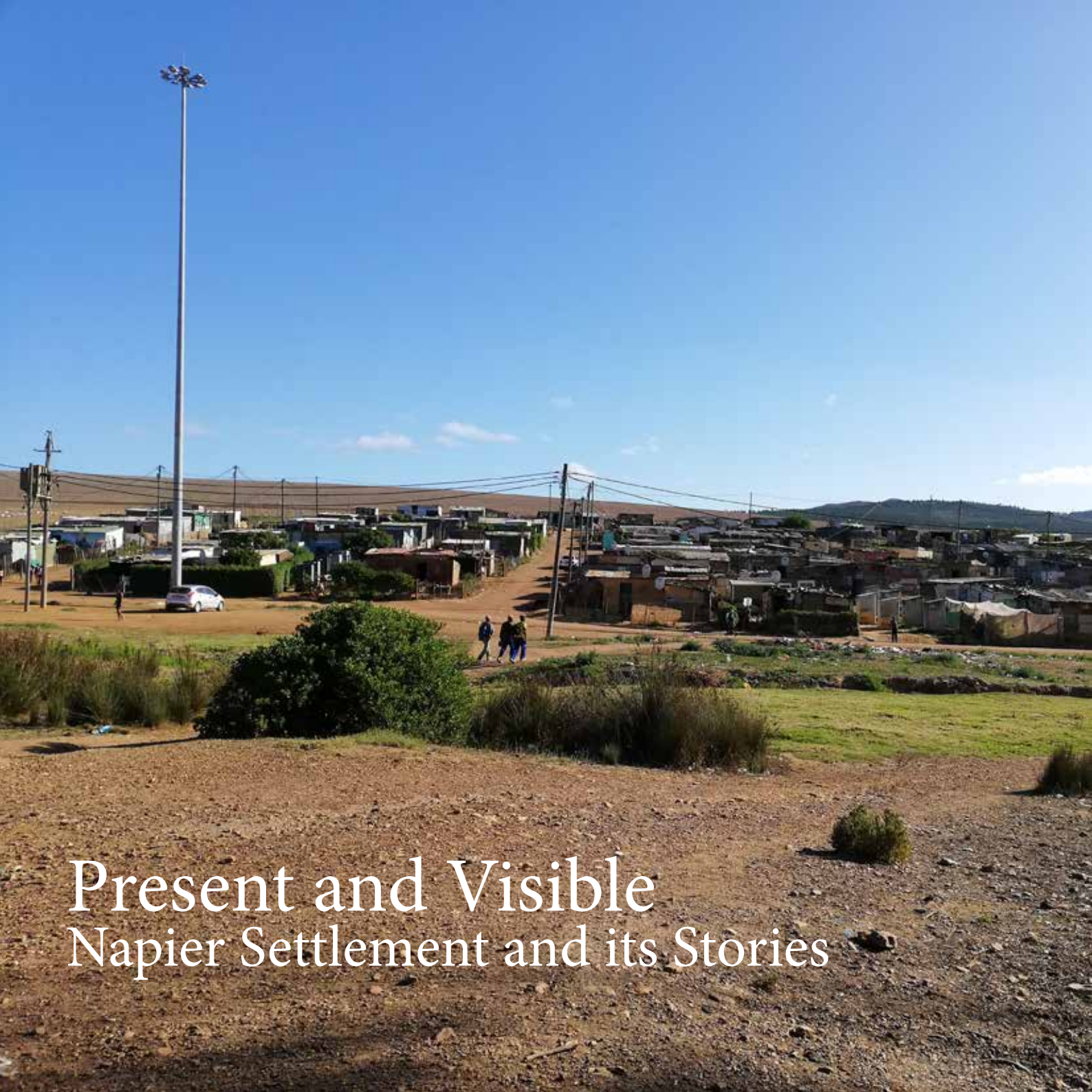

Present and Visible
Napier Settlement and its Stories

Present and Visible

Napier Settlement and its Stories

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INTRODUCTION

Tucked behind a hill, largely invisible, the Napier Informal settlement is located on Napier's town edge. This book aims to make the settlement, its living conditions, its families, their innovations, and the hardships that surround everyday life, visible. The Settlement is part of Napier, in the Cape Agulhas Municipality, integral to the town and its regional economy. The settlement is on municipal land and adjacent to a commonage, leased by the municipality to a local agricultural co-op. Relocated to this site in 2009 following the flooding and destruction of an older informal settlement on the river bank, it includes 235 structures, and at least as many if not more households and families. It is surrounded by agricultural land and a cemetery, adjacent to Smartie Town, an area of RDP housing between the settlement and the Napier main road, which, as part of a popular tourist route, is full of restaurants, B&Bs and guest houses.

The book is structured on key themes that shape the settlement and stories of families living on it, their struggles and aspirations for homes and for better lives, for safe housing, for secure access to infrastructure, and for sustainable livelihoods. To build this focus, narratives of settlement families' and their household's histories are interspersed throughout the book. These narratives document the stories of families arriving in the settlement, their experiences in it, their struggles and successes in building homes on this site. Critical themes emerged through our collaborative research, ranging from home building, and placemaking through gardening, to the challenges and possibilities of livelihoods such as farm work and self-run small businesses. Key challenges emerged in the research, particularly focused on infrastructure and its limits, the fundamental issue of access to toilets and the dangers of living next to waste. In sharing this material, the book charts a critical set of issues that shape the settlement, its leadership, families, and youth, a mix of urgent short-term needs, as well as key elements for longer term engagement with the Municipality on its development and upgrading. These materials are complemented by extracts of interviews with Municipal officials, as well as extracts of student essays and reflections, on these themes and the research process.

PARTNERS AND THE COLLABORATION WHICH BUILT THE RESEARCH

The book is the outcome of a collaborative research project in which Napier settlement leaders and researchers and the African Centre for Cities and its students from the University of Cape Town and University of Basel in Switzerland worked together to research and document settlement life. The project was facilitated by People's Environmental Planning (PEP) and their broader engagement with the Municipality and Province and the Napier Settlement in the Cape Agulhas Municipality (CAM).

PEP was established in 1998 to provide socio-technical housing support to people driven housing processes across South Africa. Subsequently, PEP has trained community building teams and assisted in the construction of thousands of People's Housing Process (PHP) homes across South Africa. Since 2010, PEP has been supporting the unblocking of stalled projects through the provision of title, housing, and negotiating complicated land use management regulations. From 2016, PEP started to work more actively in the informal settlement upgrading space and in late 2018 was contracted by the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements (WCDHS) to provide support to the Cape Agulhas Municipality (CAM) as part of the Informal Settlements Support Programme (ISSP) .

The intentions of the ISSP programme are founded on sound principles – increased community participation, alternative upgrading approaches and spatial redress are all desperately needed within the housing space. Although these ideas have been articulated in policy for almost a decade, implementation has been slow, uneven and without innovation.

PEP was appointed to support CAM in three informal settlements: Ou Kamp, Napier and Zwelitsha. In each settlement a series of Milestones, in line with a people centred upgrading process, were undertaken, to build community leadership structures and capacity, create platforms with which to collectively plan with the municipality and to collect accurate settlement level data through enumerations. From PEP's perspective, CAM municipality is well organised and managed. Officials are open to new ideas and approaches and much progress was made during the course of 2019, especially in terms of supporting PEP's work through the ISSP to work towards growing informal community leadership structures and capacities to pro-actively engage the municipality. Likewise, from PEP's perspective, communities they have worked with in

Napier, and the other settlements in Cape Agulhas, have also been receptive and eager to participate in the process.

In collaboration and discussion with the Settlement and CAM, PEP invited the African Centre for Cities (ACC) to work with the Settlement on this research project. This collaboration built on our experience of collective research through field-based studios in 2018 and 2019 in Mitchells Plain and in Philippi in Cape Town. These studios were planned to align with existing project trajectories and community priorities. In 2018 and 2019, these priorities focused on capturing detailed housing struggles and histories. Given PEP's participation in the ISSP programme and a wish to expand the scope of the studios, Napier Informal Settlement was selected as the site for the 2020 studio – a selection that was approved by the community and CAM. The choice of Napier was based on a number of reasons: community interest and capacity, the settlement being earmarked for an in-situ upgrade by CAM and timing (with a settlement-wide enumeration completed in December 2019).

The studio emerged as a component of PEP's larger ISSP project trajectory in Napier IS and was designed to contribute and add value to this work. PEP's work in this area began first with steps to establish leadership structures in Napier informal settlement, profiling the settlement, mediating conflict, understanding the municipal structure and plans for the settlement and conducting a full enumeration of the settlement. The PEP team that led this work comprised of a lead facilitator (Astrid Wicht), an assistant facilitator based locally (Tracey Lee Dennis) and a technical facilitator (Sihle Mntuna). The team worked with the Manager of Human Settlement in CAM (Michael Dennis) and the local Napier Settlement leadership, particularly Nolwethu (Lele) Kakana. The team's experience in Napier has been generally positive and the Napier Settlement leadership quickly demonstrated capacity and interest in this work.

The capacity and willingness of the Napier leadership was further developed during the enumeration process. Given all these factors the ACC/PEP studio and the research project provided an opportunity to augment these skills and deepen the findings of the enumeration.

For this purpose, Astrid Wicht and Tracey Lee Dennis recruited a team of Napier settlement leaders and young people to work with ACC and its students on this project.

The ACC team were coordinated by Sophie Oldfield, a Professor at UCT, and Geetika Anand, a PhD student, and included students enrolled in the Masters of Southern Urbanism at University of Cape Town and the Masters of Critical Urbanisms at University of Basel. Their work on this project constituted the first part of the City Research Studio, an interdisciplinary course built on engaging in practice, in collaboration with experts outside of the University, and developing methodological and hands-on research skills. Municipal and Provincial officials were also invited to participate. An official from the WCDHS and an official from the Planning for the Overberg region joined us for household interviews in the first days of the project.

1 ISSP Strategic Documents available from the Directorate: Planning of the WCDHS
- Western Cape ISSP Strategic Framework 2016
- Western Cape ISSP Implementation Plan 2016
- Western Cape ISSP Design and Tenure Options 2016
- Western Cape ISSP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework 2016
- Western Cape ISSP Prioritisation Model User Guideline 2016

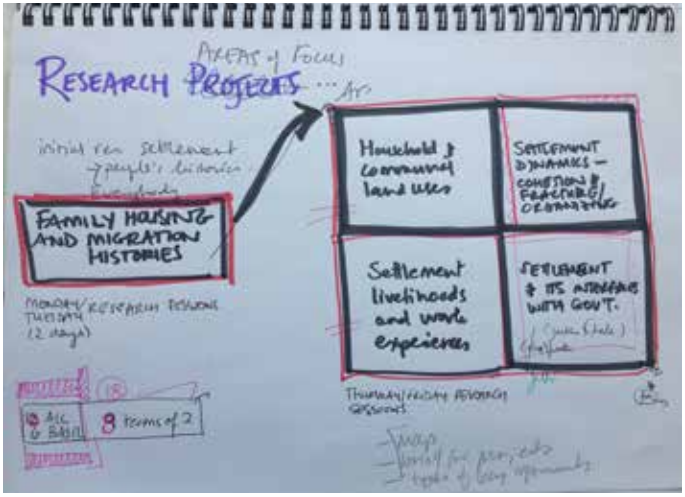
2 See Ruo Emoh, Our Home, Our Story (2018) and Building Bit-by-Bit: Stories from Hazeldean Ekupumleni (2019), see:
https://www.africancentreforcities.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/MPHIL_Hazeldean_v1-20191031.pdf and
https://www.africancentreforcities.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Ruo_emo_booklet_final_booklet_20180629.pdf

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The collaborative research took place in an intensive Research Week in Napier, which ran from Sunday 16 February to Saturday 22 February 2020. The project kicked off with a launch, which included all the Napier and University researchers, with presentations from the representatives of CAM, WCDHS, Napier informal settlement, PEP, and ACC.

Thereafter, the week included collaborative workshops to build the approach and the ways in which students and Napier researchers could work together, information and discussion sessions with stakeholders in the project, a regional field trip together, and, most importantly, research sessions in the settlement.

The week started with interviews with settlement families on their housing and migration histories, tracking what brought them to Napier, their experiences of navigating and securing housing.



In the latter part of the week, research teams were reconfigured around particular themes, which allowed us to document:

a) Homebuilding, gardening and community businesses and shops;
b) Livelihoods, work and youth;
c) Infrastructure, particularly toilets and waste; and
d) Leadership and governance, the interface with the municipality.

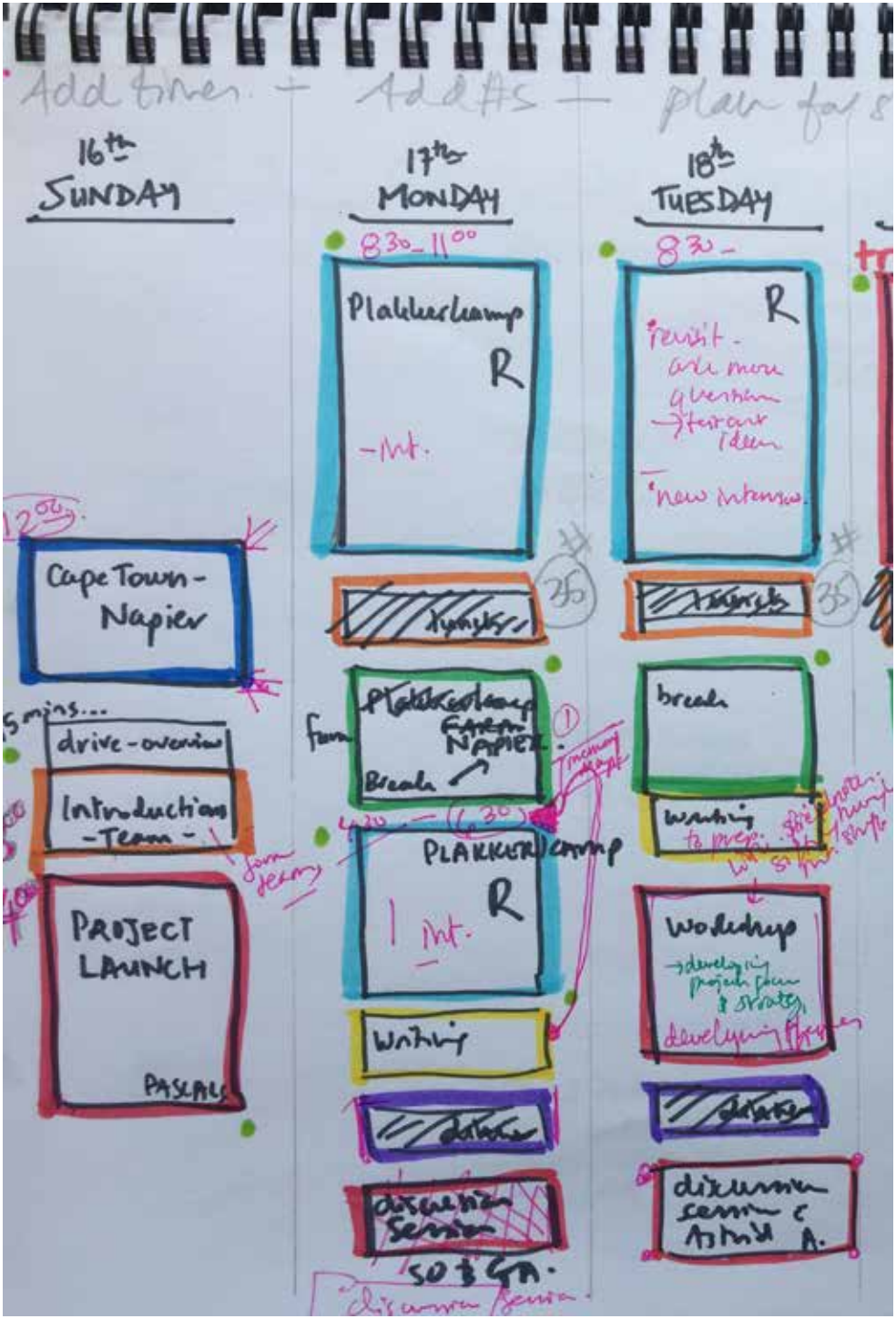
This book shares the substantive outcomes of the research work, presented in the form of narratives of homemaking and housing histories in the settlement, as well as the thematic issues which shape everyday life in critical ways. We hope that this mix documents everyday life in the settlement, the lived experiences of access to key infrastructure such as toilets, and the experiences of the settlement which are key to figuring out effective governance and the settlement's development in the medium to longer term. We hope this material is useful to settlement leaders and residents in their own organising and mobilizing work. We hope that this material also helps Municipal officials and PEP engage in the settlements in rooted ways that reflect the complexities of everyday life and the settlement's logics, opportunities and challenges.

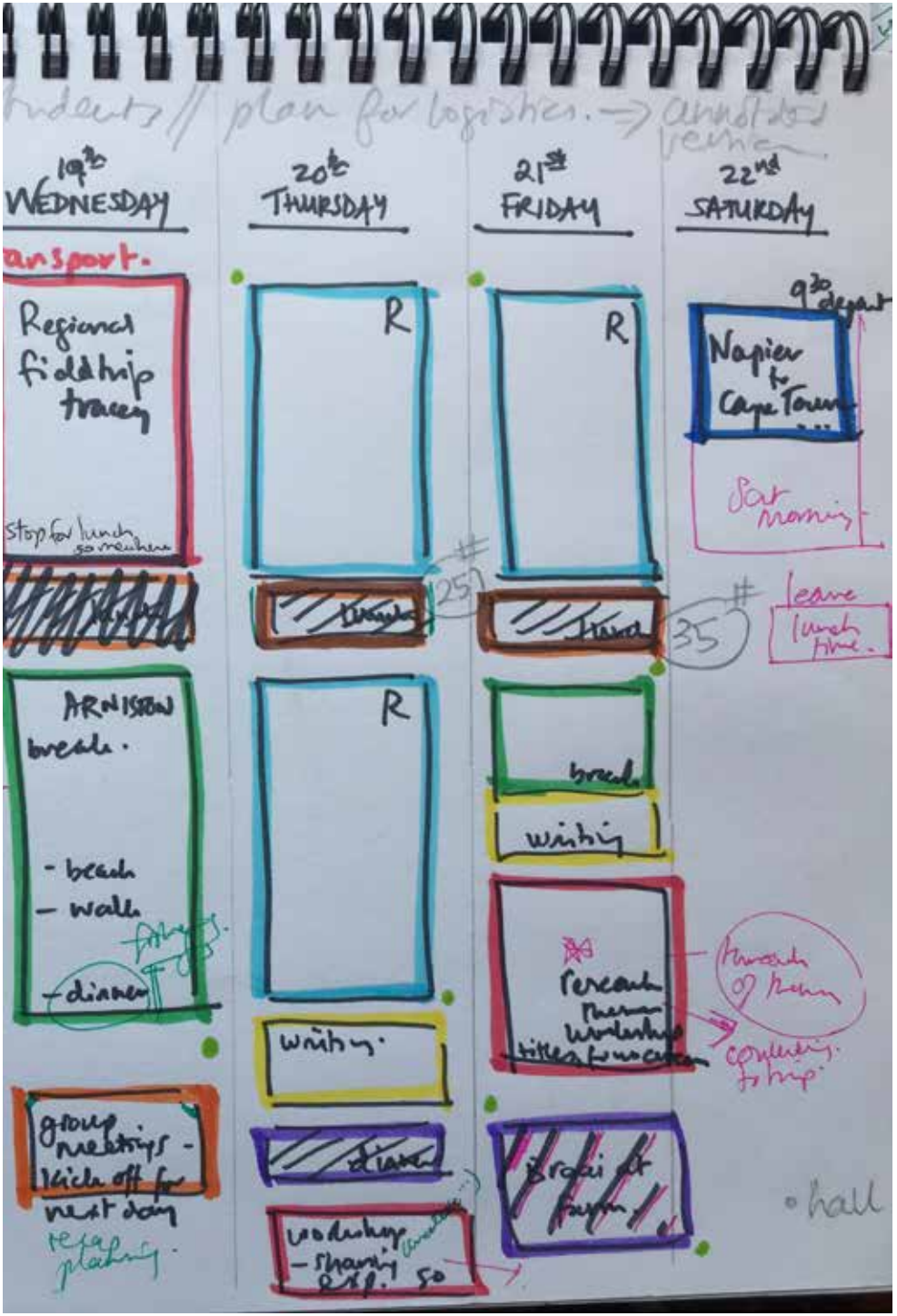
The Research Week combined three objectives: ways to build our collaboration, ways to learn research skills, and hands-on experience in interviewing, in the work of translating, analysing and documenting settlement experiences. The schedule was intense, requiring a mix of extensive planning, effective logistics, and flexibility and thinking on our feet to make everything work. Multiple ways of engaging together such as:

1) Workshop sessions to develop research teams' skills building, such as developing good interviewing questions and rigorous methods for the thematic research, and strategies which linked into settlement dynamics and realities effectively.

2) Research sessions where teams engaged together in interviews and in documentation processes, for instance mapping, photographing, and tracking themes in the settlement.

3) Sharing sessions which situated the research work and the ways in which it sat in a variety of critical local and regional debates on settlements, upgrading, development and so on, and which brought together different key figures and actors in the process. These included an initial Launch of the Studio on the Sunday evening and discussion sessions with PEP mid-week.





4) A regional tour which situated the regional spatial economy and history of area, in histories of land access, forced removals, and the broader political and economic patterns which shaped the region. Led by Tracey Lee Dennis, our trip took us from Napier to Bredasdorp, to Arniston, and Struisbaai, to understand the housing patterns and broader political dynamics which shaped the area and settlement dynamics in it. Our fieldtrip also provided us all a chance to enjoy the Cape Agulhas region, to visit the sea, the southern-most point of the continent, and to be together as a Napier-ACC group.

5) Evening sessions were also held for students to build their writing and reflecting, and to ensure the quality of the work and to engage in a more intimate way with the learning through the research process.

We ended the week with a braai to celebrate our completion of the research. The Research Week was a fantastic experience, extra-ordinarily intense, requiring a juggle of logistics and processes through which we could build our skills, our project conversations, effective research strategies, conduct rigorous and respectful research, and root the thematic focus concretely in issues emerging from the research.

On the return to Campus, the students worked to process and present the findings. Our planned collective session at UCT, where the Napier participants, and PEP would share the emerging work, was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. UCT suspended in-person teaching three days before this event.

Thereafter, we continued the work online, for the remainder of the semester, which gave students a chance to develop the rigour of the research, its analysis and to engage more fully with writing on methods of collaboration. Although Lockdown and COVID-19 prevented in-person engagement with the Napier participants, we stayed in touch through WhatsApp with Lele Kakana, the coordinator, and with others involved on the team. Through couriering materials to them, they have checked this work with those interviewed, a key process essential to publishing the material in this book.

The thematic and household narratives that follow in the book are products of this semester work.














I want to grow my home

INTERVIEWEE: Bongiwe Bunga
INTERVIEWED BY: Jinty Jackson and Tommaso Cosentino

It has been four years since Bongiwe Bunga moved to Napier to build a new life; a life that, in many ways, she is still dreaming of, and planning towards. She grew up in in the Eastern Cape's Mbethe district, a region of rolling green hills and mud huts. In Grade 11, just before completing high school, she had to drop out and start working because she says her parents were "suffering" from economic hardship due to poverty and unemployment.

In 2016, at the age of 28, Bongiwe decided to move to the Western Cape, choosing Napier because her elder sister was living there. Bongiwe brought her elder son with her, leaving her younger son behind with her mother. She hoped to find a job that would allow her to support her family in the Eastern Cape, particularly her mother as her father had passed away.

LIVING WITH A SON AND A BROTHER

In Napier, Bongiwe and her 12-year-old son Afike share a two-roomed house with Bongiwe's 21-year-old brother. The house, consisting of a kitchen and a bedroom, was originally built by Bongiwe's sister, with the help of her husband. Once Bongiwe's sister found employment she and her husband settled on a nearby farm and left the house in the informal settlement to her siblings.

Having her sister's house available and believing Napier might be a good place to find a job, Bongiwe decided to leave her hometown. Once in Napier, unfortunately, she did not find the job opportunities she expected. She has had to make a living out of seasonal jobs, yet, for her, it is still better than trying to find work back in the Eastern Cape. Part of the money Bongiwe earns goes to her mother and her eight-year old son who live in Bongiwe's grandmother's house in Mbethe. Her brother has a more stable job on a contract. "He works to build the house of the white men in Bredasdorp", she says explaining that he could not find a job in Napier. His wage is also an important source of income to support the household.

While Bongiwe and her brother each have a bed in the bedroom, Afike must sleep in the kitchen. Bongiwe emphasizes how difficult and undignified it is sharing such a tiny space with her brother. For instance, when he needs to wash himself, she must leave the bedroom and sit in the kitchen in order to grant him some privacy. Bathing is far from easy. It entails filling a plastic basinet the closest communal tap and, in winter, warming the water up in an electric kettle. At certain times (especially when most people return from work), the taps get overcrowded and one must queue for a long time before being able to collect water.

Bongiwe worries about Afike, who attends the local primary school. She remarks, proudly, that he is serious about his studies and does his homework in the afternoons. Nevertheless, she is concerned that he gets exposed to other kids' bad behaviour, such as doing drugs and playing truant from school. When Bongiwe takes time out to relax at the weekend, her favourite place to go is the sports fields adjacent to Afike's school where she occasionally plays basketball games. It is a good ten minutes' walk from her house, but Bongiwe is determined to show us this place outside the settlement that is very important for her with its well-maintained school grounds, brick buildings and sports fields. On the walk there she reflects that she is happy to see Afike studying in the Afrikaans language because, "It is the language they speak here".

STRUGGLING AGAINST VULNERABILITY

Due to the unhygienic conditions of the informal settlement, Bongiwe is reluctant to bring her younger child to live in Napier as, "You need at least ten years to see what is wrong, what is right". She is worried that he could catch diseases from the poorly maintained toilets and from the open-air rivulets of black and grey water that run through the settlement. Municipal waste collection only occurs once a week, which is part of the reason why she thinks the "Plakkerskamp" is so dirty.

Going to the toilets is a daily struggle that is never won. The municipality provides residents of the settlement with outside toilets they are expected to share. Bongiwe's household was assigned one some 20 metres from her house. She laments that her several

attempts to put a lock on her toilet in order to keep it clean and under control were unsuccessful. Bongiwe therefore uses a toilet in the "Xhosa side" of the settlement where sharing toilet cabins with other households is managed in a way that better fits her. To get there, she must walk two minutes to the next block where she borrows keys from her friend Nandipha who manages access to a toilet. Nandipha is Bongiwe's good friend and they help each other by sharing staples such as flour and sugar.

Having more secure accommodation is one of her dreams and main needs. Houses in the settlement frequently get broken into. A metal chain strung through Bongiwe's house door speaks of the sense of vulnerability she experiences in the settlement. Whenever she leaves home, she closes the chain with a padlock. She explains that the chain is necessary as the sound of anyone trying to break it would catch the neighbours' attention, in case she is not in the house. Bongiwe relies on her neighbours to keep her house safe from break-ins as she does not feel protected by the police. In her view, police officers are only responsive to certain kinds of criminal offences. For instance, she contends that if people call the police because of drug-related crimes they usually intervene quite quickly, whereas, she says, "If I call them and say, 'My husband is beating me,' they will never come". Her neighbours, on the contrary, "keep an eye" on each other's houses and exert forms of peer control that allow Bongiwe to feel safer.

"THERE I FEEL GOOD!"

In order to let us understand how she feels about her current accommodation, Bongiwe tells us about her past and her roots in the Eastern Cape, where she formed and anchored her sense of "being at home". The loss of her grandmother, who passed on in 2009, and the distance from her loved ones who live back in Mbethe, are still open wounds and make it very emotional for her to talk about her origins. As a child she was raised by her grandmother, for whom she carries a lot of respect. "She was better than my mother," she says, referring to the education her grandma gave her during her childhood and adolescence. As she brings back memories of the Umngqusho (a 'traditional' Xhosa dish made with samp and beans) her grandma used to cook for her, Bongiwe's voice shakes with emotion. Evoking this dish, which she associates with her other home in Mbethe, brings that place and her grandmother's love for her viscerally into the room.

When Bongiwe has enough money and time, she returns to the Eastern Cape. "I like to go back there because when I am there, I feel good!" she says. In Mbethe, Bongiwe used to live in a "rondah" (short for 'Rondawel', Afrikaans for traditional, African huts) that her grandmother built. Bongiwe herself knows how to build a house according to traditional techniques but observes that In Napier, unfortunately, there is not enough nor the right type of grass to thatch one.

The warmth of feeling Bongiwe shows when speaking about her grandmother's house is very different from her feelings towards the house in Napier as it currently stands. The poor conditions of the structure do not make Bongiwe feel at home. In the house, "when it is cold it is cold, when it is hot it is hot" as the walls are a patchwork of rusted corrugated iron, lined haphazardly with plywood as insulation. She wishes she had enough money to change her house for the better. In part, she and her brother have already started improving her house by adding a room that currently hosts the kitchen. An uneven mosaic of white tiles covers most of the floor. Against the far wall, a set of cupboards have been neatly built to fit into the space. Bongiwe stores her food in plastic tubs stacked on a shelf beside the cupboard. There is also a two-plate electric stove balanced on a narrow wooden stool from where it can be shifted to allow guests to sit down when necessary.

It took Bongiwe and her brother almost one year to complete this work. They bought the materials to expand the building from "Coloured people" who sell second-hand "zinc" (the corrugated iron used to construct most houses in the settlement) in the street. The price for each sheet ranged from R20 to R50 but the quality is bad. Another affordable alternative source of zinc is to ask "the white people who are breaking their houses" to donate the waste materials from their renovations.

WORKING TOWARDS A STABLE, BEAUTIFUL HOME

Bongiwe is determined to make her home "more beautiful" and structurally solid, starting by fixing its leaking roof and closing the holes in the walls that undermine her privacy and security. She also considers it very important to obtain the title deed for a plot where she can build her own house. She sees this as an important step to improve her personal stability and security. "I want to grow my

home because I know the situation of my home," she says, expressing her desire to invest time, energy and resources in this project. Bongiwe thinks of it as a way to achieve better living conditions for herself, but also as a form of heritage for her children after she is gone.

There is one house in particular she points to as being ideal for her, if she had to stay in the settlement. She takes us to see this house near the top of the settlement. What stands out is that it is considerably more spacious than most others, big enough for two families. It has two satellite television dishes on its roof. Unlike most surrounding shacks, this one is built out of new sheets of zinc which are grey in colour. Its other distinction is that it has a large yard surrounded by a fence. For Bongiwe, this is an example of a stable, safe house that could make her feel "good".

Alongside her dreams and projects for a better house in the informal settlement, she has applied for the low-income, state-delivered RDP houses. She believes that in a couple of years she will get one of these houses which she sees as a much better option than her current dwelling situation. RDP houses "feel right, because you don't have to care about rain, about cold". However, the idea of having to rebuild her neighbourhood relationships and networks makes her uncomfortable. Bongiwe says, "If my child goes there and breaks something, they will shout at me, you see?" referring to the area where the RDP houses are located. This is also due to her perception that "there is not so many Xhosa people" (sic) in the Smartie Town," which would make interactions with her neighbours more difficult as she cannot speak Afrikaans. This is the reason why Bongiwe would prefer to live in a proper house "with my own toilet", without, ideally, having to leave the settlement. As she explains, "Here I know my neighbours!"

It is home because we are here

INTERVIEWEE: Ntombe Letsoafa
INTERVIEWED BY: Malana Rogers-Bursen and Hend El-Ghazaly

We entered Ntombe Letsoafa's mother's house through a metal gate to a wide front yard with a garbage bin bearing a sticker from the Cape Agulhas Municipality. Ntombe, her mother and her daughter live together in this house. It is an RDP house, which her mother applied for a long time ago. At that time, she was living in the older informal settlement of Napier, before floods in 2009 forced residents to move up the hill in what is called the "Plakkerskamp". We sit on a couch covered with a beautiful handmade crochet cover, in front of a wide window with a blue curtain turning the sunlight blue inside the house, and a wide wooden frame on the wall with a collage of family pictures.

With nostalgia, Ntombe recalled her life in the old informal settlement on the other side of Napier, "It was nice there, we know each other, and if maybe someone wanted to do something wrong, it was not that easy." When she moved to the area known as Smartie Town where she now lives with her mother, there were only a few other people originally from the (old) informal settlement who had also moved to Smartie town. The majority relocated to the new informal settlement in its current site. Now, they barely know the names of their neighbors. At the same time, Ntombe also shows gratitude for having moved to Smartie Town because there is electricity, which was not available in the previous informal settlement of Napier nor the Eastern Cape where she spent her childhood.

Ntombe has lived in Napier at different times in her life. "I also came from Eastern Cape, we are all foreigners here," she said. She was raised by her grandmother in the Eastern Cape while her mother lived and worked in Napier. She expressed her sincere desire for her grandmother to come and live with them, but her grandmother is deeply attached to her place as well. "She wants to sit near my grandfather's grave, and she will miss her chicken and sheep for sure," Ntombe explained. Ntombe also misses her two older brothers; one of whom is working in Johannesburg as a teacher and the other lives and works in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. They all look forward to December gatherings back in Eastern Cape.

Khayelitsha was also an important stop in Ntombe's life. She lived there with her brother during high school, and again, a few years later, she went back to live near Cape Town while spending two years doing her in-service internship in the Cape Town Parliament. Every day, she used to get up very early when the sky was still dark. She would walk in a hurry as, "you never know who is behind you," to catch the Golden Arrow bus. She was spending most of her meagre salary on commuting, but she could accept that in exchange for gaining the experience she needed to get her national diploma. Despite these hard conditions, she remained determined and also managed to save money to buy material to build her future house.

Ntombe got a plot in the informal settlement in 2019 after joining a peaceful march to the municipality to demand more land. At the time the settlement was full, with no plots available. The march was successful, and the municipality allocated more land at the top of the settlement. We asked Ntombe if she could show us the house she had built there. It was finished with the external structure made of zinc with wide metal windows. She expressed her frustration and anger towards the constructor she had hired to do the work, complaining about the height of the ceiling and the position of the window. Despite all of this, she enthusiastically showed us her house. Ntombe felt a need to have "her" house, saying, "I am old now and I need to do something on my own … it is about struggling myself, without crying to my mother".

"Ohhh! It must be very beautiful", said Ntombe, in answer to the question, "How do imagine your future house?" After inhaling a long breath and rolling her eyes she continued,

> "It must be like a lady's house! I want to build my house; make my own designs especially the decorations inside the house".

She could easily list the advantages of the informal settlement: safety for instance which, for her, relates first to the fact that people know each other and second, to the police patrolling the settlement throughout the day. She was

comfortable with having a police station nearby as according to her, "It is rare to go to open a case and they do nothing, also it is a small town and it would be easy for them to do the investigation." Ntombe seemed content with the services the informal settlement has now compared to where she was living before on the other side of Napier, like electricity, toilets, and garbage collection every Thursday.

She put it simply: I am "proud to have a home here, to have something in my own name". At the same time, she was aware of the responsibilities that come with her independence. "You have to put limits for yourself, decide with whom you would mingle and think about your privacy," she told us.

Home for Ntombe is "where you can find love and warmth", which reflects her hopes related to her family. She expressed her desire to extend the house her mother lives in into four or five rooms, so when her brothers come, the place can accommodate them all. "I want to extend this [RDP] house, do something good for my mother, even though I am not living with her". These hopes for her family intersect with her personal hope of getting a job, so she can achieve more for herself, her mother and family.

A home built with his own hands

INTERVIEWEE: John Kapot
INTERVIEWED BY: Mildred Nakkungu and Alessandro Rearte
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Zulike Wyngaard

When asked, John Kapot told us the item he is most proud of in his Wendy house is the sink he installed. It is not attached to a plumbing system, and he uses the water taps shared with the rest of the settlement, but he spoke about the sink with such pride. He continued to explain to us that he connected the house to electricity himself and installed ceiling board to insulate it. He explained that metal shacks get flooded and cold in winter. In a sea of metal, his wooden Wendy house stands out as a stable structure. He considers his Wendy house something to respect. So much so that he referred to the Wendy house as a person,

> "You must protect your house, you must look after him, because whether it is old or new, it looks after you".

John explained that he had to work hard and save up money to build his house. He is unemployed, but previously worked in construction building homes in Napier. As he talks about the house, he speaks with the confidence of someone who built his house himself. He told us he bought his Wendy house new. We asked about other similar structures in the settlement and how he was able to maintain his, while others are struggling. He explained that others bought used Wendy houses, which come with a set of issues: it is difficult to transport these wooden houses whole without a crane, therefore people break them down to build them again in the new location and, ultimately, they are never as secure as a new one. John has thought carefully about ways to adapt to this landscape; to construct in a way that lasts. But he, like many others, does hope for an RDP house and has been on the waiting list for one for over two decades. Though he lives with his girlfriend and her two young children, he explains that everything in the house was chosen by him. He has accumulated various pieces of art and décor over the years from the homes of previous employers. Whenever someone was ready to throw something out or give something away, John took it as an opportunity to collect it for his house.

He is someone who values his space. He welcomed us into his Wendy house, but unlike other interviews, we all stood together in the kitchen. He seemed conscious and guarded about his space, though he was willing to speak with us. This may be a character trait developed in his childhood. He explained that he grew up in Riviersonderend where he lived with his aunt. He moved to the region to complete his Grade 12 in Bredasdorp. After various moves, he settled in Napier 20 years ago. Over the years, he has found his own way in the settlement. He is someone that moves to the beat of his own drum. To remain out of trouble, he stays at home to watch movies and listen to music. He is not interested in other pastimes that could lead to destructive ends. He told us everyone must find a way to survive, but it is difficult with the lack of jobs, and without something to keep them busy, youths end up in self-destructive situations. He told us the municipality should focus on providing the youth with jobs, although, as a middle-aged man, he also struggles to find permanent employment. He told us that he is patient and his time will come, though he has been on the housing waiting list for 27 years. When asked where his wisdom comes from, he says that he saw how the people operated in the households he has worked in, and he learned from them. So, it seems he moves through life taking in what he can and learning from what is offered.

Though it may seem he is a completely solitary man, when we first approached him, we found him warming milk for his grandchild - his son's child. He explained to us that he is willing to help family, but he has been burned when he tried to help other people in the settlement. He feels he received blame when situations have gone awry. Consequently, he has learned to keep to himself where possible. He explained to us that if he could, he would build another Wendy house, so there could be one for him and his girlfriend, and one for her children. His ultimate dream is to be provided with a plot of land to manifest his own house out of wood. He told us he can build anything out of wood, if given a chance.

Going forward: Developing step-by-step

INTERVIEWEE: Avukile Maguga
INTERVIEWED BY: Sinazo Funde and Elena Antoni
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Nolukholo Mayile

The first thing that we notice as we step into Avukile Maguga's home is the floor. Several different types of tiles are nicely arranged. When we asked him about it, he mentions that he designed it himself. When Avukile came to Napier in 2013, he joined his brother, who was staying in this place. His brother moved back to the Eastern Cape shortly after Avukile moved in. Avukile was not satisfied with the state the house was in and decided to upgrade it. He started with the floor because his living room and kitchen flooded when it rained. As a plumber, he already had the necessary skills to fix his house.

When he was done with the floor, he raised the roof of the house because it was too low. Right now, he is planning to install a new ceiling. Besides that, a new sink is already waiting to be installed in the kitchen. As Avukile tells us about the water pipes needed for the installation of the sink, his son returns from preschool. Introducing us, Avukile explains that the boy's mother attends college in Caledon. As a result, she comes home only during the weekends and Avukile takes care of their son by himself most of the time.

As a general worker and full time employee of Cape Agulhas Municipality (CAM), Avukile has had the opportunity to advance his skills. Since he was already a plumber when he first started his job, he completed a plumbing certificate at Northlink College which operates in partnership with CAM. When there is another opportunity to attend workshops, Avukile plans to get a certificate in carpentry to diversify his skills. From our understanding, this opportunity will not only make him flexible and able to adjust to changes in the job market, but it will also enable him to develop his own home in the ways he wants. For instance, he designed and built the table that is in the living room using leftover materials from the construction of the roof. As Avukile emphasised,

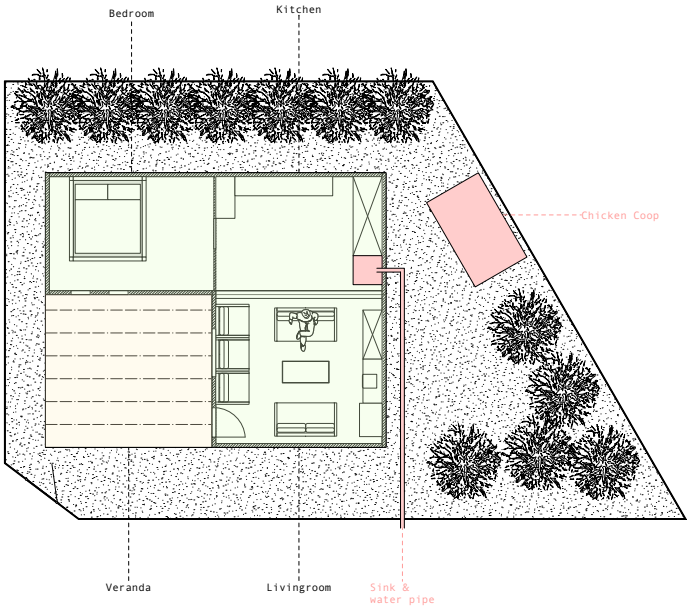
> "Emkhukhu asiyilahli imaterial" (In an informal settlement you don't throw away materials).

Avukile's house is relatively large because at the time when his brother got the plot, it was situated on the periphery, where the settlement ended. That location enabled him to take up as much space as he could. Avukile's house is large. It has an open-plan lounge and kitchen, a bedroom, and a veranda that is connected to the living room. The backyard is also spacious. He uses it to store his building materials and plans to extend the usage of the back yard as a garden for keeping chickens. He wants to keep two chickens in order to get free eggs for himself and his family. He said that he wouldn't be able to keep more because of the amount of work that comes with rearing chickens.

He is not happy about how Napier has evolved over the years. Avukile has a good relationship with his neighbours, but he has some problems with the young adults who are substance abusers in the settlement and engage in criminal activities and sometimes even break into people's homes. Besides that, there are stray animals that occasionally bother him in his yard. Avukile is planning on calling the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) to come and collect them before they start hiding in his house.

When it comes to the development of the settlement, he isn't optimistic about upgrading, as the only thing that the municipality has done for the settlement since he moved in, he says, was the installation of streetlights in 2013. While standing on his veranda, we notice that he has two house numbers. When we ask him about it, he laughs and says that one day he came back from work and found he had a new house number. The change of house numbers without him knowing about it makes it hard for Avukile to decide which address to use when he wants to receive mail. However, the letters of residents of the settlement are delivered to the petrol station, not to their houses.

Even though Avukile lives in Napier



Base structure

Extensions/Additions

Planned construction

with his son full time, he still considers the Eastern Cape home. For him, it is more homely than where he's currently staying. Avukile grew up in the Eastern Cape and his relatives live there.

This link to his family is the reason he feels a deep sense of rootedness in the Eastern Cape, because no matter where he lives, it will always be his first home.

This sense of rootedness elsewhere has not stopped Avukile from making a new home in Napier; he is happy about the current state of his house and even more excited about the renovations that he will be adding and the opportunities they will provide for him and his son.

The process and experience of building homes in Napier Informal Settlement

Elena Antoni | Sinazo Funde | Nolwethu Kakana

INTRODUCTION

The thematic aims to understand how people build; starting from the process of securing a plot for themselves and their families. We focused on the stories of three residents who are referred to here as, the Planner (Sizwe Majavu), the Architect (Mziwothando Lungephi) and the Manager (Nolwethu Kakana, who goes by the name, Lele). Mziwothando and Sizwe both live in the settlement, but their journeys have been very different. Their homes look different as well because of how the systems and processes of building have changed over time. Lele is a resident as well as a representative for CAM in the settlement. Since her appointment as a squatter controller, she has played a role in managing the settlement and assisting people to get plots for their homes. We explore the structural changes, material and official, that have occurred in the settlement, pieced together through the stories of our three respondents. These stories are drawn from interviews, observations, and drawings of homes.

MZIWOTHANDO LUNGEPHI: THE ARCHITECT

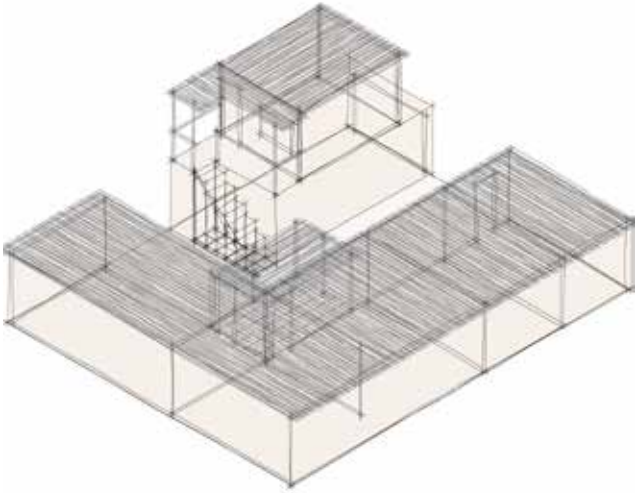
One of the most intriguing houses in the settlement, in terms of its design, was that of Mziwothando. We saw his house from the main road that goes into the settlement and we thought to ourselves, "We have to talk to the owner and see this house". All we saw was a double storey that stood out from other structures. When we went to look at it, we saw the double storey was separate from the rest of the house. The main structure was L-shaped with two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a living room. There was a garage which had a room on top of it.

Mziwothando, is a forty-year-old man from the Eastern Cape, who moved to Napier in 2009 with his wife. When he moved to Napier, there was no squatter controller – the job that is assigned to Lele now. He was informed about the process of getting a letter to build on municipal land and went to CAM himself to get permission to build his house. When he was allocated a plot, it was comparatively larger than what is currently given because there were fewer residents in the settlement at the time. Mziwonthando's plot was even bigger because it happened to be located on the periphery of the settlement at the time. He said the process of the allocation of land included the municipal representatives putting sticks on the ground earmarking how much land he could use. They did not use a tape measure or other tools of measurement; hence he did not know the exact plot size he was allocated.

Mziwothando initially built a house with only one room and kept adding additional rooms every time family members came to live with him. In 2016, he built a garage for his car and later added a room on top of the garage as a storeroom for his

tools because he had no designated place to keep them. He built his house himself and he did it exactly the way he imagined it. He has a lot of tools because, like most men in the settlement, he works on a farm and often receives tools from his employers. Mziwothando does not sell these tools to anyone, he keeps them for future use.

In his home, Mziwothando lives with his wife and child. While we were interviewing him outside, his wife was inside watching TV. There were lots of children playing in his yard and the neighbours were hanging out there as well. The children were playing in an old car next to his garage, some were going up and down the double storey garage chasing each other along the stairs. This was by far the most neighbour-friendly house we had been to in Napier.



Exploded view of Mziwothando's House

NOLWETHU KAKANA (LELE): THE MANAGER

One of the most important people we were introduced to when we arrived in Napier, was Nolwethu, also known as Lele. Nolwethu is a community leader, one of five elected by the community. She is currently also a squatter controller in the settlement, a position created by the municipality in their efforts towards managing informal settlements. She is 33 years old and was born in the Eastern Cape. She moved to Napier in 2005 in search of employment. When she explained it to us, she described a squatter controller as a person that monitors the number and quality/size of structures, the legitimacy of occupation, as well as informing people about the process of getting a plot in the settlement. She is basically the eyes and ears of CAM when it comes to dealing with informal structures in the area.

We asked Lele about what people in the community thought about her role as a squatter controller, and her response was that people think she is a spy for the municipality. The community was not informed about the introduction of a squatter controller in the settlement. This made it hard for her to do her job because people think she is stepping over the line. When she sees someone building, she must approach them and ask them for the letter of approval from the municipality; if they do not have it, she is required to report them to her supervisor in the municipality. Another challenge that Lele faces in her job is that people come and report issues that are not related to her duties, for example, crime, plumbing issues, blockages, and so on.

As more and more people move into the area, Lele's job keeps getting more challenging because she must monitor the increasing number of structures. She said that some people do not like to follow the rules or even be told what to do by her because she is a woman and because she is younger than most of the people whose houses she has to oversee. We asked Lele how she liked living in the settlement; her response was that she did not feel safe living there because she often gets threats from residents who do not want to follow the rules. She does not see herself living in Napier for long. She plans to move back to the Eastern Cape to be with her family. Lele is a single mother of three, she would like to get a better, less stressful job so that she is able to take better care of her family.

"Being a strong, hardworking and independent woman is what keeps me going"

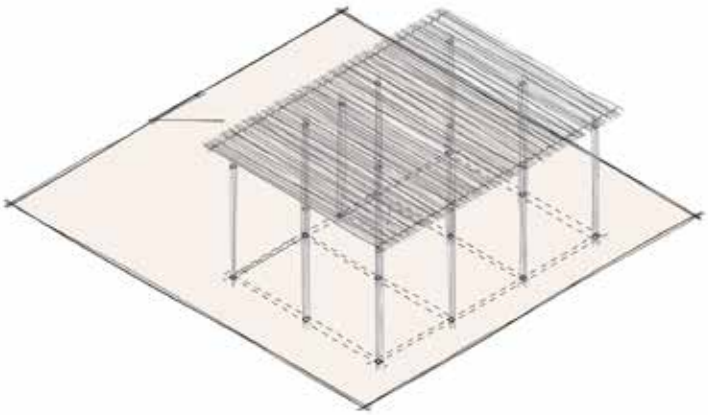
SIZWE MAJAVU: THE PLANNER

We were also interested in talking to people who owned plots but had not 'finished' building their houses yet. On the periphery of the settlement, where recent plots had been allocated, lay structures that had only wooden frames for the walls and roof, and a fence around the yard.

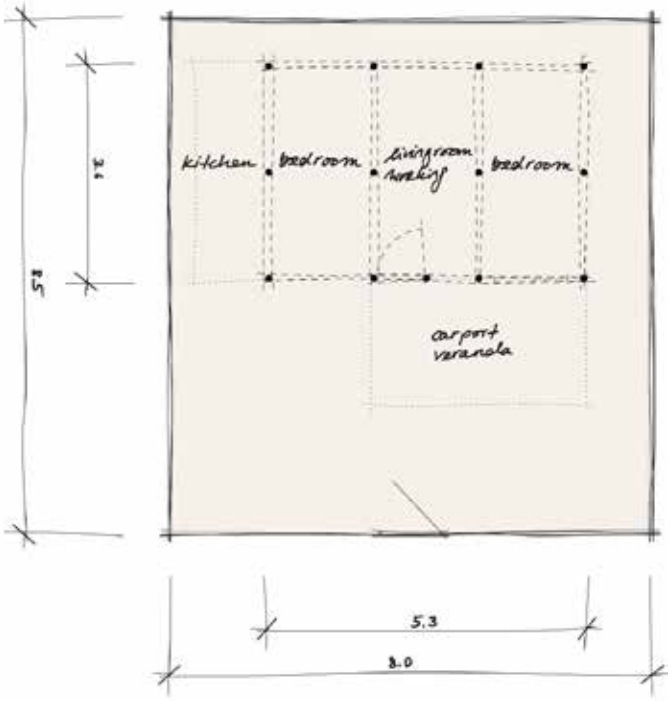
We were introduced to Sizwe Majavu, a 29-year-old man who, at the time of the interview, was staying at his friend's house in the settlement, with his wife and new-born baby. Sizwe applied for and received a letter confirming the allocation of a plot from the CAM on the 15th of January 2020. It had been three weeks since he had gathered enough materials to build the frame of the house as well as the fence bordering his yard.

Sizwe explained that he spoke to Lele regarding his need for a shelter and she referred him to CAM. Sizwe built the frame of the house in a single day, he said that, if he had more material, he would build his entire house in one go. He was grateful that his friend had accommodated him and his family, but he was excited that he had received a plot of his own and that he could build a home for his family. The element of independence that came with getting a plot gave him a sense of pride and achievement.

His biggest motivation for getting a place of his own was his family, his wife and the baby. His wife has a sewing business. She makes church clothes, school uniforms, and alters clothing items for people who live in and around the settlement. Since they are staying in someone else's house, his wife does not have enough space to run her business properly; she needs her own working space. Sizwe works on a farm and he is still collecting materials to finish building his house. He has a clear plan for what he wants to build and how he wants to build it. He explained to us that he wants to have a bedroom, a living room, a working area for his wife, and a kitchen. The kitchen will be built as an extension to the current structure of the house. Sizwe's plot is not as big as other older plots in the settlement, but he seemed happy that he has it, and was very happy to show it to us.



Exploded view of Sizwe's current structure



Sizwe's plan for his house

KEY FINDINGS

Both of our builders, (Mziwothando and Sizwe) had very different encounters with the municipality in terms of getting access to a plot. Their motivations for building were also quite different. As shown in the narrative, Mziwothando has a larger plot than Sizwe because he moved to Napier when the settlement had only a few residents and therefore plenty of space for its occupants at the time. As time went by the settlement evolved and the demand for plots increased. This is where Lele comes in: as the manager, she works with the municipality to maintain an order of the structures in the settlement. She also helps people who are in need of housing to go through the proper channels for accessing or registering their plots, as she has done for Sizwe. Whether the plot is large or small, it brings joy to its occupants and provides a home for families. The process of building a house is not separate from home-making; they are intermingled. We have seen that plot size does not limit creativity and building materials, and styles of building differ from door to door.

For residents of the settlement improvisation is an essential activity to build homes and livelihoods. Improvising demands a lot of mathematics, calculations and speculations, as well as the necessity to keep track of constant alterations that shape daily existence. Residents need to suture together their experiences and know-how and form collaborations that nurture a sense of solidarity. Improvisation often builds tactics and daily struggles that respond to instant needs rather than long-term strategic ends. It was clear that people have a vision of their wants and needs but they cannot afford to plan far ahead in time as even to struggle between today and tomorrow is sometimes already a difficulty. Residents possess the capacity to deliver small scale and temporary solutions but to intervene in an impactful longer-term manner is difficult. That requires better-oriented urban policies.

Research Essay excerpt, Kadria Hassan Ali

Most of the shacks were built with rusted corrugated iron and wooden slats, which inhabitants of the settlement source as remnants from renovations and as construction waste from new building projects in town. According to Nolwethu Kakana, a community leader and the municipal 'squatter controller', many of the building materials come either from landfills or from such construction sites, which then get traded within the settlement. Many settlement dwellers collect the materials for developing their own shacks, a form of creativity in necessity, and a catalyst in which waste materials become valuable through the act of re-use. The everyday practices of homebuilding, these forms of 'auto-construction' and 'improvised materialism', produce a material increase in value, a way in which the settlement builds an 'alternative urbanism'.

Research Essay excerpt, Elena Antoni

Voices from the Cape Agulhas Municipality

Michael Dennis's association with the municipality goes back almost 25 years, when he was elected a Councillor. However, a decade ago, he decided to step away from the politics and work in municipal administration instead. He studied Public Administration at the University of Western Cape (UWC). Currently, Michael Dennis is Manager of the Human Settlements Department. He is responsible for all the informal settlements in Cape Agulhas, including allocation of plots, provision of services, new housing projects, and so on.

"We have an electronic housing database. According to our [housing] policy, we allocate houses according to your application date on the waiting list. For instance, the last two projects we had in Bredasdorp in 2013-2014, we stopped on the waiting list for people with the application date 2005. So, the beneficiaries that will benefit from the new projects start from 2005, 06, 07 up to 2010. So that is how we do our allocation, but we also make provision for vulnerable cases; people with serious social circumstances in the community. On the waiting list, for Bredasdorp only, we're looking at plus minus 3,500 [households]. Struisbaai, we're looking at plus minus 500; Napier, we're looking at plus minus 200, and Arniston plus minus 100."

"I think politicians have realized -- This [informal settlements] is an African phenomenon. Politicians know that informal settlements are here to stay. We have to plan for it. We can't chase people away. We've got foreign nationals coming in. We can't chase people away. They've got the right to come and find an opportunity. As long as they are legally within the country, we don't have a problem. So, there is the sense from the community, as well as our politicians that informal settlements are here to stay. We just need to find ways and means with limited resources to provide services to people. We have to see how we can accommodate and improve service delivery at all levels."

"In terms of Napier, you can see the difference compared to Zwelitsha, for instance, and Struisbaai. It's nicely formalized and that's the difference I think that we tried to do when we relocated the settlement from the riverbank. We are still sitting with a challenge there with people coming in trying to put up their shacks without permission. Luckily for us, we've got officials that are our eyes and ears as well. Not plain policeman, but rather working with us. And that's the idea also that we want to sell to communities. If we have people reporting on informal settlement issues, it's not that that person is a policeman and want to hit you and the people that we've appointed, we've also made them understand that is your role, work with the communities. You're not only reporting illegal stuff, but also service delivery issues as they happen, so that we can act on that."

Michael Dennis, Manager, Human Settlements

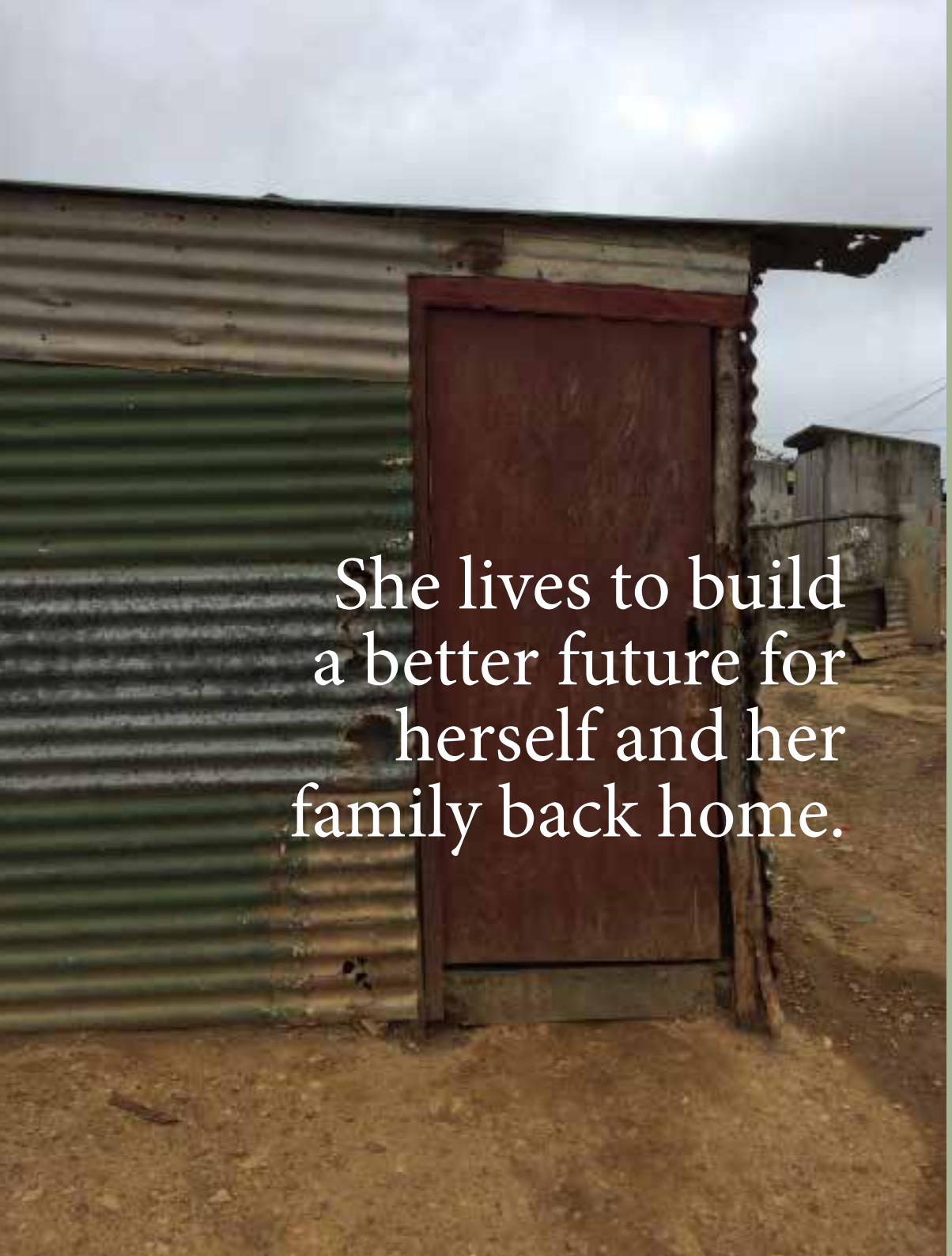
"If someone wants to put a shack, she must come to the office… [to] me. Then my Manager is going to send me to go and check if there is a space so that person can put a shack. So, no one's allowed to put a shack without the permission from us. But the people are not doing that. They just put their shacks as they please. Then it comes back to me. In this municipality, it is governed by the DA now. You see now that pile of letters? Now they decided that the people must have to write letters now, if you want a plot now. It was not like that before. Now you have to write a letter. [Earlier], People just came and asked if we can get a plot. Then we go and look if there's a space and give that person space. But now, people have to write a letter. Then the letters - I have to compile all these letters and put [them] on the system. Then one or two, three weeks, the Councillors just asking the list, then we sit down and look at the circumstances of the people in need."

"The condition is you are not allowed to hire out your place. If you are leaving Cape Agulhas, maybe in Cape Town, or whatever, you are not allowed to sell the property. So, as to material, you have to break your material and sell over, and to leave the space. The municipality is going to give another person that space. If someone got a new [place], like these people are getting new houses now, that person must demolish the shack, then take your material and sell your material, and leave the space. But there are families that are big, and the houses are too small. So, they have to come and tell us: 'no, I've got this family, I can't take all my kids to my house. I'm going to leave them behind'. So that one can't demolish the shack."

Felicia Bungu, Squatter Control Officer

Originally from Eastern Cape, Felicia Bungu moved to Bredasdorp in 2009. Since then she has worked with the Municipality in one capacity or the other. Reporting to Manager – Human Settlements, Felicia Bungu is currently in charge of 'squatter control' in CAM. All applications for building or modifying shacks must go through her. She has one or two people working for her in every informal settlement.

Voices from the Cape Agulhas Municipality



She lives to build a better future for herself and her family back home.

I am here for a better future!

INTERVIEWEE: Alice Banda
INTERVIEWED BY: Bronwin Du Preez and Linus Suter
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Lindokhule Fetile

At the age of twenty-one, a few years after completing her schooling, Alice Banda left her home in Malawi in search of better job opportunities in South Africa. Alice took this big decision for her future. The journey from Malawi was expensive. Her sister, already living in Cape Town and working as a domestic cleaner, helped her to cover the costs. When Alice arrived in Cape Town, she stayed with this sister for the first few months. At the time, her brother already living in Napier. He persuaded Alice to move to the settlement, explaining that it would be better for her as she could find employment on farms in the area.

Alice found farm work in Napier and discovered a love for agriculture. It is an industry in which she would like to build further skills. From Monday to Friday she works on the farm. On weekends, Alice has a second job. She works at "Bay Leaf", a local popup restaurant in the town of Napier. With these two jobs, she is able to send money back home to Malawi. Work has also helped her make friends in the settlement and allowed her to live independently.

Initially Alice lived with her brother, his wife and their child but space was limited in their home. This drove Alice to find and rent a place of her own in the settlement. When Alice moved into this rented place, the house was bare. She bought furniture to fit it and decorated the walls with a set of lovely wall drapings. The house includes a kitchen and a bedroom, which Alice explains is sufficient as she lives alone. Due to the lack of individual toilet facilities in the settlement, Alice shares a toilet with her brother and his family.

She comments that at times she can feel lonely. She feels safer than she did when living in Cape Town, where she feared xenophobic attacks. In the settlement, she has good relationships. Whenever she lacks something, she is able to ask a neighbor for help. Missing home can at times also become a burden for her. Back home in her "own country" she explains, she was free to do what she wanted to do, and she was surrounded by her other brothers and sisters

Nonetheless, the settlement has been welcoming. When she misses home, it is a little easier because there are other Malawians who live in the settlement. Alice makes the effort to communicate with her family in Malawi on a daily basis, despite being tired from her busy schedule.

Alice's drive in life is palpable. She explained that she works hard and does not drink or smoke. She lives to build a better future for herself and her family back home. She dreams of starting her own business in Malawi and hopes to build a five-bedroom house with its own bathroom and kitchen. Listening to the story of Alice is inspiring. Young and far from home, she dreams of a better future.


Dulux

The most is mine

INTERVIEWEE: Monica Nkuzola
INTERVIEWED BY: Isabella Baranyk and Kadria Hassan
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Siyavuya Blom

From where we sit around the coffee table in Monica's home, the quiet morning din of the street mixes with the sounds of her grandson playing with his friend, and streams in through the open door. When she describes life here as "calm", the word is given immediate meaning by the delicate confidence in her voice and the knowledge that her toddler grandson, his friend, and the chickens are all safe in the yard with minimal supervision. She inherited the house from her brother who has left Napier to move to Caledon with his boss. He brother built it after moving here from the Eastern Cape. We ask Monica if she can remember which aspects of the house she kept as they were and which she added herself, and she replies, "The most is mine," looking around at the cosy sofas on which we've been sitting and the outfitted kitchen behind her.

Monica has been living in the informal settlement since 2015, but the path leading her here wasn't a linear one. She left her hometown in the Eastern Cape years ago when her boss asked her to follow him first to East London, then Cape Town, and finally, Napier, living and cooking in his homes. It wasn't easy to leave her kids, but the promise of work pushed her to make an impossible choice. In East London, she had access to the city and a nearby mall and other facilities, which turned living there into a more pleasant experience than Cape Town, where, in addition to being even further away from her children in the Eastern Cape, the difficultly of accessing public transport and a sprawling city meant her mobility was limited. After moving around so much, settling in Napier has been a welcome change for Monica who has been joined by her (now grown-up) children. In 2015, her brother invited her to take over this place. She was then no longer working for the boss who had asked her to relocate to Napier. Having a house made it easier to continue staying in Napier and avoid yet another move, even when she no longer had her old job. Up until 2017, Monica was able to find temporary employment (as part of a Cape Agulhas Municipality's Community Work Programme) working on an onion farm an hour's walk away.

The house may have originally been built by her brother, but Monica has made it her own. When she first moved in, she used five litres of powder pink paint to coat the interior walls, then took care of the rest of the house. It is made up of two rooms: a combined living room and kitchen, and a bedroom with a large, tall bed that she uses for the nap times of the toddler whom she takes care of for her neighbour. The living room is filled by two large loveseats and a coffee table, creating a sitting area that faces both a television mounted on the wall and the open kitchen, where Monica spends a lot of her time.

On the exterior, small panels of beige corrugated metal overlap to form a wide facade, providing one half of a safe play area for Monica's grandson, completed by a wraparound wire fence. When we ask what she'd take with her from this house if she ever moved or upgraded, Monica rattles off, "fridge, stove, bed," with the speed of an answer that's already been thought out. The fridge and the stove belong to the kitchen, which is by far her favourite part of the house, and she lights up when talking about cooking. Making food was what she did in her boss's house and now she finds joy in cooking for her own children and grandson, as well as for others from the community whom she looks after, as well as for herself. Later, when she stands to pose for a photo in the kitchen, we see a woman in her element, surrounded by stack upon stack of carefully arranged containers, pots, pans, and other equipment, their organisation and reachable distance from the big stove evidence of a chef in command of her space. In future, when she gets around to building something with the materials sitting in her yard, Monica plans on having a garden to go along with her chickens where she can grow spinach and beets – some of her favourite things to cook.

Monica has been making up for the time she spent living in her boss's house; not only by redesigning her own place, but also by building new spaces for her loved ones. She and her husband, have built two additional homes as gifts for their son and daughter, as well as two

other homes that she rents out to tenants from Malawi. She uses material sold by people in the community and can put up a house in two days, although the frame for the house she's been building for her son has been standing half-constructed for a while and she's getting eager to finish it.

As a mother, Monica is a homemaker in the sense that she takes care of her family by cooking nourishing meals, stepping in to provide everything from caring for children and emotional support to a physical place to relax and watch some television after work. She is also literally, a homemaker. With her own two hands and the construction materials she acquires, Monica makes tangible homes for her loved ones.

It is important to her to be able to provide place for her children to live independently if they so desire.

In the other places she's built, the beds she rents to immigrants generate a small income, but these houses also come from a place of care. Immigrants and refugees, she says, "suffer also like us," and she goes out of her way to build community with them. She undercharges for rent in the houses she leases out and takes care of the young children of her women tenants during the day. These kids have become her grandson's friends and playmates, and Monica is glad he's being raised around people from other cultures, learning to love people from different backgrounds. When we ask how it feels to live here in Napier, in her own house with her own kitchen, while also building additional houses for the people she loves, she responds in quiet confidence with one word – "freedom".

Home is there but money is here

INTERVIEWEE: Moses Chirwa
INTERVIEWED BY: Romeo Dipura and Geetika Anand
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Zolile Fetile

The sun was scotching hot and there was not much activity on the streets as if the inhabitants of the neighbourhood were hibernating from the intense heat. Our community partner, Zolile seemed to tower above the gravel roads of Napier with his giant frame as he led us to our next interview. Zolile could not wait to break the news that he had found a Zimbabwean to interview because he understood how much I longed to interview someone from back home. Apart from bypassing the need for a translator, I just could not wait to listen to the experience of one of my own. As we approached Moses Chirwa's house, we were greeted with a bright smile as he welcomed us and gave us seats under the shade of his veranda. As the introductions concluded it became evident that Zolile had mistaken Moses for a Zimbabwean when he was a Malawian national. A warm and welcoming man, when we asked him to tell us his story, he went straight ahead.

Moses is 37 years old and hails from Nqata village in Malawi. He came to Napier in 2017 in search of employment. He had been informed of the opportunities in South Africa by a relative living in Cape Town. He travelled by bus from Malawi to Johannesburg and then to Cape Town where this relative was living. In Malawi, he was engaged mainly in agricultural activities. Given his experience, he was prompted to move from Cape Town to Napier where he could access opportunities due to the proximity to farms in this area. What prompted his decision to immigrate, was the desire to support his family back home in Malawi.

When he moved to Napier the jobs he found were mostly temporary, cutting flowers. He would receive flowers from nearby farms to cut at home. He has worked for five different people in the flowers business. Business is high from August to April but declines dramatically between October and January. His weekly income is between R 800.00 to R1 000.00. He sends part of his income home to Malawi for his family. In Malawi, he has a wife and three children. He felt extremely uncomfortable about being apart from them and told us he sometimes helps himself get over the loneliness and anxiety by looking at his family pictures.

However, he felt that it was better for him to be away whilst being able to support his family financially. "In Malawi, I fail to find money. I like where I get money. When I get money, home becomes happy. When I am not able to send money, family [back home] borrows money from others to survive," he elaborated. He does not consider himself as being in Napier permanently, but only in order to be able to work and support his family. Although Moses feels a sense of security in Napier, he also goes back home to Malawi every Christmas in December. For him, home is where his heart is – in Malawi.

The structure Moses lives in faces a nicely gravelled road. It is a two-roomed structure predominantly made from zinc sheets, sack material and wooden planks. The external enclosures are made from zinc metal sheets. The roof is also made from zinc sheets supported by wooden poles. It is also interesting to note is that Moses's yard is not fenced by any barrier in contrast to some structures in the settlement. In front of the structure is a small veranda where Moses sits whilst cutting his flowers.

Moses is renting his structure for R300.00 per month from a South African. His interior space is divided between cooking and sleeping. As he was telling his story, we heard someone bathing in the house. Moses then informed us that he was living with his brother and he was the one bathing. They also used their sleeping space as a bathroom. To access the toilet, Moses and his brother were using one of the communal toilets. This was uncomfortable for him especially at night, when going out even to the toilet may be dangerous. They were getting access through their landlord who had the keys. In an almost semi-detached fashion, another structure, used by his landlord, extends from where Moses lives, towards the road.

He complained that the structure was very warm on hot day, while the roof leaked in rainy weather. Apart from that,

electricity was already in place when they started renting the structure and he felt comfortable. He also has a great relationship with his landlord and other members of the community. Moses feels secure in the neighbourhood because of frequent police patrols. He is also building a three-bedroomed brick house back home in Malawi thanks to what he earns in Napier. Moses hopes to raise money and start a business back home. In Napier he hopes for a brick house with an en-suite bathroom.

The story of Moses is one of someone who is living for home by being far away from it. Napier is a place where he must be in order to support his family. He is willing to move as better opportunities present themselves. Malawi is where his heart is, where his family resides. Malawi is also where he is building his dream house and where he really wants to be.

Building a better future for our child, bit-by-bit

INTERVIEWEE: Sibongiseni Sokhetye and Zimasa Sebethwa
INTERVIEWED BY: Joseph Dennis N. Quarcoo and Naomi Samake
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Atabile Gwagwa and Vathiswa Siwa

From the outside, the house where Sibongiseni Sokhetye and Zimasa Sebethwa live appears tucked away. It is built on an incline. There is a small window facing downwards towards the main road. It is fenced off with mesh wiring. The fencing also supports a lusciously green peach tree that grows over a small garden filled with spinach and tomatoes. This garden nourishes them, but it is not enough for all their needs. For those, they rely on Shoprite supermarket where they buy grains and other household necessities.

Sibongiseni initially seems uninterested, excusing himself and disappearing into the comfort of his room. Zimasa cautiously engages with us in their garden. She enquires about our mission. With time, casual conversation, and some trust, Sibongiseni invites us in. We immediately step into his favorite place in the house: the kitchen. The room is rectangular in shape with shelving opposite the entrance doorway. The small window that caught our eye from the outside is what makes the difference inside. The window is a reminder of what it took for Sibongiseni and Zimasa to get here. It catches bits of the sun's daily cycle, brightening up this room. Besides the shelving and the accent of this window, the room is empty. A white laminate floor with tile pattern decorates the entry way and stops mid-room. It makes the room feel even more spacious. Opposite of the window is a frameless doorway that leads to the sitting/living room. It has two sofas in front of a magenta backdrop that illuminates, in stark contrasts, the cool tones of the kitchen. A baby stroller is tucked away in the corner.

"We work on the farm," Zimasa tells us. "We are picking flowers from five a.m. until six and sometimes even seven p.m". Today, Sibongiseni and Zimasa were released earlier from work due to the heavy rains. That means a day's loss of potential income. Like many in the settlement, Sibongiseni and Zimasa are from the Eastern Cape and have come to Napier in search of work. Although the settlement is where they have built a house, they both still very much identify with the Eastern Cape. Zimasa explains, that she can't imagine making this place her home. "In our culture," she tells us, "we can't stay here a long time because we are Xhosa. The family is in Eastern Cape and [we] can't do the traditions here". Nevertheless she says, "my children will grow up here because I'm here".

They have lived in Napier for more than 15 years. Sibongiseni built their three-roomed house himself. He gathered the materials he could from various places including farms he had worked on. The "white man" had (cheap) materials which helped him, he told us. It took time to make this house, he explains. This house is not the first version. After finally getting the materials and means to finish building his house the first time, he left for what only felt like a few minutes, to return and find his hard work and what was supposed to be his shelter in flames. It was a Saturday afternoon. The fire department did not make it in time. The materials of the house burned so fast that he and his family lost everything. The cause of the fire remains a mystery still to this day.

But this fire did not keep Sibongiseni and Zimasa from building their house.

"I want to create the future for this child," Sibongiseni explains.

They have a one-year-old baby, for whom they continue to work hard. In Sibongiseni's dream house, he would wish to have more space now that his family is growing. They dream of a house that is founded with more reliable materials and an equipped kitchen. He hopes for a toilet and shower of their own and furniture like a wardrobe for clothes. It is the future of their child that inspires Zimasa and him to dream. They are determined to create a better future for their family.

Farm work: Lifeline of Napier and its residents

Siyavuya Blom | Bronwin Du Preez | Malana Rogers-Bursen


CS 1315

INTRODUCTION

Farm work employs a significant portion of residents of the informal settlement. According to the enumeration carried out in 2019, 40 per cent of people in the settlement are engaged in farm work and 17 per cent in gardens. As we spoke to individuals and families and walked around the settlement, this was evident. Everyone knew someone or knew someone who knew someone who worked on a farm. Every time we entered a house, we found some members of the family had experience of working on the farm. Several times a day, a pick-up truck or bakkie comes to drop off or pick up labourers, and collects cleaned, arranged flowers. Farm work is not just done on farms, but also happens in the settlement, as well as in sheds in the vicinity. If you walk around in the middle of the day, you may see people cleaning and arranging flowers. When we visited, we saw residents working with light pink coloured, almost glass-like flowers. Flowers are an integral part of the settlement landscape. They are beautiful and stand out against the coloured metal sheets of the houses and the sky.

The stories of farm work, and of families for whom farm work is an important source of income, should be told and heard. While the settlement relies on farm work, the farms also rely on the people in the settlement. Residents are resourceful, as they piece together work, move across borders, and work together to support their families. The stories of some of these residents presented here speak for themselves.

MOSES CHIRWA

Moses Chirwa sat on a bench clutching a bouquet of flowers in each hand. He told us they were called filicoma flowers. Moses was in the middle of his workday in Napier's informal settlement when we met him. He was cleaning and cutting the flowers that he had collected from a farm earlier that day. Moses is a short, stocky man who talks very fast. Laughing, he said, "Please come after…" While we stood there we noticed a bakkie driving around and later found this had been his boss about to arrive to collect the flowers. Moses was on a deadline to clean and bundle them before he arrived. Moses usually works in the settlement, but sometimes, if there are more flowers, he does his work at a nearby canteen. This job is not permanent, but "piece" or target work. He is paid by the jobs he completes, rather than hourly. Moses joined his brother in Napier two years ago, after searching for work in Cape Town with no success. His brother is also a farmworker. Moses is using the money he earns to build his own house in Malawi, and to support his family who stays there.

GIFT MUNDALA

Gift wasn't always a farmer and it wasn't his choice to do farm work in South Africa. Back in Malawi, he was a businessman, selling clothes, but, he told us, "I cannot do business here, it's not my country." Later he reiterated, "This is not my place. I cannot have a choice to work in a good place." Gift works at a flower farm cleaning and cutting flowers. He has been a farmworker for three years now in Napier and previously in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. He came to Napier because his friend invited him to come for work.

At first, he lived far away, and had to travel a long distance for work. Gift works on the farm, sometimes a full day but sometimes just four to five hours depending on the job he's busy with and how fast he works. This is a "piece" job meaning it's not permanent, and Gift says, it can feel insecure. He is paid in cash on Fridays, although the pay is not enough for his family. In this job he does feel respected, but he tells us that, on the farm in Khayelitsha, he didn't feel respected as a foreigner. They were given either no time for breaks, or just five to ten minutes. At the farm in Napier, they will even take workers to the hospital if they're sick.

Gift and his wife work on the same farm. He's happy to have work to support his family, but he hopes someday to go back to Malawi and continue his business. He misses his family back at home.

SIYAVUYA BLOM, SAKHILE MLATI, AND NOKUZOLA MONICA KEPA

As we entered the house to interview Siyavuya, we quickly realized that her whole family was involved in farm work and that this was probably the case for many others in the settlement. For Siyavuya, her cousin Sakhile, and her mother Nokuzola, farm work is often seasonal, depending on the produce. In 2015, Nokuzola worked for six months picking figs. Siyavuya and Sakhile both worked at Vierfontein Farm, with blueberries, raspberries and grapes for wine. Vierfontein doesn't make the wine on the farm. They ship most of their grape harvest to other places for wine production.

Siyavuya started working as a seasonal worker harvesting blueberries in 2017, but then changed to raspberries in 2018. She would like to continue working on the farm, but there are no jobs at the moment. She says, "Sometimes they say it's full. They don't need people at that time and you have to come back". When there was work available, she found out about it from others in the settlement who already worked there. A typical day of work included: cleaning around the plants, checking and fixing the irrigation system if necessary. They began their day at 6:45am when the lorry picked them up and arrived at the farm at 7am. She said it really depends on the boss you have. She described unfair treatment by one boss saying, "If I'm working, the coloured lady would not do as much work as I do." Overall, she enjoyed the work due to the experience it gave her in agriculture.

Her cousin, Sakhile was working at Vierfontein as well, mostly with grapes. He was previously employed in construction, which he enjoyed more. Sakhile mentioned that women typically pick, plant, clean around the plants and maintain the grapes, while men typically build and maintain tunnels (greenhouses). But, if there's wind or they need extra hands to hold the tunnels down, they might call the women. Nokuzola also described his work as physically very hard. The women had to move heavy stones so that the men could build the tunnels. When speaking about his work on the farm, Sakhile said, "If you are exploited, you are exploited. It doesn't matter your gender...As I'm standing there on that lorry, when anything that is happening there, there is no man or woman who will say they feel safe like that. When it comes to rain or anything that comes with the weather, I have to be given rain suits or whatever. In most cases, I was exploited. I don't think I was more safe because I'm a man".

Sakhile described how the lorry was often unsafe because they crammed too many people into one vehicle and people had to stand. Siyavuya added that sometimes they had to walk because the lorries were too full or they didn't send them to pick up the workers. Other challenges included working in poor weather conditions and sometimes being forced to come in to work when sick or injured.

Each of them mentioned payment as an issue. They were paid into their bank accounts, either on the 25th or the last day of the month. The payments varied from R18.00 to R30.00 per hour, but they all mentioned it wasn't enough and should be R30.00 or more in order to support a family. In addition, sometimes, the farm would change the payment date so that people had to stay in the job longer to receive pay. This kept people from leaving the job early.

It's hard to find work in Napier. There used to be more jobs on milk farms, but more people are coming to this area now and jobs are scarce. Sakhile said, "I would have enjoyed working for the farm work if it wasn't for the way of the treatment". Also, he said, if the pay was better "You can enjoy your physical work but mentally not." He added that farm work doesn't leave you much time with your family. Sometimes you leave home at 6:30am and get home at 6pm and get to spend only three hours with the family. Sakhile concluded by saying, "They don't want [us] to speak up. If you're going to speak up, then you're going to get fired...Most of the people are desperate for work around here".

Siyavuya hopes her son can go to school and get a good job. Currently, the family is doing odd jobs to make ends meet. They also provide childcare for other farmworkers' children.

MEMORY SALIMA

Memory was sitting in her yard cleaning flowers when we first met her. She works in the settlement, cleaning and cutting flowers. In the morning, she and other farm workers go to the farm to pick up the flowers and bring them back to the settlement. She usually starts her day at 5 or 6am, when the bakkie picks her up, although the times are not strict. She has only been in Napier for a few months and came here to join her sister. She left four children back in Malawi and she works to send money back home for her children. In Malawi, she was also a farmer, planting vegetables, potatoes, bananas, and sugar cane. She hopes to go back someday.

BUYISWA MAYILA

In 2019, Buyiswa Mayaila started working at the Vierfontein Farm as a grape and berry picker. She heard about the job from a friend in settlement who is currently working on the farm as well. When Buyiswa went for the job interview, she wore her uniform from the previous farm she had worked at, De Kock Akker farm, where she had planted and harvested onions. Getting the job was easy, Buyiswa did not need any sort of qualification, all she needed was her ID document. Buyiswa's daughter, Nolokulu is also currently employed on the same farm.

Despite having obtained the job easily, being happy that she is employed, and being respected by her boss because she "does her job correctly", Buyiswa faces many challenges daily. Employment on the farm has always been seasonal for her; even after a year of working on the farm she has still not received an offer for a permanent post. Besides picking fruit, at times her job requires her to carry crates from one plot to another. Being outside, one of Buyiswa's biggest fears is being attacked by snakes. Also transportation to and from work can be challenging, the bakkie is reliable in the morning, but in the evening sometimes it doesn't come and Buyiswa and other employees have to walk back to the settlement after a long day of work. Since working on the farms, Buyiswa has always earned R18.00 per hour; an amount that has not been enough to support her family. Buyiswa has a son who is still attending school and a grandchild who attends day-care. Besides food and electricity for the house, these are extra expenses which need to be covered.

Buyiswa says, "You have to like everything you do on the farm – as what the boss tells you". While she doesn't mind the work, it's not what she wants for her children and her grandchildren. She has bigger hopes for them, but she can't make those choices for them.

SIBONGISENI SOKHETYE

Sibongiseni Sokhetye moved from the Eastern Cape to Napier in 1999 and has worked at the Koonpoort Vineyeards for the past six years. When he arrived in the settlement, his neighbour told him that the farm he was working on was employing new people. The very next day, Sibongiseni went to the farm and was offered a job there. When he started, the job was on a contract basis for three months; after this Sibongiseni was offered a permanent job. Sibongiseni works mostly with grapes and occasionally with flowers. His wife works with him on the same farm picking grapes.

Sibongiseni's daily routine starts at 4am when he wakes up to get ready for work. At 5am he makes his way to the pick-up point where he meets the bakkie. At 6am he arrives at the farm after having picked up other employees in the community. By 7am employees are assigned their tasks for the day, for example having to pick nine crates of grapes. Once the task is complete, the day's work is complete. From February to April each year it is grape-picking season and for the rest of the year the farm prepares for the next harvest with the laying of pipes and cleaning. Farm work has never been Sibongiseni's first choice of job, but under the circumstances, it was the easiest one to get in order to earn a salary to provide for his family.

Although finding farm work has been easy, there are many daily challenges which surround the working environment on the farm. Being from the Eastern Cape and not speaking Afrikaans, Sibongiseni had to learn to speak it. He has only received a R30.00 increase in his salary per year for the six years he has worked on the farm. Sibongiseni has felt on many occasions, like leaving the job. However, there is no "back-up" plan once he does. The salary he earns is currently supporting his three children back home in the Eastern Cape, as well as one child who lives with him and his wife in the settlement.

KEY FINDINGS

A history of the settlement shows many generations of spatially stretched families. Many young people had parents who came to Napier for work, while they stayed in Eastern Cape with their grandparents until they were older. Others came to Napier alone and left their parents in the Eastern Cape. For the Malawians we spoke to, some had to leave their children in Malawi. Their economic situation required this separation, in order for them to get jobs or to go to school. Family played a big role in the stories we heard. The money generated from farm work would go towards their children. Many people spoke about hoping for other possibilities and more choices for their children.

Payment for hard labour

People who work daily on farms are trying to make a living for their family – whether the family stay in the settlement or back home in the Eastern Cape or even Malawi. According to individuals who shared their experiences, there are different forms of payment for farm work. Some were paid on a weekly basis, some on a monthly basis, some in physical cash and others by bank cheque. Nonetheless, everyone raised concerns over the low payment associated with farm work. Some also highlighted the issue of irregularity of payments.

Work insecurities

Working on a farm in Napier, it appears, involves working just for the moment, for, at any point in time, you could lose that job. The seasonality of farm jobs was dependent on the fruits in season at that time and, more specifically, what was planted and produced during that time, whether it was barley, wheat or hops, for instance.

Hopes and aspirations

It is evident that, despite the harshness of working conditions, workers feel their work is not done in vain. Their true sense of security lies within the happiness of their family. Many of the farm workers place their happiness in their children's futures.

‘Enduring harsh working conditions is something that has become a norm. When I sat down and listened to these stories of farm work and people’s daily work struggles, I began to appreciate what people do for their families. Going to the shop now, taking a punnet of grapes, berries or even milk, after listening to people’s experiences of work made me realize that there is a story behind this item on the shelve – a story of a mother, a father, a brother or sister who wakes up early in the morning, who works so hard, for a minimum wage, to provide for their family.’

Research Essay excerpt, Bronwin Du Preez


A15

Our home, a canvas to paint our future

INTERVIEWEE: Lindelwa Mankayi (Noluvo), Yolanda Phelokazi Makayi, and Yiva Mankayi
INTERVIEWED BY: Joseph Dennis N. Quarcoo and Naomi Samake
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Atabile Gwgwa and Vathiswa Siwa

As we walk up to the gate, Lindelwa Mankayi (known as Noluvo) greets us with a big smile. She waves us in proudly, her white-beaded bracelet swaying on her wrist. Her beige house has bright red window frames and "A15" enumerated on the top right-hand-side of the front entrance. We step into the entrance way, a seating area with two sofas facing one another. In the smartly arranged room, a large flat screen TV sits to the right with a remote control perfectly aligned to the edge of its stand. An antique wooden clock is mounted at a slight tilt over a proudly framed certificate of achievement Noluvo's eldest daughter received in Grade 9. A Victorian-styled showcase is filled with pottery and a green-leafed houseplant.

Noluvo has a peaceful aura; her smile makes us feel warm and comforted. She selects her words carefully; they are reassuring and understandable. Noluvo responded to a spiritual calling and became a sangoma a few years ago. In 2018, she returned to the Eastern Cape for a full year to learn traditional rituals. She is proud and excited to be able to help people who otherwise would not be able to get the help they need in the hospital. She offers her services in an extension to the house that is accessible from their front yard. This room is an essential part of her household, as are the two bedrooms, seating area, and the kitchen. It has a spacious design with cupboards along the wall. Here she can not only treat but create a safe space for people who come from near and far beyond the settlement to seek her help. She explains to us that people come to her with sugar and salt disease, cancer, infections and sickness from waste pollution, and even concerns with wealth. The array of rituals she practices takes time. With a high demand for her services, she is assisted by another practitioner from Zimbabwe who also lives in the settlement.

She and her husband, Bhutise, originally come from Burgersdorp in the Eastern Cape. For her, home remains without a doubt in the Eastern Cape, where her relatives are. Noluvo, Bhutise and their two daughters return to Burgersdorp and Queenstown once a year, usually in December. They live in Napier for most of the year because there is no work in the Eastern Cape. In Napier, she and her husband have built their house, bit-by-bit, using materials that include metal sheets for the facades of the house, plywood for flooring, and parquet-laminate placed in various patterns across the uneven floors. They have painted the outside and inside of their house in warm colours. The room where their daughters sleep is light pink. They have filled all five rooms with furniture pieces that are meant to stay: beds, sofas, and a television. When asked what her favourite part of her house is, she quickly leads us to the kitchen where a self-installed iron woodstove stands in the centre against the back wall. The oven warms up the two main rooms during chilly winter days.

Her husband, Bhutise, has a lot of experience working on farms. He is adept at construction and, through work, has had some access to materials they have used to build their house and its essentials, like the iron woodstove. At the time of our interview, he is working on a farm where he usually stays during the week. Noluvu explains, "He will be back on Friday afternoon". At this point, her daughter, Yiva Mankayi joins the conversation. "I am very proud of my father that he makes sure I get the best. Also, he's skilled in building. He built a double story in the farm for the white people," she explains proudly.

Noluvo emphasizes that it is not just the structure of the house that makes a home, a home is a house full of love with a father and mother. This is their commitment to, and aspiration for, their two daughters. Noluvo and her husband work hard to inspire their daughters to have a better future. They do the best they can to keep their daughters in school.

Yiva, 15 and her sister, Yolanda Phelokazi Mankayi, 14, are two out of only three girls from the settlement who attend high school. A bus was organized a few years ago between Napier and the high school in nearby Bredasdorp. They have a ten-minute walk from their house to the pick-up location near the primary

"A park with swings," says Yiva.
"And slides," responds her sister.
"A swimming pool!"
"A netball court!"
"And a jungle!"
"Kids from here and kids from Smartie Town can play together."

school. From there, it is a 15-kilometre drive to Bredasdorp. Yiva likes school. "It is fun at school; I learn more about life and respect...discipline." She and her sister are well aware that many of the youth in this settlement and surrounding areas drop out of school. Most of their friends have either failed or been held back to repeat a year. As we sit together on the sofas, Yiva tells us, "I don't want to drop out of school 'cause it's expensive to drop out of school. The lifestyle I want to live in the future is expensive... I wish the [neighbourhood] kids the best in life. They should keep up with their studies and reach their goals".

Drug and alcohol abuse are a real concern among the community and something that traps settlement youths. Yolanda Phelokazi and Yiva believe that children and young adults would reduce or even stop doing drugs if only there were a place for them to spend time. As many don't attend school and do not have work, the younger people find themselves sitting and waiting around, making them susceptible to alcohol and drugs. The sisters think a community park would be a good place for youth to hang out and play games like netball. "Yiva is the best netball player," says her sister. The park should be located at Esbanini, (Xhosa for "under the main light") where the main road enters the settlement, in the vicinity of the cemetery. As the idea blossoms in their imaginations, they bounce proposals like ping-pong across the small coffee table in between the two sofas.

"A park with swings," says Yiva.
"And slides," responds her sister.
"A swimming pool!"
"A netball court!"
"And a jungle!"
"Kids from here and kids from Smartie Town can play together."

While their imaginaries are innocent and hopeful, they don't hesitate to tell us that they would not want to live in Napier in the future. In Yolanda's words, "There is no future here... People are messing up their lives with drugs and alcohol. It is a problem".

Conscious of the fragility of their futures, their parents make this house a home that can encourage their daughters to dream big. Yiva aspires to be a pilot. She hopes to travel and see different places. Yolanda Phelokazi hopes to become a medical doctor, potentially a surgeon. Like her mother, she wants to help people. When asked where she would like to live one day, she looks down, and smiling, replies, "In Las Vegas... or Paris."


NDZ

Construction worker through the week, businessman on weekends

INTERVIEWEE: Philasande Charlie Ngomthi
INTERVIEWED BY: Geetika Anand and Romeo Dipura
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Zolile Eric Fetile

We caught Philasande Ngomthi at the wrong time perhaps; he was almost on his way out for his soccer practice, but out of kindness and his seemingly shy nature, he agreed to engage with us for a few minutes. As we sat at a round table at the corner of Philasande's shebeen, a short, but interesting conversation began.

Originally from the Eastern Cape, Philasande moved to Napier in 2007 at the young age of 19 looking for a job. He lived first with his brother and sister-in-law in the informal settlement when it was in its former location. When the settlement was moved to its current location in 2009, they got two sites, and thus, Philasande got his own plot where he lives by himself.

Initially, it was a two-roomed structure, which Philasande extended two years back, adding a large room in front to explore a business opportunity for himself. Philasande has a very busy life, with almost no time to rest. During the week, he works on construction sites, and over weekends, he has his own shebeen to manage and run. Having his own business is his favourite part about this place. Housing a pool table, a music system, a television, and a fireplace for braais, the shebeen only opens on weekends. Philasande said he got permission from the neighbours before he started the shebeen. There is a footfall of about 30 to 40 people over a given weekend, said Philasande.

Philasande feels that the settlement has changed since the time he moved in. There are a lot more people now. However, municipal services have not kept pace. He uses one of the community toilets, but he has managed to make his own arrangements for water supply and wastewater disposal. With the help of a friend, he has laid down one pipe to bring in water from the community taps outside, and another pipe for wastewater disposal.

Philasande is a skilled construction worker. He can do brick work, tiling, painting, and so on. His own structure though, is built of zinc, supported by wooden poles. The zinc walls are reinforced with ceiling boards to cut the wind and the cold. The floor of the shebeen is partly tiled, which cost him R400.00. Philasande is not very happy with the structure and doesn't think that it is secure because it's not permanent, "It's a zinc structure, anyone can do anything". When asked why he has not built his own house with bricks, he promptly replied, "I can't because it's not mine". He is worried that the municipality could move him anytime and that's why he never thought of building with bricks. Philasande mentioned that if the municipality were to give him the permission, he could start building a permanent house for himself. Even though he is skilled and willing to build his house if given permission, Philasande also expressed a desire to get an RDP house. His wish to get a permanent job felt more urgent though.

As we bade goodbye to each other, Philasande started getting ready to leave for his soccer practice, a sport that he loves the most.

Building a life one piece at a time

INTERVIEWEE: Mkhuseli Awu and Maliviwe Nongwadla
INTERVIEWED BY: Malana Rogers-Bursen and Hend El Ghazaly
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Ntombe Letsoafa

We meet Mkhuseli Awu and Maliviwe Nongwadla in Mkhuseli's home, where his friend is visiting him. Located on the main road, this house is one of the first ones you see when you arrive in the settlement. It is large and looks as if it spans two plots. The structure consists of pieced together blue, red, green, and silver metal corrugated sheets. Though some are rusted, the effect is both functional and decorative. We sit together in the living room, with its elaborate tile floor, and a shelf where two televisions are placed. The young men stand up and offer us seats built into the floor. After we insist that they also sit, they bring in a wooden bench from outside that can accommodate us all.

Mkhuseli is very proud of his house. He loves everything about it. He loves the way he designed it; he loves the furniture, the TVs, the sound system, and the fridge. He has worked hard to build this house.

We ask him about the beautiful tiled floor. He explains the process of gathering the tiles, which he collected one-by-one from a dumping site. He is in the process of buying material to change the roof, which leaks. Mkhuseli completed building his house in 2014. He says it took a long time to collect the materials. Without a permanent job, it was hard to buy what he needed. He made it work by buying second-hand material from people who were "working by the construction". Mkhuseli explains that it is possible to buy the old materials when someone is renovating. He bought the materials one by one until he had everything he needed, staying with his sister all that time.

Despite all the work and money he has put into the house, the rain can still come through the roof. He explains that it gets very wet when it rains, however, he says, "I have no choice but to stay here." He also explains that costs have increased and it's expensive to maintain the house. In 2013, for instance, when he first arrived, there was no load shedding and electricity cost less. Today, for R10.00 you get much less electricity. In short, he has mixed feelings. He stays here all year round, but for Mkhuseli, home is still the Eastern Cape and he misses his parents.

Neither Mkhuseli nor his friend, Maliviwe, have permanent jobs, yet both came to Napier specifically in search of job opportunities. Mkhuseli came from the Eastern Cape in 2013 to join his sister who was in the settlement already. Maliviwe came in 2014 to join his parents. Both stress that in the Eastern Cape, jobs are very scarce. Currently, however, because more people are coming to Napier, jobs are becoming scarce here too. As a consequence, it is very hard to find a permanent job and many people are forced to work "piece jobs". Mkhuseli, for instance, works a piece job as a gardener, typically two days a week or as and when he is needed. Maliviwe tells us the problem is not just the lack of jobs, but also the lack of skills development. There are, as far as they know, no programmes to help people develop skills especially in construction where they feel there might be job opportunities.

Nonetheless, both still feel Napier is cool, for the job opportunities and it feels like a quiet and safe place for now. But Mkhuseli adds, you never know what can happen. You never know when it can be unsafe. Although you can go to the neighbours in a crisis, he wishes people were less scared to ask their neighbours for help. It is a small community and everyone knows each another. Maliviwe adds that many people come from the same village in the Eastern Cape. Both young men wish that the municipality would come to the community more to ask them what they want and do not want. Sometimes the local councillor gives out plastic tarpaulins when it's raining, but only to the households she knows personally. They hope this will change. Mkhuseli suggests the community needs garbage bins, and the toilets and taps fixed. Right now, there is black, dirty water out in the open and the children can get a rash from it. Maliviwe suggests the municipality could hire someone from Napier to pick up garbage.

Everyone should have their own tap and people should stop vandalizing the materials that are already there. Mkhuseli and Maliviwe are still young. They enjoy themselves on the weekends and weekday evenings. They used to play football at the rugby field with a diverse group. It has become harder now because the rugby players do not want the football players to use the field. The municipality promised a new field, but they have not yet delivered it. Both young men also like to listen to music.

They have big dreams and hopes. When he has enough money, Mkhuseli would like to open his own business "fixing the music", in other words, fixing stereos. In the future, he would like to have a nice house, a wife and three kids. Maliviwe also dreams of a nice house, a car, a wife and kids.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Like home for me

INTERVIEWEE: Dembelo Alabo
INTERVIEWED BY: Isabella Baranyk and Kadria Hassan
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Siyavuya Blom

When Kadria greeted Dembelo Alabo using her basic Amharic, his reactions to hearing his mother tongue went from surprise, to relief, to warmth. He immediately seemed to feel at ease, as if we were his guests from back home.

Originally from Ethiopia, Dembelo immigrated to South Africa ten years ago, mainly because of political instability and the lack of job opportunities in his home country. He began his journey from the city of Hawassa, where he was born. He took a bus to the Kenyan border, Moyale. From there he travelled to the Kenyan capital, Nairobi where he stayed for one week. After a short rest, he went on, crossing the border from Kenya to Tanzania. He got to Dar es Salaam after spending a couple of days on the border. He can still vividly remember the warmth of the Tanzanian people who provided him with food, and their respectful attitude. His next stop was Malawi. This time he took a truck that brought him to the frontier between the two countries where he had to stay in the middle of nowhere for two whole weeks. Dembelo said that he and the other immigrants with whom he was traveling did not have enough to eat and almost starved during that time.

After they felt the police presence in Malawi, they jumped into a rickety boat and remained for several days out on the cold sea. But their attempt at hiding did not succeed unfortunately. The police caught them the moment they landed on the shore. Dembelo and the other 150 immigrants with him languished in prison for five long months. His voice grew stiffer while recalling the atrocity that came along with the capture. They experienced physical and mental torture, and they had to endure in a tiny room with 300 other migrants in the prison of Mzuzu in Malawi. "The room was so tiny that we did not have enough space to sit, let alone to sleep," he recalled.

After his release, the authorities expelled him, sending him back to Tanzania. However, he made another attempt and returned to Malawi. This time he was not caught and made it to Lilongwe. After a short recovery period, he continued his journey to Mozambique in a minibus. He stayed two or three days there and then went on to Zimbabwe from the border. Dembelo walked from the frontier to Harare with the generous help of the Zimbabwean police, who provided them some food and a place to stay in Harare. He finally reached his destination through the border town of Musina to South Africa arriving in the city of Johannesburg. After that he stayed one year in Cape Town in the suburb of Bellville, where he worked in a shop belonging to his brother who had come to South Africa way before him. This dangerous journey cost him 20 000.00 Ethiopian Birrs (the equivalent of R11 000.00) without the guarantee of reaching his destination. It was a happy ending for Dembelo, however this is not always the case for other immigrants.

His introduction to Napier was through an invitation from an Ethiopian fellow who owned a shop in Napier and who was moving to Bredasdorp. His friend told him about the job opportunity in the area. Dembelo worked in the shop for a year, earning R1 500.00 monthly. After he became familiar with the place, the people and the language and had gained a foundation in entrepreneurship, he decided to start his own business. He managed to buy a shop in the informal settlement previously owned by a Somalian family, who were leaving the area. "My friend lent me R12 000.00 to run the business and I managed to pay him back within one year," he told us proudly. He emphasized the solidarity that is cherished among foreign nationals and how they support each other.

After five years, he opened his current shop, which is much bigger than the previous one, with permission from the municipality in the form of an official document. The paper says, "In terms of the Cape Agulhas Integrated Zoning Scheme a House Shop is permissible as a primary right within an informal settlement". The document is valid for five years; however, it is not in his name, as foreign nationals are not granted such rights.

When Dembelo first arrived in the settlement, there were few people living there. He said over the years more Xhosa

people and foreign nationals have settled in. "There were not many businesses and we got electricity only after two years." Over time, he taught himself Xhosa and Afrikaans, and now speaks both fluently, along with English. Learning local languages has helped him integrate into society. He cheerfully expressed how close he is to the other members of the settlement, saying, "Here everyone is like my friend and family". He socializes with them and takes part in their happy moments as well as times of mourning. "I stayed longer; I know people." He has never experienced any xenophobic attitude or attack. If he gets into trouble, Xhosa people protect him and fight for him.

Dembelo said that his life here is much better than the one he had back home, both financially and socially. "It is like home for me," he emphasised. Even though he considers going back to Ethiopia from time to time for family visits, South Africa is where he envisions his future. He happily brought up his recent marriage in the conversation and he was excited about bringing his Ethiopian wife to Napier; to join him in his "home". He is willing to live with her in the formal part of Napier, in a rented house as he is unable to own a house as a foreigner. He holds an asylum seeker temporary permit that he gets renewed every six months in Cape Town.

Dembelo currently runs a thriving shop, which is also a social space. While we spoke, young people gathered in front of the shop, listening to the television with only the sound on because, according to Dembelo, the screen was "fastly eating up the electricity". When we visited, a boxing match was on, and the young men were listening attentively, an escape from their reality in the informal settlement. The shop is not always as busy as it was that day. Dembelo has expanded his business "slowly, slowly". He first bought one standing fridge; the other two were offered later for free by the Coca Cola company. Later he added other essential equipment, such as a freezer. He sells every kind of essential product, especially in small portions and detached from their original packaging, so as make these items more affordable for the inhabitants of the settlement. One of Dembelo's plans is to open a fish and chips shop. When we asked what made him successful, he answered,

> "After passing through such a hard road, I learned that my life is not a joke and that I need to stick to my commitment that led me here".

We were struck by his sensitivity towards the community as well as his willingness to provide the youth work opportunities so they could own their futures. In addition to hiring them, he spends time advising and empowering the community's young people. He also lends people money and holds a debt book, mostly for electricity coupons and food purchases. People usually pay him back by the end of the month. Additionally, he donates to the most vulnerable people in the settlement, helping them with the school, furniture, and clothes. Considering his contribution, and his feeling of belongingness to this place that he whole-heartedly calls "home", it seems hard, even unfair, to use the word 'immigrant' when recounting Dembelo's story.

Starting and sustaining settlement shops and businesses

Kadria Hassan | Vathiswa Siwa | Linus Suter

INTRODUCTION

What leads people to start businesses?

People start businesses for different reasons. This is true in Napier, just as it is anywhere else. The businesspeople we interviewed aimed, through their businesses, to earn more money and to be independent, so as not to rely on the uncertainty of seasonal labour and other precarious forms of employment. There was pride in Patrick Wyngaard's voice as he explained to us how he left his previous job on a farm to move closer to town and to stand on his own two feet with only a chainsaw as starting stock for his business. There was a tremendous sense of gratitude when Samuel Abebe talked about how a friend helped him set up his shop in Smartie Town, how that allowed him to move from a bigger town to the more peaceful surroundings of Napier. There was a mixture of duty, regret and pride in Lindelwa Mankayi's eyes as she explained the layers of faith, duty and fear that made her pursue training in, and a career as a traditional healer. Starting a business is hard. It takes courage and commitment. Business owners in the settlement shared their experience, the hardships, and the varying emotions linked to their businesses. This diverse mix mirrors the range of motivations that led this dynamic set of individuals to start and then to develop their businesses.

ON METHOD

This research represents a small section of business life in Napier. We were incredibly lucky to talk to these business owners and hope that what we have shared is an accurate, although only partial, account of their work and experience. It was humbling and inspiring to engage with these individuals to understand what has been possible, how they have taken their lives in their own hands, despite the restrictions and limitations they face. Vathiswa Siwa shaped our work. Throughout the process, she was engaged and critical, helping us again and again by suggestion new questions and angles of approach, all while competently guiding us through Napier. We are incredibly grateful to her. We could not have done any of this without her!

PATRICK WYNGAARD

Patrick worked and lived on a flower cutting farm for a long time. "Thirteen years I was working so hard for so small money, so I thought, I must leave the farm to come into town so I can try something better ... for better money." After moving, he deliberated for a few months on what exactly to do. His business started through a combination of receiving a chainsaw instead of final pay from the farm, his assessment of the need for cheap wood in the community, and a strong relationship with a friend which led to a loan that enabled him to start up his wood chopping business. With the loan, he bought a bakkie (pick-up vehicle), partnered up with his brother-in-law and expanded the business, including hiring workers from the settlement and buying an additional chainsaw.

LEARNING SKILLS TO GAIN AUTONOMY

LOAN	EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT	SKILLS ACQUISITION	EMPOWERING YOUTH
Patrick took a loan from a friend to start his wood selling business	He bought a pick up and a chainsaw as well as other essential materials	Patrick learned how to fix his equipment by himself which saves him money	Patrick young people in the settlement to save them from unemployment

FRANS XINELA: TAXI OWNER

Frans Xinela worked on a farm before he started his business. “Life goes on and the economic issues are challenging outside. I decided to add to my income by starting a business,” he explained. For Frans a lot of planning and analysis went into choosing what business to start. Because there were already many shops and a lot of competition in that sector around town, Frans decided to start a taxi business. Having been politically active, he saw the potential for a local taxi as a positive force in the community, providing much needed mobility for many who do not have access to a car. Since starting his business, he has had to change minibuses three times. He still runs the business out of his office in Smartie Town, ferrying people to and from work and into Bredasdorp to do their shopping on Saturdays. He says he thrives on the gratitude of his customers and is proud of the service he provides.

THE ART OF NEGOTIATION

LOAN
Frans took a loan from the bank to start his taxi owner/driver business

TAXI
He bought a minibus but had to replace it 3 times as it constantly breaks down

PERMIT
The municipality granted him with a permit to transport people between Napier and Bredasdorp

NEGOTIATION
Frans is in constant negotiation with the municipality and taxi driver to expand his permit.
He is also engaged in the political struggle over implementing a new taxi rank in Bredasdorp.

EMPOWERMENT
Frans feels the mobility his taxi provides, he is empowering the people of the settlement

DEMBELO ALABO: SHOP OWNER

Dembelo Alabo, an Ethiopian shop owner, told a similar story of what motivated him to get started. He was working as a shop assistant, but not earning enough money. He decided to use the knowledge he had picked up to go into business on his own. He has since owned and managed several shops in and around the settlement. Currently, he runs one of the settlement's main groceries; a space where anything from sweets and cool drinks to food staples can be bought. With his incredibly open and engaging personality, he and his shop are a hub for people to gather to talk, exchange gossip, and spend some time watching sports on the TV in his shop.

SAMUEL G. ABEBE: SHOP OWNER

Ethiopian shop owner, Samuel G. Abebe, pursued a path similar to Dembelo's. Indeed, he did so under Dembelo's mentorship. Having lived previously in George, a larger town on the Garden Route, he was happy to follow his friend Dembelo to Napier to escape from xenophobia and the big town's hectic environment. He worked, initially, as a store clerk, saving up money in order to open his own shop with Dembelo's help and investment. He has run his business since 2015. Situated just outside the informal settlement, in the formal RDP housing area known as Smartie Town, it is a grocery store similar to Dembelo's shop.

LINDELWA MANKAYI: TRADITIONAL HEALER

Lindelwa Mankayi's start in business was quite different from others we interviewed. Lindelwa is a traditional healer. She had a recurring dream, where a healer told her to come to learn from him. She explained that this dream constituted her calling to the profession of healing. Lindelwa had not planned to be a healer, but the calling meant that she had a duty to become one. In fact, she ignored the dream for some time, but became afraid that harm might befall her if she did not engage with its message. The power of this calling, and her sense of duty, pushed her to take out a loan and travel to Mpumalanga to study healing. Since her training, she has returned to the settlement and advertises for and attracts clients from all over the Western Cape. She has built a healing room onto her family house, acquired a stock in medicines and objects of ritual healing, which she uses to help her clients. Her vocation of healer is complex. It brings with it constraints, including prescribing how she acts in her private life. Nonetheless, she is proud of her role, her success in it, the regard her clients have for her, and the business she runs.

DREAM

Lindelwa's journey as a traditional healer started with a dream from her ancestors

LEARNING JOURNEY

She went to the Kwandlangamandla school for training paid by a bank loan

CERTIFIED

Lindelwa graduated after three monts with a certificate

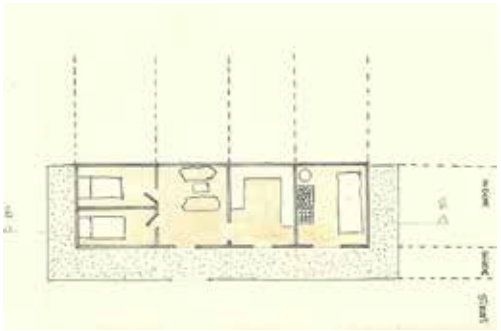
BUSINESS STRATEGIES

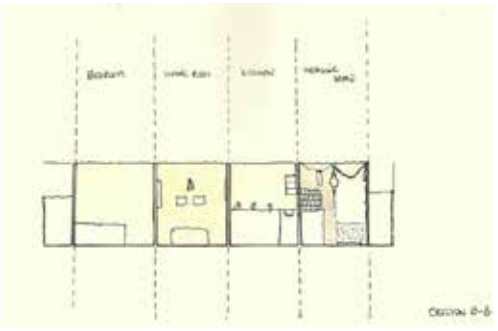
She developed strategies to market her business such as putting her contact details on bottles

HEALING ROOM

Lindelwa extended her house to include an annexed healing room

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT





COLLABORATIONS AND SOLIDARITIES

We encountered stories of collaborations, ways to be stronger together, among many business owners in Napier.

Patrick Wyngaard's neighbour across the street also sells wood. He commented, "We are just friends. He does his business. Me, I do my business. But each in their own way." Both men cut and sell wood, but their business models are different. Patrick sells his wood in bags of around 12 logs, while his neighbour sells by individual log. They don't begrudge each other their customers but are aware of the positives brought by the close proximity of the two businesses. Patrick appreciates most the potential for mutual aid, for instance, if machinery breaks. This cooperation has allowed both businesses to keep going when their machinery has failed, avoiding the financial implications of stopping work. This form of collaboration has made both businesses more resilient. The two neighbours also share their accumulated knowledge, something Patrick sets great store by.

Collaboration connects Samuel and Dembelo, in addition to their friendship. They form part of a committee of Ethiopian and Somali shop owners. Dembelo explained that most owners of grocery shops in Napier are part of this committee. Together, they agree on the prices of the goods they sell. By doing so, they don't engage in price wars that would shorten the profit margins and might endanger each shop's existence. This collaboration had been disrupted, though, with the arrival of a new shop, whose owners did not want to participate in the communal pricing. At the time of our interviews, the committee had yet to decide how they would respond to this disruption.

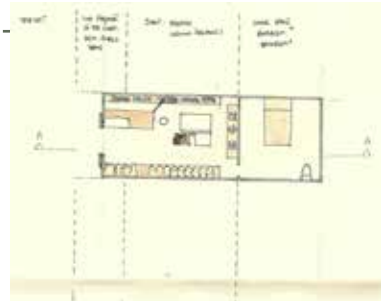
Collaboration is key in the early developmental stages of a business. All business owners explained, in some fashion, the difficulties they had in raising the funds to start their work. It was difficult to access a bank loan on a small income without collateral. When a loan was secured, it could be a long-term burden that was hard to pay off. Only Frans and Lindelwa had managed to get bank finance to start their businesses. For Patrick and Samuel, it was the solidarity and generosity of good friends that allowed them their start. In a context where traditional avenues for raising capital are closed or more difficult to access, solidarity and collaboration are crucial to help businesses get off the ground and to ensure their resilience once they are running. Aware of the value they represent, business owners mobilised their support networks and carefully maintained them. Those without such networks struggled more. Those who have succeeded, shared a sense of gratitude and responsibility, aware of the generosity and communal spirit that lifted them up.

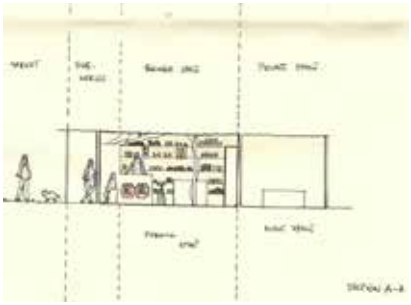
STORIES OF INCREMENTAL GROWTH

Businesses in the settlement have grown incrementally. Each person grew their business when they could, in small steps, using the space, strategies, negotiating power and skills they had at their disposal.

SHOP + LIVING SPACE

In his previous shop Dembelo did not have enough space so he was using the shop as a living space

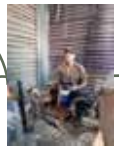




There are constraints and limitations to this incremental approach. The constant improvisation and manoeuvring involved in making a business work do not change the long-term structural constraints of finance, legal regulations and access to space, for instance. Growing a business in this difficult environment requires skill and creativity, as well as collaborative strategies.

CONSTRAINTS & LIMITATIONS FACED BY BUSINESSES

- Spatial constraints: Space limitation is the primary obstacle that prevents businesses from growing
- Financial constraints: Most residents of the informal settlement are unable to obtain loans from banks due to financial insecurity and so they rely on friends.
- Social constraints: Racism and other forms of discrimination are realities that affect the growth of businesses



Patrick is a woodcutter/seller. He started his business with an interest-free loan from a friend for the purchase of a pick-up and a chainsaw. He uses his yard for storage, but because of the high demand during winter he is unable to store enough wood. Hence, he is unable to grow his business.

As an immigrant from Ethiopia, Dembelo was unable to ask for a loan to start his shop. He benefited instead from his network to start his business.

Lindelwa is a traditional healer who uses her spiritual power to heal people. She receives constant scrutiny from her neighbours as well as accusations of witchcraft.

Frans is a taxi owner/driver. He is willing to expand his business to more lines but his positionality as a black man is preventing him as racism is still prevalent in Napier


2020

I want flowers in my kitchen

INTERVIEWEE: Ncumisa Ndevu
INTERVIEWED BY: Jinty Jackson and Tommaso Cosentino
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Bongiwe Bunga

Ncumisa Ndevu moved to Napier in 2010. That was the year South Africa hosted the football World Cup and she was full of expectations, hoping to earn enough to send money home to her parents in the Eastern Cape who were caring for her two children. At the time, she was trying to put her life back together after escaping an unhappy, forced marriage.

Born in in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, Ncumisa grew up knowing her family's other home in the rural Eastern Cape from annual visits there at Christmas time. At the age of 18, before completing high school, she was forced to give up her education and ordered back "home" to the Eastern Cape to get married. The pain of this memory showing on her face, Ncumisa explains that the marriage was arranged by her family without her consent. That was the culture back then she explains, "They just catch you and then, you go and marry that guy."

She had one child with her husband, however, her marital life in a village near Mount Fletcher was filled with conflict. "Several times I ran away, but my family said, 'No you must go back 'there' because they paid the lobola (isiXhosa for bride wealth). But I was fighting with my husband. Then I decided I'm gonna leave and I left".

Having fled her husband, Ncumisa found herself a single mother who had gone against her family's wishes - a precarious position to be in. Her elder brother let her come and stay with him in Khayelitsha. However, she struggled to find work in the city and decided to return to the Eastern Cape – not to her husband this time, but to her own family. She was determined to carve out a new life for herself and her children (she had two children by then) but found there were no jobs in the Eastern Cape either. Without a school leaving certificate, she reasoned, she might be suited for farm work. She heard from an aunt who lived in Napier that there were jobs to be had on farms in the area.

MY GIRLS WILL BE PILOTS OR NURSES

It is now a decade since Ncumisa arrived in Napier and we are sitting in the two-roomed shack, a rented accommodation she shares with another of her brothers and her ten-month-old baby daughter, Lingomso. The day we meet them is cold and grey and but the welcome we receive soon warms us. We are all squeezed into the kitchen area which doubles as a sitting area to receive guests. Ncumisa wipes off the top of plastic containers she pulls from under the kitchen table, so these serve as an extra seat for her visitors. She herself sits on a wooden stool next to the door.

We ask her how her life has turned out in Napier. "I am still suffering," she tells us. Finding fixed employment has proved elusive. Like many people who live in this settlement, she has worked under short term contracts – some three, others six months in length – mostly on flower farms. Although she says she would take "any job", something about working with flowers clearly appealed to her. She remembers one job on a flower farm particularly fondly, saying it was "beautiful". She was employed to make up "bunches" or "posies" of blooms she says, the kind you can buy in big supermarkets "like OK and Checkers". The longest time she spent on a farm was two years, until a dispute with a colleague cut it short. "I took my stuff and left," she says sadly. This appears to be the closest she seems to have come to a permanent position in Napier. "I feel my life is stuck. There is no change," she says bitterly. Sometimes, the thought of going to night school to complete her school education crosses her mind, "but I'm thinking about my child. What is she going to eat if I'm at night school and not looking for a job?"

With Ncumisa currently unemployed and her brother unable to work because of poor health, they rely on a R400 state grant Ncumisa receives as a child subsidy. This added to her brother's disability grant of R1,700, adds up to a monthly income of R2100. Out of this she is expected to send money home to the Eastern Cape for the care of her other daughters, aged 14 and nine years. What she needs most, Ncumisa stresses is "uyasebenza" (isiXhosa for 'a job').

On her lap, she holds ten-month old Lingomso, full of smiles and gurgles.

Ncumisa's third child, she is the first to be born in Napier, in a hospital in the nearby town of Bredasdorp. Her name means "better future" in English. Ncumisa wants her daughter to grow up here where she can go to what she calls the "right kind of school" as opposed to those in the Eastern Cape where, she explains, schooling is "not right". Once she reaches school-going age here in Napier, Lingomso will be schooled in English and Afrikaans, the two languages preferred in local schools; not in Xhosa, her mother-tongue. Ncumisa believes this will give her daughter more opportunities in life. She hopes all three of her girls will grow up to look like her, but unlike their mother, she wants them to get educated. She would like them to grow up to become "maybe pilots, or nurses, or whatever".

A SOLUTION FOR "NOW"

Born in the city, forcibly married in the Eastern Cape, Ncumisa's relationship with "home" is complicated. "Home is there in the Eastern Cape," she says, a place where, "I feel I am at home. I am not a rich person but when I am there, I am feeling at home". By contrast, Napier, where she landed because of the pressure to find work, is where several members of her extended family have also moved. She now has several cousins living in the area as well as close friends. These relationships are key to how she navigates the basics of everyday life. She is part of a network of women (all of them Xhosa speaking from the Eastern Cape) who have access to the same toilet, which is locked, and who trust each other to keep the toilet clean. She also enjoys hanging out in the park in town and at the local football field on weekends. "Sometimes I like Napier and sometimes I don't like Napier," she says. Her ambivalence is mostly due to a feeling of vulnerability. Twice in the past year her home has been robbed - once while she was inside sleeping - the thieves making off with her cellphone and money - leaving her feeling unsettled.

Last year, Ncumisa added her name to the waiting list for one of the state-provided RDP houses for low-income earners. As a single mother with a dependent, earning under the minimum wage, she fits the basic criteria. However, at 32 years old, she has not yet reached the 35-year, minimum age for eligibility set by this province. With the waiting lists backlogged for years, she has no idea how long it would take for her to get to the top of the list. Besides, she says, she would not want to live away from her close friends. "They would go with me," she says of the prospect of moving to an RDP house which usually involves a move to a different area.

An interim solution, one "for now, now" as she puts it, would be her own plot of land where she could build a "small house". She would grow a hedge around it and, since it would have its own yard, it would also have its own toilet she explains. She describes this imagined home as "very different", because it would be "nice", however, she does not envision anything grand: just three rooms instead of the two the family currently live in. The extra room would serve as a dining or sitting room and could be used to accommodate her mother when she comes to stay.

Ncumisa's plan is not a vague dream; she has a precise idea how much each item she needs to build this home would cost, which materials she would need, and the quantities involved. She would buy new zinc sheets for the roof and walls from the local "korporasie" (Afrikaans for 'co-op'), not the rusted second-hand ones her current home is fashioned from. She would also go into "the bush" by which she means a wooded area a little distance from the settlement hidden behind a pig farm where she could cut poles needed for roof trusses and other supports.

TEMPORARY TENURE

At the time of our interview Ncumisa is living in the fourth of a string of rented accommodations since moving to Napier. She says she feels no special attachment to any of these places. Although it is neat and clean, the signs of the impermanent nature of her occupation of this space are everywhere. Our eyes are drawn to a six-armed chandelier hanging from the ceiling, without bulbs. According to Ncumisa the chandelier does work, but she prefers not to use it. Electricity, which comes in through a prepaid metre, is too expensive for her to afford to use six light bulbs so instead, she relies on a single bulb attached via a chord to the ceiling. The chandelier hangs like an empty gesture, a decorative fancy of the owner of the shack.

A long black, lacquered wooden cupboard runs almost the length of the room, helping divide the space in two. It is stocked with cutlery and crockery and there is a microwave on a faux marble counter running along the bottom of the shelves. None of these items belongs to Ncumisa who rents the contents along with the shack. We can hear a portable television from behind the flimsy cardboard partition that divides

this kitchen-come-sitting room from the bedroom which Ncumisa shares with her 29-year-old brother. As he is too ill to work, he spends much of his time watching television, one item they do own.

DECORATION DEFERRED

When we ask if there is anything else that does belong to her, Ncumisa brightens and points to a picture that hangs on the back wall. Painted in shades of pinks, red and yellow, it depicts a flower (an arum lily is Ncumisa's guess) resonating with her special connection to flowers. The picture, she explains, once hung in the home of a "white person who gave it to another lady who was working in her kitchen". She convinced the woman to pass it on to her. "I was working with blomme (Afrikaans for flowers) and I said, 'I like that picture,'"she chuckles. This bright touch of colour is the only decoration Ncumisa has contributed to this space.

She also gestures to a tall wooden display stand that, up until then, we had not noticed because it was stacked with other objects. Only when Ncumisa removes these can we see that this is a carefully crafted piece of furniture with a hexagonal top. "You see this table, I like it. When I have my own place, I want to put it in a corner, I want to put the flowers there." As with her other treasured item, the flower painting, a caste-off from a "white person in town" has found a purpose. With Ncumisa its purpose is not one for the present but deferred to the future: a display stool she will one day use to stand a vase of flowers. Talking about her plans to decorate, she becomes animated: "I want to paint white in my house," she says, "Then, I want flowers, ja, in a dining room."

At the time we met her, Ncumisa was dreaming of having her own home, large enough to accommodate other family members when they visited from the Eastern Cape and decorate herself. We subsequently learned that she had found her own shack and no longer needs to rent. An end to a long state of impermanence, the place has three rooms - two bedrooms and a kitchen. Ncumisa and her family still rely on the state's child support grant and her brother's disability grant, saving every cent. Ncumisa is still hoping to find a job.

A home that offers little shelter

INTERVIEWEE: Maria Benjane
INTERVIEWED BY: Mildred Nakkungu and Alessandro Rearte
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Zulike Wyngaard

Maria Benjane's humble garden with a small patch of lawn leaves a lovely impression of her home, a wooden one-roomed Wendy house. As she welcomes us inside, we find ourselves in an awkward situation because of the scarce possibilities for sitting down, so we gather tightly around her bed on which she has taken a seat. Maria speaks frankly about her housing situation and lets us know only a few moments into our interview that she is far from being happy here. She has spent nine years in the informal settlement; she never wanted to move here in the first place, but circumstances forced her husband to take that decision, so that their son could continue going to school. Maria had no choice but to follow.

Originally, she's from Barrydale and lived with her husband on Matjies Kloof Farm for 25 years. The death of the farm owner resulted in them having to move 24 kilometres south to Napier, a place her husband saw as ideal to settle in since their son needed to complete his schooling. But they went from a "proper" house on the farm, to a Wendy house in the informal settlement, leaving Maria dissatisfied and struggling to keep her stress levels down. As a pensioner, she is at a time in her life where she should be relaxed, but she receives little help to do so. The ward councillor doesn't listen, she complains, and the municipality each year repeats the same mantra of the supposedly soon-to-come RDP houses.

The biggest problem with the house is that it is unstable. What we didn't notice from outside, could not be overlooked anymore. The whole structure is badly slanted and almost leans into the front garden. Even whilst interviewing her, we worry about leaning against the walls because the structure is precarious, and every night, Maria worries that the roof will eventually fall on her head. And then there are the kids of the area, who keep chucking stones at the house, putting it at risk of leaning even more. Once again, we realized something that we didn't notice at first, which was that this light-deprived structure used to have windows, but they have been covered with wooden planks. Next, she points to the holes in the roof they can't fix because the structure would not support any more weight. If she had an income and access to materials, she would throw away everything we could see from where we sat and build a proper house. One that keeps out winter's cold nights and heavy rains.

The possibility of the house collapsing haunts her husband even when he is at work. Taking a trip to her family once in a while is not an option since they live a R200 trip away, and the streets feel too unsafe, at least at night, to spend a little time there. Now we understand why her husband couldn't wait but to lament their current situation the moment we asked them for short interview. The need for a new house is pressing, and the uncertainty as to whether her husband will succeed in sourcing another Wendy house anytime soon only aggravates Marias high blood pressure and epilepsy. In the meanwhile, she finds comfort and friendship in her neighbours and counts on their conversations about God to keep her happy. We ask her if she considers this place home, despite all the hardship. She says right now, Napier is just a town for her and her house is a place she wants to avoid as much as possible, but the overwhelming sum of dire circumstances deny her that wish.


PEP

In this humble abode

INTERVIEWEE: Zulike Wyngaard
INTERVIEWED BY: Mildred Nakkungu and Alessandro Rearte

Zulike Wyngaard's name was given to her by her father. In her culture it is common to name children after a beloved elder member of the family, for example Zulike's mother (Johanna) has a niece named after her. Zulike's father broke tradition and gave her a Xhosa name. Her name means "humble". This describes Zulike perfectly. She has a quiet presence and a strong spirit.

Like its resident, Zulike's house though humble, is just right. The house is a two-bedroomed RDP house built as part of the second phase of RDP houses in Napier. Zulike commented that these houses are bigger than the houses where she first lived when she came to Napier. She finds this compact house perfect for her family, as it is only she and her mother who live in the house. The lounge/kitchen area is compact, but the two women have been able to use the space well. When she gets home, Zulike spends time in the kitchen cooking meals for her mother (retired) and sometimes baking for fun. However, she told us her favourite room in the house is her mom's bedroom. This is where they spend their time together watching movies, her favourite pastime.

When Zulike and her mother first moved to Napier, they stayed together in a granny flat rented from Johanna's sister in the formerly Coloured township. They moved to their current RDP house ten years ago, after being on the housing waiting list for eight years. Zulike explains that she and her mother don't need any more space. But, Zulike does hope to get a car soon, and she hopes then to build a garage as an addition to her house. Otherwise, they make do with their space, decorating it with greenery and other knick-knacks. They have music speakers mounted on the wall, which seems curious considering Zulike's solitary nature. She told us that it is for décor, to bring something special to the room. In this way, Zulike and her mother use what they have to in order to make their humble house a home.

There is a bright yellow cupboard unit that acts as storage, as well as décor. Pictures of aunts, cousins and nieces are stuck to the cupboard doors as well as pictures of Zulike as a teen, on a netball team, and at her matric dance. The cousins in the picture live nearby and her best friend too, so she is imbedded in this community, having lived in Napier almost all her life. She told us she loves living in Napier, because the neighbours are friendly and she generally feels safe living here, though it is becoming less so.

As we walk around the township and settlement, Zulike constantly greets people while guiding us around. She notices some children playing in the middle of the morning and asks them why they aren't in school. We later find out that their mother is away in the Eastern Cape and they are taking the opportunity to play truant. More and more as we walk, we notice the youngsters, who are not at school. Zulike tells us there used to be a high school in Napier, that is where she went. But it closed down and has been replaced by a vocational training centre. She told us that young people need more opportunities; that the high school needs to come back. She echoed the opinions of many of the older people in the township, emphasizing that, "we need to keep them [kids and young people] busy".

When Zulike finished school, she worked at a nearby shop for a number of years. She was able to further her studies at Boland College in Caledon. While studying, she worked weekends at the shop in Napier. To get back and forth between Caledon and Napier she hitchhiked to make it in time for classes. For two years, she hitchhiked. Though hitchhiking could be dangerous, the taxi to Caledon was too expensive, costing then R100.00 one way. Zulike is currently completing an internship in the local municipality in Bredasdorp. Her pay allows her to take care of herself and her mother and she can afford to take a taxi to Bredasdorp for work.

Above the couch is a large picture of Zulike's great aunt. This picture points to the history of Zulike's family in Napier. Her maternal grandmother is from Napier. She even pointed out her grandmother's grave in the old cemetery nearby. This graveyard, which used to be on the outskirts of town before the

informal settlement was built, is now used as a thoroughfare by people to quickly get from the main road to the settlement downhill. Zulike lamented that, "They have no respect for the dead". After Zulike's grandmother died, Zulike's mother, Johanna, who was four at the time, moved to Port Elizabeth. By the time Zulike was born, Johanna had moved to Cape Town, working as a nurse at Tygerberg Hospital. Not long after Zulike's birth, Johanna moved to Napier to be closer to her family. She decided to be a primary caregiver to her elderly relatives who needed help and took care of them until they passed away. She moved on to other work afterwards, but now she is retired, getting the rest she needs after years of taking care of others. Zulike has the same caring heart. We asked her about her dreams, things she hopes to achieve in the future. In line with the person we had got to know, she said that she would love to be able earn more one day so she can give back. She tries to help when she can but wants to do more. She told us about a man that sometimes comes by for help. All she can do right now is provide food but would like to do more for him and others in the community. What about moving, would she ever leave Napier? "No," she says, her mother is here, and she needs to be close to her, to work near her, and take care of her.


PEACE

Surrounded by family and flowers

INTERVIEWEE: Lucy Pekeur
INTERVIEWED BY: Mildred Nakkungu and Alessandro Rearte
NAPIER RESEACHER: Zulike Wyngaard

Lucy Pekeur invited us to have a seat at the dinner table in her living room right by the entrance. She said something in Afrikaans to our community partner, Zulike and laughed shyly. "As long as we don't take any pictures", Zulike translated for us. We assured Lucy that for the moment, we were mostly interested in what she wants to tell us and took a seat. On the couch next to us sat her son, Frederick, named after his father, playing with a smartphone while examining us from the corner of his eyes. Above him, photos of her kids, her recent marriage and of other family members, decorated the wall.

What Lucy has built, is, without a doubt, a family house. She lives with her husband, her three kids, and her granddaughter in a beautifully laid out and decorated four-roomed house with a private toilet, a separate shed and a much-loved garden. This garden is Lucy's solo adventure and a pride and joy for her. When asked how she learned to grow such beautiful plants, she said quite simply that she just planted seeds and they grew. Her one desire, she said jokingly, is to have a big house with an all surrounding garden.

Looking at her house today, you would not know a terrible displacement had once occurred. Lucky has lived in Napier for 18 years, but in 2009, she and her family fell victim to a devastating flood. Like most other people who were affected, much of their belongings and the house itself were swept away by the seething waters. "They managed to save a few things and dry them", Zulike translated after Lucy explained how the story ended for her family.

Lucy lived with her father on a farm in Bredasdorp until his death over 18 years ago. She had to move, and decided on Napier, where her mother had managed to obtain an RDP house. Lucy said that in the old informal settlement, residents could simply claim their plot by starting to build a shack, whereas in the current location, plots are officially given out by the Municipality upon request. Thus, Lucy and her husband had to apply for a new plot where they began by building a double-roomed house, and later expanded it, when their means allowed, from two to four rooms. Her husband is a skilled woodworker and was employed for several years by the Municipality until he was let go. He adapted to the change and is now self-employed. Together with Lucy's income from her cleaning job three times a week, the two have incrementally built their beautiful house as it stands today. No practical construction skills were needed, Lucy said. She hopes to get her driver's license as soon as possible and become self-employed like her husband through a contract with the municipality to do garbage collection in the settlement.

As we got to know Lucy and her husband as self-builders, we wanted to know if they had plans to expand their house further. She explained, however, that they required more space for substantial alterations, which they do not have at the present time. The house in its current state already has a lot to offer. In considering the future, Lucy preferred to talk about her kids. Her daughter, for example, is at an age where she would like to leave her parents' house and move to Bredasdorp as soon as she finds a boyfriend. This is not to Lucy's liking though; she hopes to keep her family close in the settlement, a place about which she hardly has any bad words to say. The noises on the weekend, Lucy added, do become somewhat of a disturbance and, in recent years, young people from neighbouring Smartie Town increasingly pay visits to the settlement for drinking and probably also buying drugs.

Regardless of the noticeable increase in disorderly conduct and petty crime, a strong sense of security and belonging prevails, because Napier, and especially this informal settlement, is the place where Lucy is surrounded by her family and has settled for good.

Creating beauty and feeding community: gardeners of Napier

Isabella Baranyk | Romeo Dipura | Atabile Gwagwar

ON METHOD

Under Atabile's guidance, we selected households she knew had gardens. In some cases, these individuals also informed us of other gardeners or gardens. We interviewed gardeners about their gardens, and their experiences of and inspiration for gardening. Atabile who had studied plant sciences, focused on insights on techniques used by gardeners, such as solutions for soil preparation, fertilizer, and irrigation.

GIVING BACK BETWEEN TWO DREAMS: LINDILE MHLABA (PROFESSOR)

"I had a dream to have some green stuff; something to eat from the ground," Professor proclaimed as he began telling the story of his garden. He began cultivating produce in 2017 by growing spinach out of a suitcase. It was a solution to the space constraints that come with the small plot of land he is permitted to occupy. After three years of gardening at home, he still innovates around these constraints. Although the size of his plot hasn't increased, he now has a small, but expertly efficient garden in front of his shack. He also has agreements with some other members of the community to use spare land on their plots for growing food. Since the days of the suitcase, Professor has expanded into his own yard and those of a few neighbours with a year-round crop rotation of potatoes, tomatoes, ramps (wild leeks), turnips, cabbages, carrots, and onions, alongside rearing chickens and a duck. Rotating these crops means the soil can withstand year-round cultivation without losing necessary nutrients, according to Prof, but it also means that when he has a craving for a certain vegetable, he may have to wait until another time of year to eat it.

Prof built up his vegetable garden using a lifetime of knowledge. He grew up helping his parents garden at home in the Eastern Cape and sharpened his skills on a produce patch his school offered to interested students. Later, he worked in gardening and as a farm labourer for eight years in Napier. Of this work the says, "Whether you like it or not, you must do it," although in his case, he does enjoy it. Gardening has always been a part of his life, and his expertise is not a dispassionate one. He has an intense enthusiasm for this skilful art; in part because it brings him joy (although he does have more upkeep work some days than he'd like), and in part because of the dream it helps fulfil for himself and his community.

Prof grows produce as a way of providing nutritional food that is otherwise inaccessible for himself and his community. "When you are going to the market, the prices are high. We can't afford to buy some veg," he explains. The high prices on nutrient-rich foods are made even worse by the fact that Prof, like many others in the informal settlement, is currently unemployed. His garden is a place to experiment and build expertise as well as express a cultural identity rooted partly in gardening, and partly in the need for a food source. Growing food himself, inside the settlement, is both imperative and symbolic, and the crops he grows are famous for being fresher than the tired produce in grocery stores. Some Somalian friends have even asked him to start selling his renowned, high-quality produce at groceries in Cape Town, but for Prof, it's not about what he can sell. That the "community needs that special food, fresh from our soil" is what guides his approach. He lives off of what he grows, but he also distributes it to community members in need. Neighbours come to admire his garden he says, and sometimes request vegetables. "Prof, give me

spinach," he recalls them urging. He always obliges. He knows what can happen when people lose access to healthy food and is deeply serious about what his garden can – and must – provide.

> Working with the plants, chickens, and ducks, he says, "makes me feel happy because I'm not playing". Everyone knows he's always busy in a vegetable patch and that when he's tending to his chickens, making sure that he and those around him can sustain a healthy diet, he's not to be disturbed.

More recently, the municipality promised to make a piece of land available to a cooperative to which Prof belongs. It started out as a group of individuals who had a shared goal of producing food for the community. They made a proposal to the municipality to use an unoccupied tract of land for a larger garden. The municipality rejected the proposal, alleging that the land the group selected was too salty, and instead promised them a spot near Smartie Town that was far tougher to farm. In order to obtain access to the land, the group was required to register as a legal co-op with the municipality, a process that involved expensive, community-funded fees and an unfamiliar bureaucratic process. When the co-op status required a second, unexpected fee, the group was unable to source more funds and subsequently lost the legal status required by the municipal agreement. Even with access to land, Prof says they also required tilling equipment or a tractor, which would have been out of reach without financial assistance from the municipality. He's not finished dreaming about and fighting for a garden that could feed everyone. For as long as this reality remains just out of reach, he'll keep working whatever plot he has available to produce fresh food for himself and the ones he loves.

CULTIVATING A VISION OF BEAUTY: TRACEY LEE FOOT

Tracey has had her garden for just about a year, but it's already grown tall and lush. She adds to it constantly, finding little pieces of plants in places like dumpsters and the flower company where she works. She brings these home and grows them up from scraps. Although she credits the rich soil (in which canola and wheat once grew) with part of her garden's success, Tracey has a natural green thumb. Her ability to turn fragments and remnants into something beautiful is mirrored by her personality: the warmth in her voice when she speaks about her plants makes the sun feel brighter. While we speak, her puppies bound towards her through the plants-- they can't keep away from her. Although Tracey spends her working hours at a flower company, there's a difference between what she does there and here, in her garden. In the garden, "you're doing it for yourself," she says.

The way she has organized her plants creates an enclosed space of pure beauty around the yard of her house. Tracey describes every plant as her favourite plant, and she's meticulously placed each one to play a role in her vision. In early February, flowers of bright orange, pink and red spring up over layers of wide-leafed hostas in shades of green and purple. She plans on turning a grassy spot into a vegetable patch, but for now, her garden feeds her soul. It's a place of refuge; a place of joy. "I feel pleasure when I'm in my garden. When I have a lot on my mind, I just go out to my garden," Tracey says. No matter how her home may change and grow in the future, she knows her garden will remain a place of peace and pleasure.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY FROM THE GROUND: ZANDILE LENGISI

Zandile's story is one of independence and self-sufficiency. At 21, she's been staying by herself in Napier since she moved from her home in the Eastern Cape four years ago. Having grown up gardening with her family, Zandile started another garden in Napier about a year ago to support herself through a period of unemployment. She now has two gardens: one enclosed under a protective white mesh on the side of her house where she grows spinach, cabbage, and tomatoes; and another more recent addition outside her front wall, where she grows flowers.

When she's not working, the vegetable garden is a source of both sustenance and income. With the meals she's able to make from her own produce, the only food items she need to buy at the store are rice, meat, mielie-meal, and an occasional bottle of oil. The produce Zandile doesn't eat herself, she sells to neighbours to make money to buy electricity. A bunch of spinach is sold for R10.00 and tomatoes are R1 each. She chose these crops because they flourish year round and she'd learned from her parents how to cultivate them. To start off, she bought inexpensive seeds in Bredasdorp and has had a largely consistent, successful harvest since then. In the past she's worked on a farm picking berries, but didn't learn anything about gardening there. She still uses the tricks her dad taught her about how to care for the plants and what to do with them, such as using boiled ganja leaves as stomach medicine.

Zandile is extremely casual when talking about the efforts that have gone into having a functioning garden throughout the year, focusing on the happiness and security she gets from it, rather than any stress it may cause. When it's hot, she uses a piece of plastic tubing to water the plants from the communal tap. Other than that, nothing in particular comes to her mind about the efforts that have gone into her gardening project. She is an expert at putting in just the right amount of care. With around 30 minutes of work twice a week, the vegetables are bright and thriving. Even the young flower garden at the front of the house, which she decided to build purely to "make it nice" looks happy and healthy. Although it's only been a week since she started it, delicate white and blue blossoms have already appeared on top of new green stems. She has placed a decorative collection of upturned bottles as a border around the flowerbed, supported by sculpted bricks. In the future, Zandile hopes to continue growing flowers as well as start growing pumpkin and butternut -- staples in her family's garden back home in the Eastern Cape.

A GARDEN FROM THE PAST: IVIWE MDUNUSANA

In Iviwe's yard, leafy greens poke up through pieces of lumber waiting to be used to build her infant son's new bedroom. This space used to be her garden, started by her husband about a year ago. Although she was not interested in becoming a gardener herself, she appreciated the value it brought to their family, while her husband was maintaining it. He grew tomatoes, spinach, and cabbage which they ate and sold for extra cash, but Iviwe says she also appreciated the garden for the fresh air it provided and as a place to quietly "go look around". In its heyday, the garden attracted attention of neighbours, who would comment on how beautiful it was. Iviwe's husband was spending time on its upkeep in the mornings and afternoons several days a week. From what she could see, it was work that seemed to bring him joy.

"I think he became lazy," she says of his choice to stop maintaining it. The same fate has befallen her son's room, whose half-constructed state Iviwe gestures towards with a laugh. As we stood in the yard, looking at what remained of the greens which continued to flourish amongst the weeds that had also taken root, it was hard not to think about the amount of work that goes into maintaining a garden, even for those who enjoy it. It means constant effort, no matter whether a gardener gains or loses employment, gets married, hosts additional family members, or even has a baby. Even with all that a garden can offer a family, it has to be negotiated between other demands on time, labour, and resources.

KEY FINDINGS

Gardens in Napier are important means of self-sustenance.

Gardening is an important activity that households undertake to feed themselves. They fill the gap between low incomes and high commercial market prices. One's own garden allows access to fruits and vegetables and enables sharing of produce with friends and family, and the sale of surplus harvest at affordable prices.

Gardening is a way of giving back to the community.

Instead of each household producing for themselves, produce from gardens is often shared with the community. Gardeners share their harvest with the community and benefit from community resources such as water.

Gardening practices are often a reflection of one's upbringing and past experiences.

Nearly all the gardeners interviewed either grew up gardening as children or engaged in these practices elsewhere at some point in their lives, or both. Gardening is a way of keeping those memories alive.

Gardens are designed.

Gardeners pay attention to detail: material improvisation and garden layouts reflect careful, rational planning, no matter what materials they have at hand.

Gardening is an interface with which to engage municipal government.

The desire to expand gardening practices prompted community members like Professor to organize themselves and engage with municipal systems and procedures in a bid to access land and expand their work.

Gardens in Napier not only provide material outputs.

People who practice gardening are emotionally invested in their work. They often enjoy garden upkeep and find pleasure in it even after a day of work elsewhere.

Plants take in carbon dioxide and give off literal fresh air, but so many other ephemeral necessities are carried through the ether of the garden and the work of gardening. Gardeners calibrate the conditions for plant life to thrive and they build a sense of place on their plots, one that encompasses the richness of multiple generations of lives in the Settlement. Gardeners engage in a form of ownership of space and placemaking, their own or shared with neighbours, which cultivates collectivity, privacy, memory, and beauty. In this politics-through-living, gardeners exert their agency not only in order to survive, but in the spirit of the richness of life, they cultivate a living atmosphere that thrives under their own visions. Gardens are a medium through which one can have control over physical space and the fruits, both literal and metaphorical, it can offer.

Research Essay excerpt, Isabella Baranyk

Similar to the logics of house building in the settlement, the development of gardens also involves an incremental and step-by-step process. Proponents had to use whatever they had and wherever they would find it in developing their gardens. From old mosquito nets and suitcases to using communal taps and sourcing seeds in farms, gardening in the settlement is a continuous process of improvising. Apart from the material aspects of arranging gardens, gardeners also had to forge relationships and networks, to access material inputs for their gardens. They had to liaise with friends and employers at farms to access seeds as well as seek the community's approval to use the communal taps for their gardens. In Napier informal settlement, I was particularly drawn to the everyday struggles of gardening and resident's agency, not only in building their houses, but also in feeding themselves through gardening

Research Essay excerpt, Romeo Dipura

Finding joy in a space of no choice

INTERVIEWEE: Belinda Nolanda
INTERVIEWED BY: Jinty Jackson and Tommaso Cosentino
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Bongiwe Bunga

Belinda Nolanda conveys a sense of patience and calm. She is one of the settlement's most respected and established residents, having lived in Napier for 19 years. Belinda lives with her five-year-old grandson, Lufefe, an intensely curious child who is keen to explore the workings of any gadget he comes across. Like many of her neighbours, Belinda's roots are strongly embedded in the Eastern Cape, where most of her family, including her three children, reside. She has two boys and a girl, all in their early twenties. A sense of nostalgia permeates her words and eyes when she speaks of the Eastern Cape. When she has enough money, usually in December, she goes back to visit them for three to four weeks at a time.

BUILDING AND REBUILDING

Belinda moved from the Eastern Cape to the Western Cape searching for "umsebenzi ungcono" (isiXhosa for 'a better job') in order to support her family. Before settling in Napier, she lived for a year in the nearby town of Caledon working as a milkmaid in the local dairy industry together with her then husband. It was a job she continued doing in Bot River, a small town in the vicinity of Caledon before moving to another farm in Struisbaai. During this period, she and her husband had accommodation through their work.

Belinda decided to move to Napier's informal settlement and build her own home there because of conflicts she was having with her husband. However, her move from the farm to the informal settlement brought with it new anxieties. On the farm she did not have to worry about her rent, or the bills and responsibilities that come with inhabiting your own house. In the context of informality she inhabits, the burden of responsibility for managing the household is now hers alone. Furthermore, access to basic services such as water and electricity, as well as tenure security on the house and land plot she occupies, are not fully formalized or guaranteed by the law, making her condition even more uncertain.

Due to a flood of the nearby Elandsrivier stream in 2010, the municipality decided to relocate the settlement. So, Belinda dismantled her house, moved the materials to the relocation site on a strip of municipal land on the outskirts of town and rebuilt the house, where it currently stands. While the municipality provided the land for those who relocated to the new settlement, residents like Belinda had to arrange privately to transport their dismantled houses and belongings to the new site with "no help from the masipala" (isiXhosa for 'municipality') she recalls. In the process of re-assembling her house, she added one extra room, making it a three-room accommodation.

FACING THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE IN THE SETTLEMENT

Unfortunately, apart from being less vulnerable to floods, the quality of life in the new settlement has proven worse for Belinda. She had more job opportunities while she was living there, including work as a florist and as a brick-maker. Since relocating, she has struggled to buy electricity, and to make ends meet. Belinda is currently unemployed, and her everyday life is spent "cleaning the house and sleeping". The last job she had was "last year" and she is currently looking for seasonal jobs as a fruit picker. In the meantime, she supports herself through a state disability grant because she suffers from an (undisclosed) medical condition. Belinda is quite satisfied with the healthcare system in Napier, notwithstanding long waiting times in between GP consultations and access to hospital treatments. She benefits from the ambulance service as a means of transport to go to the doctor and to the hospital.

She has access to one toilet a few metres away from her house that she shares with three more households. Not placing a lock on one's toilet makes it impossible to keep it clean and, hence, safely usable. Occasionally, people who do not have access to toilets in the settlement break into her toilet in order to use it, but, she concedes, not as often as some other toilets getting broken into. Perhaps, she reflects, it is because she is

respected as one of the older residents of the settlement. She also laments the terrible smell emanating from the toilets and the black water rivulets that cross the settlement from top to bottom. "If you go out, it smells bad. It affects you. You breathe it in," she says. Belinda claims that "Masipala doesn't want to help people here". She feels this particularly in relation to the deficient toilets, taps, and the lack of showers, and proper drains. These conditions leave her disillusioned, and sceptical about the possibilities of improvement to the settlement. Despite her status as a respected elder in her community, these difficult aspects of daily life undermine her sense of belonging to the place. Overall, though, she feels quite safe in the settlement and does not have major security concerns for herself and her grandson "because there are not too many skollies (Afrikaans for 'gangsters') here".

PROUD HOUSEKEEPING

Belinda is confident she will remain in the settlement in the future. She has made plans for her children in the Eastern Cape to join her next year, after being separated from them for "Yoh! A loooong time!" (almost a decade). Two of them will go to school in Napier whereas the other one will look for a job in the area. Belinda is very concerned for one of her sons who suffers from epilepsy. On the one hand, the idea of taking care of him reassures her, on the other hand, she knows that life is going to get even more difficult once he is living with her. She has "no other option" because of the severity of her son's condition. To accommodate her children, Belinda plans to expand her house by building an extra room. In the longer term, however, she hopes to move into an RDP house in order to stabilise her family and her life.

Although she does not fully identify with Napier's informal settlement as home, Belinda does love her house. As she shows us around, we get an impression of lived-in orderliness with nothing out of place, and everything shining clean. Answering the question on which is her favourite room or part of the house, she claimed she is proud of every part of her house because she made it herself and has spent many years in it. She and her grandson each have a bedroom. Above the bedside table in her room is a portrait of Jesus, depicted as, "the Good Shepherd", covered in plastic to protect it from dust. Beneath this is a shiny DVD sound system. As we enter her grandson's bedroom, she proudly pulls back a dust cloth to uncover a large set of double audio speakers decorated in shiny, army fatigue print.

From the large array of pots and pans neatly stacked above and between the cupboards in her kitchen space we understand that Belinda loves to cook. A testimony to the length of time she has spent here and the life she has established, is a stand-alone Defy stove and oven in her kitchen while many of her friends and neighbours rely on two-plate, portable stoves. Her favourite dish is Potjiekos (a typical South African stew). Belinda also loves to bring people together. A few days after our interview, we meet Belinda wheeling an empty crate of beers (that she ordinarily stores in a corner of her home) up the road in a wheelbarrow and returning with it full so that she can invite friends and neighbours to Lufefe's sixth birthday party.

This is home, and Eastern Cape is also home

INTERVIEWEE: Bulelwa Fetile
INTERVIEWED BY: Geetika Anand, Romeo Dipura and El-May Pelser
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Zolile Eric Fetile

Born and brought up in Queenstown, Eastern Cape, Bulelwa Fetile is a 38-year old woman, who lives in Napier's informal settlement with her husband and four-year old daughter. She was not thrilled about leaving home in the Eastern Cape, but in search of a job, Bulelwa came to Napier in 2006. At the time, she moved in with her older sister, who was living on the previous site of the informal settlement. It was a three-roomed structure, shared by six people. Bulelwa had to sleep in the kitchen. It was not the best arrangement, but she tried her best to live with what she had. She soon got a job making bricks.

By the time the settlement was relocated to its current position in 2009, Bulelwa's sister had already moved into the formal settlement. This meant that the municipality gave a plot to Bulelwa when it was time for the move. According to her, the municipality even helped with cutting the poles, and transporting the building materials and other items during this shift. Since she was not working at that time, Bulelwa only built a two-roomed structure in the beginning – one room for sleeping, and the other one for cooking and sitting. This cost her almost R1 500.00. She was also living by herself at the time.

After she got married in 2011, Bulelwa and her husband felt the need to have more space and decided to extend. They added an additional room to serve as a separate kitchen and converted the original kitchen into a living room. They added a fourth room last year for their daughter, who was born in 2015. These two extensions came to about R1 000.00 in total.

Bulelwa has a beautiful house. It's no wonder she thinks of it as her home, in almost the same way she thinks of the Eastern Cape as home. She told us, however, "That's [Eastern Cape] the original one because I was born there, and I grew up there". Her house in the informal settlement currently has four rooms, and a yard. Crossing the yard, we entered her home through the kitchen. To the right, was her daughter's room, and to the left, the living room, with a door leading to the bedroom. While we were sitting and chatting in the living room, we could not help but notice the walls, made of zinc sheets had wooden boards attached on the inside. The boards seemed to be made from packaging materials with symbols and words such as, "handle with care" marked on them.

Bulelwa said that these boards were added last year, because the zinc walls get really cold during winter. We could feel the much-needed warmth inside her house on that particularly cold morning. She was kind enough to let us stay on indoors even after the interview was over, while we were waiting for others to finish theirs, because it was windy and cold outdoors. We had a good time watching a soap opera on television together. Bulelwa's daughter's drawings on the walls brought the entire lounge to life.

Bulelwa's husband is a taxi driver. She herself is looking for work at the moment. She is intermittently able to find work on farms, picking berries, mostly between June and December. Bulelwa feels that farm work is what is available in Napier. She has completed schooling up to Grade 10, while her husband has done Grade 11. Their daughter goes to a creche in the formal settlement nearby. Bulelwa said there were three creches in the area. The one her daughter attends has six to seven caretakers for about 100 children.

Over the years, Bulelwa and her husband have tried to make their lives as comfortable as possible and overcome various obstacles that the informal settlement threw up. These include not only the changes and extensions they made to the house and to basic services like water and drainage, but also procuring assets like a cooking range, refrigerator and a washing machine. Bulelwa said that the community taps and toilets were installed in the same year the settlement was moved this side, however, the electricity came a year later, in 2010. Bulelwa has her own key for one of the community toilets, which she shares with a few other households. Since last year, the family has had water inside the house through a tap connected to the community water supply system.

They have also made arrangements for drainage of wastewater from the house. Bulelwa still has to take baths in the bedroom though.
From the municipality's side, Bulelwa feels not much has changed over the years. Even though many more people live in the informal settlement now compared to 2009 (when there were about 200 houses), the number of taps and toilets remain the same. She feels in fact, that there were more toilets in the previous site than the current one. There are no jobs available for the residents. Bulelwa has been on the national housing database since 2009, and is still waiting. These are some of the things that Bulelwa expects from the municipality. Whatever she could do on her own, she has already done. She was very clear that she could not build a permanent house by herself, even if the municipality were to allow it.

While Bulelwa thinks of her house in Napier's informal settlement as "home" in a similar way to her "original home" in the Eastern Cape, she did point out a key difference in the end: that her Eastern Cape home is made of bricks, while the Napier one is still not.

Bulelwa doesn't think of going back to the Eastern Cape though - there are no jobs there, she said. She plans to stay on in Napier, and dreams of a five-roomed brick house, with three bedrooms, a kitchen and a sitting room. Even if it means moving out of the current location, Bulelwa is open to that.


CALI

I am not a chicken; I am not staying in a zinc

INTERVIEWEE: Chesline Goliath and Presville Mckrige
INTERVIEWED BY: Geetika Anand, Romeo Dipura and El-May Pelser
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Zolile Eric Fetile

Chesline's wooden Wendy, next door to our research partner, Zolile's house, stood in sharp contrast to the corrugated structures that characterize Napier informal settlement. It was slightly raised above the ground and its external enclosures consisted of treated wooden planks. Her house also had more glass windows than most structures in the settlement. When we were welcomed into Chesline's house on that drizzly morning, the warmth of the family and the Wendy itself, seemed to dispel the chill. Comfortably seated on chairs, Chesline, her boyfriend and two young daughters, as well as the four of us in the research team almost filled the entire sitting space. Without wasting time, she started telling her story.

Chesline, 29-years old, had moved from Bredasdorp to Napier informal settlement with her boyfriend Presville Mckrige two months prior to our interview. The couple had known each other for a long time. They went to the same school and church in Klipdale, where their parents were working on farms. From Klipdale, Chesline and her family moved to Napier (formal settlement), and Presville's family moved to Arniston. Together they have three daughters (aged five, seven and nine); two of whom live with them in the settlement, while the eldest lives in Arniston with Presville's family.

One of Chesline's greatest motivations for establishing her own house was her desire for independence. In Napier's formal settlement, she had been living in her mother's house but when her mother started living with her boyfriend and wanted to sell the house, Chesline thought of finding her own space. A friend introduced her to Valentine and Lele, who informed her about the process involved in getting a plot in the settlement. Thereafter, Chesline wrote an application to Michael Dennis at the Cape Aghulas Municipality and received their plot in April 2019.

Having secured the plot, a structure was next, however, that took a while because of financial constraints. In the meantime, someone came and built on their plot. Chesline said the municipality was scared to chase them, but she was not. She called Presville, who broke down the other structure and reclaimed their plot. Thereafter, they brought in their own Wendy, just two weeks before Christmas last year. To acquire their house, the couple had to help someone move and after completing this work the person gave them the Wendy and some furniture which they brought to their new plot. The Wendy is a two-room structure; one room is used as kitchen and for sitting, and the other one is for sleeping. The couple intends to add another room, so that the children can have their own room.

Chesline and Presville didn't have their own electricity box at the time of the interview. They had pulled a connection from their neighbour, Zolile's box, and paid him for the electricity recharge. The family also tried to access communal toilets, but they were told there are already too many people. Chesline uses a toilet at her workplace, the children use a bucket, and Presville goes out in the open. Along with the additional room, having their own toilet and electricity are the family's most urgent needs.

Chesline and her family felt proud about living in a Wendy house which is surrounded by zinc structures. Asked why she had specifically chosen a wooden house, Chesline almost instantly responded, "I am not a chicken, I am not staying in a zinc". She added that zinc structures get cold and wet and that she needed something better for her children. She had lived in a zinc structure before when she was still living in Bredasdorp. When she moved to Napier, however, she was living in her mother's brick house, but both Chesline and Presville feel this Wendy is their favourite house because it is their own.

Having established their home in Napier's informal settlement, supporting their young family had not been easy. Like most people in the settlement, finding decent work is extremely difficult. Presville depended mostly on part time work in construction. He said that he was an expert in tiling and had used some of his skills in setting up their Wendy properly. Chesline had been involved in part time work. She had initially secured contract work at OK Supermarket but, just before our

interview, had managed to secure her job on a permanent basis.

Previously, the difficulty of securing consistent, reliable work placed immense constraints on the couple's ability to provide sufficient food for their young daughters. Sometimes, they literally had nothing to eat and at others, they could only afford porridge. With Chesline's new job, however, there was a sense of relief that she was going to be better positioned to better provide food for her family in spite of the fact that she would have less time with them. Although this made her uncomfortable, being able to feed her children brought her consolation. Chesline was also proud that with her new job she had her own separate insurance; for her this was an important achievement.

Finally securing a permanent job was a dream come true for Chesline. Not only did it mean the ability to pay school fees for her young children with relative ease, but most importantly, it enabled her to come back from work every day with a loaf of bread and milk to feed her children. It meant that once in a while, she could afford to do what her young family enjoyed the most: braaing on the weekend.

The story of Chesline and her household is a story about women's empowerment, homemaking and the everyday struggle that young parents face in putting food on the table in Napier's informal settlement This is a struggle also for belonging, independence and self-determination. For Chesline and Presville, their wooden Wendy house, in a maze of corrugated structures, is a symbol of their aspirations for their children. Finally, beyond showing the difficulties of providing sufficient food in the context of high unemployment, the story also illustrates how food also brings families together.


2020
SUGAR
TEA

Waiting to go home!

INTERVIEWEE: Vuyani Mpame
INTERVIEWED BY: Malana Rogers-Bursen and Hend El-Ghazaly
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Ntombe Letsoafa

"I want to get back to Eastern Cape for my mother." With a wide smile painted on his face, Vuyani Mpame expressed his longing to reunite with his mother. Vuyani first came to Napier in 2009, seeking a job. However, he expressed his frustration with the scarcity of job opportunities here. He used to live with his sister in Napier until he decided to build his own house in the settlement, using the second-hand materials his sister left for him after she moved to another house. It took him around one year to build this house.

Walking to Vuyani's house to conduct the interview we faced a storm of plastic bags, drops of rain, and cold air. As we reached the metal door and stood outside, we heard a voice of the occupant inside talking in isiXhosa with Ntombe, who then disappeared into the dark interior and returned with a bunch of keys and opened the door for us through bars. In that weather, it felt as if this process took forever. However, when the three of us stepped into the entry room of Vuyani's house which served as a kitchen and living room, we instantly felt shielded from the weather outside.

It was such a warm house; the external structure was made of zinc, covered tightly with large amounts of plastic on the inside, preventing any rain or wind from getting in. There was a window with a floral pattern curtain, a clock, and a calendar on the wall. In front of the couch, kitchen utilities were organized in a way that made you think Vuyani was someone who truly cared about the place. Therefore, it left us astonished when he said that he did not really like anything about this house.

"I don't like living in the informal settlement," he said, leaning on the half-open wooden door, gazing outside. He insisted on the good relationships he had with the neighbours but was disappointed with the physical environment and services in the settlement, especially toilets where sometimes ten people share one toilet. He seemed to feel hopeless and unsure about changes that might be possible in the settlement. While looking outside, as if he was talking to himself, he was remembering how many times the municipality promised to come and fix something and then they never arrived. On the other hand, Vuyani unintentionally showed us how proactive he is when it comes to dealing with everyday issues in the settlement. When the municipality didn't deliver the bin bags they promised, he chose not to wait. Instead he went directly to their office to ask for the bin bags that they were late in delivering to the residents of the settlement.

In this waiting phase, Vuyani is living by himself in his beautiful house with his dog for company. If there is any hope for upgrading; he would choose to have his own tap and toilet. He is looking forward to saving some money to get back home, to his mother in the Eastern Cape.

Networks and neighbourliness: strategies of toilet access

Bongiwe Bunga | Hend El-Ghazaly | Jinty Jackson | Ntomby Letsoafa

ON METHOD

We conducted interviews with residents on strategies to access toilets and with the EPWP worker in charge of toilet maintenance. Focusing on a few nodes of the settlement, we mapped the location of toilets in relation to users. Where people shared locked toilets, we mapped where they were living in relation to other users of the same toilet. As safety was an urgent concern, we explored the affective experience of accessing toilets with our research team member Bongiwe who walked the routes she uses to reach a toilet and described her experience.

INTRODUCTION

The most urgent concerns residents spoke of in relation to toilets were safety and hygiene. Many said they wanted a toilet inside their homes where they could ensure it was clean and safe, but, in the meantime, they had developed practices and strategies to secure their access to toilets that was as safe as possible in challenging, precarious circumstances. By recognizing and valorising their strategies, we do not suggest that access to a dignified, safe toilet, is any less urgent, but rather, we hope these can be part of conversations in upcoming interventions or upgrading projects.

The strategies residents use to reach and access toilets also demonstrate the vulnerability of their bodies in this space. One woman had erected a fence to keep dirty toilet paper from a nearby toilet ending up in her yard and in the hands of her toddler. We explore several strategies women used to deal with the risk of using toilets after dark such as always being accompanied by a partner or a brother. Men also mentioned that they experienced fear going to toilets at night, although we did not investigate their affective experiences explicitly in our research.

TSETSE: MAINTAINING AND REPAIRING TOILETS

Lwandile Mkhangume, who goes by the nickname Tsetse, maintains and repairs toilets, employed at the Municipality short-term through the EPWP. He acts as the interface between the municipality, located in Bredasdorp, and settlement residents who use the toilets. Tsetse does not have an office where people can report their complaints, nor does he post regular times when he is available. During the day he often works at other sites or is based at the municipal offices in town. However, most people know where he lives, and they know how to find him. He explains he checks in every day and can be contacted once he is at home in the evenings. When there is a problem reported to him, he reports it to his foreman at the municipality and, when he has authorisation, he fixes the problem.

According to Tsetse, children steal parts of the plumbing system and throw stones at the toilets, causing damage. He also complains that, although he warns people not to, they use newspapers instead of toilet paper, which blocks toilets. Another problem is that people come from outside the settlement, from Smartie Town for instance (where they have toilets in their houses), to steal parts of the sanitation infrastructure built in the settlement. He has caught people carrying away doors to use elsewhere. He takes these challenges in his stride, explaining, "Ja, you fix, then children they break, and other things get stolen, but you still organize it you see. Put it back again. It is still fine".

Young, approachable, and with a cheery disposition, Tsetse has picked up many good skills on the job, adaptability being chief amongst them. He shows us a row of toilets where he has experimented with using a different type of connector valve outside the toilet which is less susceptible to being broken. He says children break off parts that stick up from the pipes at the back. To address this problem, he has begun attaching smooth bender valves.

Tsetse confirms the perception, voiced by other people we spoke to, that there are serious problems with toilets in certain parts of the settlement. He singles out the middle area, block B, as an area where there are "a lot of problems". These, he says, occur when residents are asleep at night and people come to break into locked toilets and steal parts. "The toilets, is alright, but they lock it ne. Maybe three houses, sharing one toilet. … and because [they are] maybe sleeping at night… there is tsotsis, para-paras . They break that toilet, steal something there.

You see." Tsetse's explanation highlights that the toilets are more than just a service, they are also commodities. Specifically, toilet parts and toilet doors have a value elsewhere, particularly for people who have their own, private toilets.

As a settlement resident, he is also an active participant in the system of shared, locked toilets. He himself shares a toilet with three other households. As a user of this system, he agrees that locking toilets is the obvious way to keep toilets clean and functional. However, his position is complicated because of his dual role at the municipality, which also means he sees the many people living in the settlement who need access and who aren't able to because the toilets have been locked by others. He attempts to accommodate peoples' arrangements wherever possible and to find solutions to technical problems. Other problems he refers to his manager.

As a matter of principle, Tsetse refrains from offering opinions about people's actions and decisions regarding toilet access, as long as they do not involve clogging, breaking or stealing. In his role as a technician, he is critical, the key to the hybrid governance system which shapes toilet access across the settlement.

WISDOM: FOREIGNERS "CAN'T SAY ANYTHING"

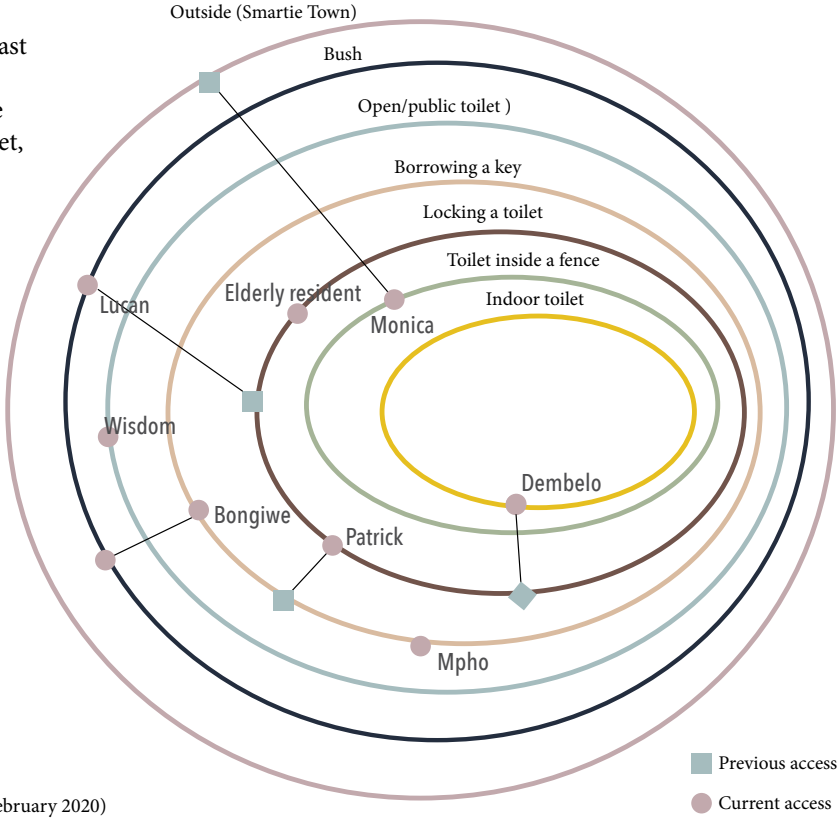
From Malawi, Wisdom has lived in Napier for over three years. The toilet he and his family uses is close to where he works preparing fynbos, quite far from his home. It is daubed with graffiti. "A lot of people use this one; nobody cleans it," Wisdom explains. The toilet door is closed but unlocked. Inside we see a pile of crumpled newspaper, cardboard, and other papers that stands as high as the toilet. Those who use the toilet have left behind this refuse rather than clog up the toilet by flushing it with substances other than toilet paper, which people cannot afford. There is no bin. The toilet seat and cistern cover are missing. Still, the toilet works. "If you are a foreigner using this toilet. This is the best one," Wisdom tells us. He does not see any possibility of organizing access by locking one, the way other people have managed to do. "If we put a lock, people will take it off. We can't say anything."

MONICA: A PUBLIC TOILET IN MY YARD

Monica and her children waited eight years before getting access to use a toilet close to home. Previously, she used a toilet outside of the settlement, in Smartie Town, where a relative was living. Last year the municipality added a number of toilet blocks for communal use. One was built just a few meters from her door. She became worried that a publicly used toilet so close was a health risk. "The papers that are coming, when it is windy, they come right inside your house," she explained. She decided to erect a fence around the toilet. The fenced-off toilet, however, is not for her own exclusive use. She shares it with another woman and her family who live in a different block. She explains, "They don't have toilets on that side". They rely on the fence instead of a lock to control access. Monica locks the gate when she is at work and home at night. While she is at home in the daytime, it remains open. But, she adds, "While I am here nobody comes without asking… if they ask, I am allowing people to come in".

NTOMBI: NO TOILET WHERE I LIVE

Ntombi moved to a plot at the top of the settlement last year, a new area where the municipality had not yet built toilets. To draw water for her family's needs, she attached a long hose pipe to the tap at the closest toilet, down the hill from her new place. To access a toilet, the family still walks the distance to her cousin's house in the middle of the settlement, about 200 metres away. When that toilet is broken, she asks her cousin's neighbours for their toilet key. When we asked if she felt she could ask her closer neighbours for a key to use the toilet where she accesses water, she explained: "No, I do know them." She gestured instead towards the settlement, explaining again, "But I am used to using toilets… there".



Spectrum of modes of accessing toilets in Napier informal settlement

Based on the experience of residents we conducted interviews with (February 2020)

PATRICK WYNGAARD: A SECURE TOILET ON THE "STILL SIDE" OF TOWN

For the first year he lived in his house, Patrick and his wife, brother in law, and two children borrowed a key from his sister to use a locked toilet to which she had access. He noticed that one of the communal toilet blocks at the bottom of his road was broken and standing open. Patrick spoke to the guy who maintains toilets for the municipality "to fix it specifically for me," he explained. Patrick's strategy to clean, lock, and claim the toilet paid off. His lock was respected by the surrounding households and has not been broken. His family shares the toilet with the family who live across the road. Patrick emphasizes that the system of access in the block where they live is "like a chain" in which everyone knows their place.

BONGIWE BUNGA: PLAN A, B, AND C

The door of the toilet Bongiwe regularly used was ripped off its hinges the night before our interview. In the five years she has lived in the settlement, Bongiwe has tried and failed three times to place a lock on a toilet close to where she lives in order, she says, to "make my own toilet". Each time, someone broke the lock in the night. Eventually, she gave up. Instead, she relies on her friend Nandipha, her "neighbour from the Eastern Cape," to lend her the key to the locked toilet next door to Nandipha's home. The walk, that takes almost two minutes, between Block A and Block B, is not necessarily be quickest, but she feels it is the "safest" because it passes "in front of doors" where there is more likely to be light shone by people's homes, and activity; where neighbours can hear and see her (if they are up). If she needs the toilet late, Bongiwe must wake her friend. It is "too hard because sometimes she is sleeping. If I knock, she takes time to open the door. This walk is risky at night, but where Bongiwe feels most comfortable borrowing a key. Until Nandipha's toilet door could be fixed, Bongiwe's plan B was to try to borrow a key from another friend, also from the Eastern Cape. Failing that, she would have to use the "trees and grass" in front of the settlement."

DEMBELO ABICHE: MY INSIDE TOILET

Dembelo used to share a communal toilet, but when he moved to live in the shop, he found himself, for safety concerns, in a need of an indoor toilet. He explained that he doesn't know what he might face when he opens the shop doors and goes to the public toilet at night. Dembelo explained "…. Because I am from another country I don't want to get out at night, feeling scared". These feelings remain, despite Dembelo's insistence that Napier's informal settlement is quite safe in comparison to other informal settlements and "I know everybody here; family, friends, nothing [is a] problem for me." He approached the municipality to ask to install an indoor toilet in his shop, especially because the right to have a toilet and shower is part of his shop license. Tsetse installed the toilet for him and the total cost for the toilet ranged between R3 000.00 to R4 000.00, an expense which for him was worth the money.

LUCAN JULIES: GOING TO THE BUSH (AGAIN)!

Lucan and his family currently do not have access to a toilet. They resort to using the bush. He explained he could not afford to buy good quality locks so the locks he used were easily broken. "I wasted around R400.00 on locks; … there were around 25 locks, and the longest period a lock lasted on the door was six days!" People are wary of sharing with too many others, so he does not feel he can ask neighbours for access. He is not confident about the possibility of securing another toilet as well because the Settlement "is getting overcrowded, there are not enough toilets for all of the houses." His last resort, the "the bush" where it is open and everyone can see you sit there … [or] you must go there [to the public toilets] and sit on this [disgusting] toilet and shit if you want to shit, there is no other way to do it!"

MPHO PHANTSI: ENEMIES IN WAIT

A relative newcomer in the settlement, Mpho Phantsi borrows a key from her boyfriend's sister to use a toilet. During the day Mpho often has an uncomfortable wait if she needs to use the toilet and her "sister-in-law" is at work. However, using the toilet at night, brings other risks and terrors. To get to the toilet Mpho must take a winding route between shacks and around corners where she feels anyone might lurk in wait. She refuses to go alone, and always takes along her boyfriend, explaining, "...you see in the night I am getting scared. You see the corners that I walk before I come to the toilet? I am just scared if maybe there is someone who is going to wait there and grab me." As for the option of using one of the open toilets accessible to all, she replies in disgust, "I've seen those toilets. Ha-a. I wouldn't use those toilets. They are dirty!"

KEY FINDINGS

Access to locked toilets is built on relationships

Claiming a toilet is a negotiated process with uncertain outcomes. Timing is crucial. A claim to a toilet can go back to when toilets were built. There are other claiming practices that rely on unspoken rules. For instance, if a toilet is broken for some time and standing open, and no one is perceived to have a claim to it, you might attempt to arrange access to it, perhaps chatting first to the municipal contact person on site. Once it is fixed, you can lock it and hope for the best that your claim on that toilet stands and is respected.

Padlocks come with three keys, each of which can be lent to multiple other users or families. This 'three-keys system' works, although the number of users of each toilet varies considerably. Metal chains are an important addition to locks because the sounds of the chains being broken when struck by metal objects (like hammers) are an extra security protection that alerts people nearby at night. Whether a lock will stick or not also depends on how neighbours and the wider community perceive that claim. Sometimes locks are broken straight away and other times not; sometimes they are broken to ensure that a toilet stays open to everyone. The frequency of breaking a lock depends on the location of the toilet in the settlement. Block B and C seem to be particularly rough, especially on the weekends when people get drunk and when people who live outside the settlement visit and party. In contrast, one resident described block A as the "still" area in the settlement. His claiming of a toilet there has been stable for a long time.

Making do strategies: neighbourliness and networks

A sense of neighbourliness can be shared by people who live close to each other, built through daily acts of sharing. Trust can be linked to a sense of neighbourliness established somewhere else, for instance in the Eastern Cape. People do not necessarily share a toilet close to where they live. Sharing networks stretch across the settlement, some more expansive and open to newcomers or those who needed to borrow a toilet key temporarily. Not everyone is able to successfully negotiate access to a key, especially foreign immigrants. Many are left to use the best available unlocked toilet. In this case users share common practices or understandings to make the best of a precarious, difficult situation and to ensure the toilet stays usable as long as possible. Sharing toilets is accompanied by an expectation of shared responsibilities amongst users, including cleaning the toilets over weekends. The fear of disease was sometimes given as a reason for excluding others because people feared overcrowding of a shared toilet. A fear of catching diseases is partially what provoked one resident to reject the whole system of access; instead of using either overshared toilets or public "dirty" toilets, he used the "bush".

Expanding and adaptable logics of repair

Theft of toilet parts – such as doors, locks, chains and toilet valves – is a key material condition. On this issue, there is a difference in perception between the municipal worker and the Municipal Water and Sanitation Manager. The latter suggested the residents of the stealing and vandalizing of toilet parts was due to the shared nature of the infrastructure. However, the municipal plumber, who is also a settlement resident, suggested that people from outside the settlement come to steal these parts for their own private toilets. Inside the settlement there is no need to steal doors or toilet parts because most people use this shared infrastructure. The system of locking doors can be viewed as a strategy on the part of residents to help mitigate this shared problem of theft and damage to toilet infrastructure for both residents and the municipality.

Maintenance of the sanitation system is formally provided by the state through on-site servicing by a plumber who works for the municipality and is also a resident. He has adapted and experimented with the maintenance of toilets in relation to the social and technical interactions happening between people and this toilet infrastructure. Maintenance is perceived to be a service provided only through the municipality. Many residents shared their frustration about the municipality's delay in fixing the toilets. One resident expressed a desire to have the tools and knowledge to be able to fix broken toilets himself. He felt frustrated that this capacity was vested exclusively in the municipality.

A necessary first step requires recognition of informal settlement residents not as heroes who are overcoming difficult circumstances, but as urban actors whose knowledge and needs must shape conversations about how to go about upgrading lives, and, in the process, also infrastructure that is imbedded in those lives. Improvised social practices can and do make infrastructure relevant, in some instances, extending and sustaining what the state provides. This reality, however, does not dim what is urgent for those living in the informal settlement: access to a clean, safe toilet in order to prevent themselves and their families from catching diseases. The numerous examples show the vulnerability of bodies (especially, but not only women) in this space; and the ease with which toilet access can be ruptured amid precarious living circumstances. All of this underlines Olson's (2015) insistence that "a suffering body, now, is that which cannot wait" (p. 524) and calls for a "fierce urgency for now."

Research essay excerpt, Jinty Jackson

The varied and diverse ways in which residents have to interact with toilets shows that this infrastructure is more than a thing or mere service. It is a complex social and technical process, which enables or disables certain experiences, relations and forms of access. As Charlton suggests (2018), the strategies people develop to find ways to access toilets, make this infrastructure more relevant and useful in their precarious situations. These strategies show the question of accessibility is more than ratio-dependent service provision. It take into consideration the ways access builds on the uncertainties and heterogeneity embedded in the community

Research essay excerpt, Hend El Ghazaly

Voices from the Cape Agulhas Municipality

Shane Roach is Manager of Water and Sanitation at CAM. When interviewed, he had worked with the municipality for just over seven months, moving from a private consulting firm and, before that, the Stellenbosch Municipality. Shane Roach is responsible for water purification and distribution, and also sewer distribution and sewage treatment for the whole municipal area.

"We must make sure that everyone has access to water within 200 meters of their house. That's the law. And then also a toilet within 200 meters of their house, which is not always the case. Water is essential within 200 meters. The toilet is not that essential, but we do provide toilet infrastructure in the informal settlement. […] From my experience, I would actually like to give each erf or each unit the water; their own water, their own toilet, because once you start sharing that infrastructure, there's a lot of wastage. People waste water, people break stuff, they steal stuff, especially outdoors, in the toilets, they like to steal the doors."

"We make sure that they have water, twenty-four/seven. If we cut that water, in front of the main building, they'll start toyi-toying. You don't cut that water, yeah, whatever you do. If there's a leak, then we will fix it. In Napier, in some of the other areas also, we have what we call EPWP workers. These are people that walk around every day and they check for leaks. They check for broken toilets. They check for stolen stuff. They will then report that to the Superintendent and then we will either instruct them to fix it or come out ourselves to fix it. So, we really do have these guys walking around. There are like two or three guys that we employ on a contract basis and then they do all the repairs in the informal areas. They are dedicated for each town's informal area. Most of the time, they also live there."

Shane Roach, Manager , Water and Sanitation


A19
VOTE ANC

Going in circles: from a formal home to the settlement

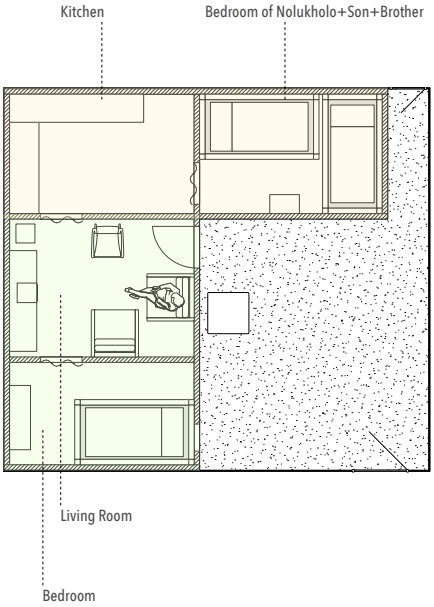
INTERVIEWEE: Zingisile Mcapukisi (Shorty)
INTERVIEWED BY: Sinazo Funde and Elena Antoni
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Nolukholo Mayile

Zingisile Mcapukisi's house caught our eyes: first, because of its elevated location, and second, because of way the exterior was painted. On the corrugated iron walls, flames are painted in dark blue against a light mint green background. This blue frames the structure and highlights all openings (windows and doors). The plot is located at edge of the settlement and, as one of the main streets runs perpendicular to the house, we get an unobstructed view of the house which seems almost exposed. Owing to its position, and the striking way it is painted, the house really stands out in the settlement.

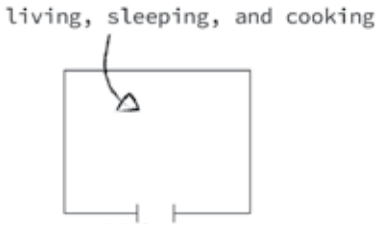
After passing by the house a couple of times, we asked our research partner, Nolukholo about its owner. As Zingisile, (known as Shorty), is her stepfather, she introduced us and arranged for us to interview him. Shorty is a 60-year-old man, originally from the Eastern Cape. He moved to the Cape Agulhas region with his wife in 1985 and stayed near the village of Klipdale, where he worked on a cattle farm. They came to Napier in 2008 and initially lived in the former informal settlement before they got resettled into an RDP house in Smartie Town. Shorty and his family stayed there until 2019 when he decided to sell the house because it was difficult for him to pay the service charges.

When the residents of the informal settlement received plots on the edge of the settlement, his was one of the first houses to be built there. Shorty lives there with his five grown-up daughters and a grandson. He is very proud of his house because he built it by himself with materials he bought from a "proper" store and not from a scrapyard, which is where some of the residents get their materials. Shorty loves his house. He wouldn't change a thing about it, except that he wants his daughters to move out. Shorty is not only a father and a grandfather, he is also an animal lover. Besides the two dogs in his yard, he owns chickens and has a pig farm. The farm is five minutes away from his home, where the former informal settlement used to be.

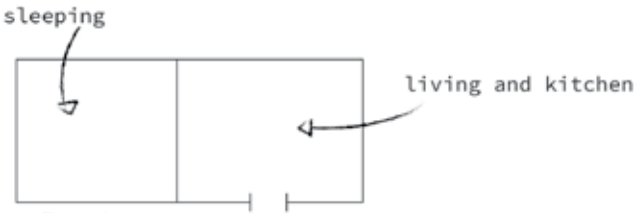
In all, it can be said that Shorty is happy with his current living situation.



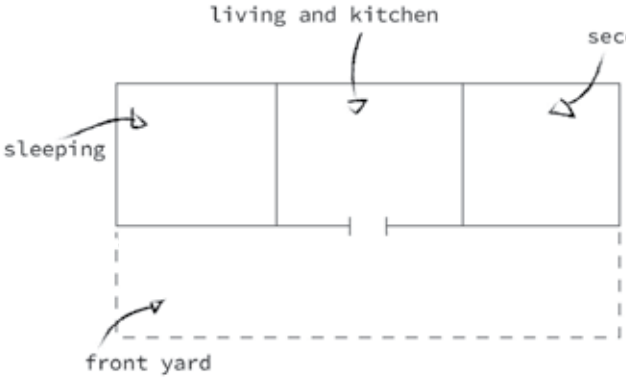
Nosimanye Mxhunyelwa: Past, present and future house planning



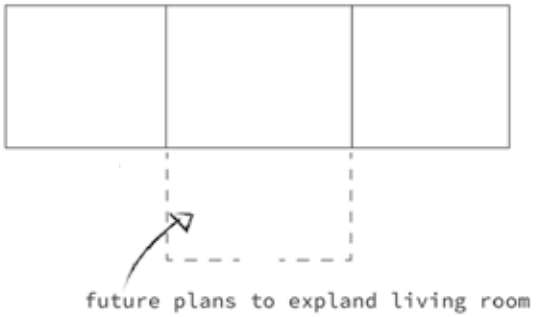
1. Original



2. First addition



3. Current layout



4. Future plans

Creating warmth and making do

INTERVIEWEE: Nosimanye Mxhunyelwa
INTERVIEWED BY: Isabella Baranyk and Kadria Hassan
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Siyavuya Blom

Nosimanye Mxhunyelwa moved to Napier in 2009 after leaving her hometown in the Eastern Cape in search of work. In the 11 years that followed, she worked on an onion farm in Bredasdorp, survived flooding of the previous informal settlement, tripled the size of her house, and had a son. Yet for Nosimanye, Napier still hasn't earned the moniker of "home". Home is back in the Eastern Cape, where much of her family remains, and where she continues to invest in her familial and social relationships. Whenever there is an important event or ceremony that involves everyone, Nosimanye makes the long journey back home to offer help and undertake some of the same roles that she would take on if she was living there permanently.

Living away from home has not changed the centrality of responsibilities to the community there, and these journeys make up a collection of happy memories for Nosimanye, especially when she travels with other women.

In Napier, she is part of a collective savings group made up of women who live in both the informal settlement and the Eastern Cape. Together, they save money throughout the year and receive a pay-out in December, part of which she sends back to the village to help her loved ones.

While she appreciates the work opportunities that drew her here in the first place, Nosimanye describes what she has in Napier as a house, not a home. Her husband, who works in the construction industry, built it over the years, room by room, beginning with the kitchen and living area, then the first bedroom, and now a second one, as pictured in the floor plan Kadria drew under Nosimanye's direction.

Her connections back to the Eastern Cape are evident in the planning of the house that she shares with her husband and young son; the second bedroom is reserved for family guests. Regardless of the frequency of their visits (which are not very often, she says), it feels good to be able to offer them a place to stay. At some point, when she has enough money for the materials, she hopes to expand into her yard and create a full living room with a cupboard, bigger stove, and sofa; and more space to welcome and host guests from home. As far as guests from Napier are concerned, apart from her husband's family, Nosimanye is unsure about starting new friendships with people who don't carry the guarantee of trust that family can provide. Her social life is far from empty though: she always makes time for "women talk" with other ladies of the community, she tells us with a shy laugh that we later find out is indicative of the fact that "women talk" mostly means gossip.

More than maintaining her relationships between Napier and the Eastern Cape, what prevents her from feeling like this is home Nosimanye explains, are the challenges presented by the environment of the informal settlement. The first issue is the flooding. The roads turn into muddy creeks in the rain, and stormwater rushes down the slope and enters houses. It's difficult to feel at home when a winter rain turns the floor of one's house into a lake or keeps one trapped inside to avoid flooded streets. Toilets are also a problem. Nosimanye's family have a lock on a toilet outside, but it's been broken in the past, and she's looking to upgrade and install plumbing and a toilet inside the house as soon as possible. The precariousness she describes happens alongside everyday joys. While we speak, Nosimanye does her washing in the kitchen, which is her favourite place in the house. She loves to cook umphokoqo (she and Siyavuya laugh as we try to pronounce it), and samp and beans for herself and her family, creating warmth and making do.

Home is where my children are

INTERVIEWEE: Bettie Smith
INTERVIEWED BY: Bronwin Du Preez and Linus Suter
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Lindokhule Fetile

Clearly, family is everything to Bettie Smith, as we see her grandson cling tightly against her. As we entered her home, we could see there was a morning routine underway. Bettie sat on the bed with her grandson and a little boy from the neighborhood whom she looks after during the day while his parents are at work on nearby farms. As we listened to Bettie's conversation, one thing was for sure: whatever she does, it is for her children and her family. Family is the main reason why Bettie came to live in the settlement in the first place.

Bettie made a big move when she left her hometown, Caledon, the place in which she was born and raised, to come to the settlement in Napier. She was encouraged by one of sons to do so when she retired from farm work in the Caledon area. Her sons were already settled in Napier. Both sons, like Bettie did previously, work on a farm picking flowers. She was convinced by her son, (the father of her grandson) who said in Afrikaans, "Jy raak nou te oud, Ma moet lewers hier kom bly and aftree" (You are getting too old now, Mommy should rather come stay here and retire). In light of her bad asthma, her son also preferred that she lived closer to him. In the settlement, she could stay home and look after her grandson. The proximity to the Napier Clinic also was another benefit.

Growing up, Bettie did not have an easy life. Being the eldest daughter, she was unable to complete her schooling. She had to stay home to look after her younger brother while her mother went to work each day. Today she focuses on her family. She and her husband bought the house she lives in now from the previous owner. It was originally a two-bedroom house which the family split. Bettie and her husband live on one side, while her son lives on the other.

Bettie moved from a well-constructed house in the town of Caledon to the two-bedroomed house in the settlement where she currently lives. Although a more solid and well-constructed house made from bricks with its own bathroom would be nice, she is content. The move to the settlement, Bettie explains, did not affect her life drastically. Prior to moving here, Bettie would visit her sons on weekends and sometimes for even longer periods of time. In other words, Bettie was familiar with the settlement. She explained, "Toe ek hier kom het die mense my al geken" (When I came here the people already knew me). This is how she got to know the people in the settlement. In consequence, she never felt like a stranger. She felt safe, and comfortable, welcomed into the community. Aside from the safety and comfort of moving and settling into the community easily, recently Bettie has come to notice the influx of "jong mense" (young people) whom, she says, are slowly changing the community from what she experienced when she first moved here, which was peace and quietness. Now it all echoes with loud music throughout the settlement from dusk till dawn.

Today, although Bettie still has family members who live in Caledon, she has no communication with them. Instead, she prefers to be on her own, with her immediate family - her husband, sons and grandson - in their own little space in the settlement. For Bettie, a house is not about fancy windows or couches or a separate kitchen from the bedroom. She explains clearly that, "Ek is ma gelukkig hier… Ek gaan nie sonder die kinds trek nie" (I am happy just here…. I will not move without the children). Staying with her family is what is most important to her.

This is not home; home is with my ancestors

INTERVIEWEE: Zukiswa Dlova
INTERVIEWED BY: Bronwin Du Preez and Linus Suter
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Lindokhule Fetile

In search of better job opportunities, Zukiswa Dlova left everything back home – even the memories and remains of her late father. Originally from the Eastern Cape, Zukiswa lives in the settlement with her mother, her two children and her brother's daughter. Entering Zukiswa's home that cold morning, we found the house busy. Zukiswa, a single mother, was preparing something to eat for her son, while her mother was on the bed attending to the neighbours' baby whom the family take care of during the day.

After her father passed away in 2007, Zukiswa moved to the Western Cape to complete her schooling. At this point in time she was only in grade 10. Zukiswa's plans after completing school were to find a job to provide for her family in the Eastern Cape due to her father being gone and her brother living and working in Gaansbaai. This, however, did not end up happening. She could not complete school as there was no money for her to be able to do so. Before coming to the settlement, Zukiswa stayed with her brother in Gaansbaai. There she found a job on a nearby farm and was able to fulfil her father's role as family provider. Up to the present day, her brother still lives and works in Gaansbaai even though he has also moved to the settlement. Zukiswa's move to the settlement was not only influenced by better job opportunities, but also the need to be closer to the schools her children were attending. The children attended school in Napier and this required travelling long distances from Gaansbaai to Napier and back on a daily basis. She explained that when she first moved to the settlement she felt lost because, being from the Eastern Cape, she did not know anyone and it was not easy befriending people. Now, 13 years later, Zukiswa has familiarised herself with more people in the settlement and she has friends with whom she interacts on a regular basis.

Deep into the conversation, after sharing much of her past in the Eastern Cape and her journey to the Western Cape, there was a clear change in her body language. Zukiswa went from being anxious in the beginning of the conversation, to deeply thoughtful, as she reflected on her past. In this state of deep reflection, Zukiswa went on to say that today she does not enjoy staying in the settlement because she is unemployed and unable to provide for her family. Having money would change everything for her and her family.

Zukiswa opened up to us about one of the harsh realities that the household currently deals with: her niece (her brothers' daughter) is unable to attend school because she does not have a birth certificate. This has been an ongoing struggle for the family. At the time of her birth, Zukiswa's niece was abandoned by her alcoholic mother without any documentation. This has become a burden for the family. Zukiswa, her brother and mother (the child's grandmother) have been unable to find the little girl's mother. In order to retrieve the child's documents, the family would have to go back to the hospital where she was born in the hope that the hospital would be able to provide them with the necessary documents. However, this is an expensive process the family cannot afford. In light of the family's situation, Zukiswa's mother has fallen sick and has become bedridden. With Zukiswa not having completed school, her mother bedridden, and the children at home (one unable to attend school); there is major financial stress on the household.

The household relies mainly on social grants from the government which include child support grants and a disability grant for Zukiswa's mother. Reflecting back on when we first approached the house, we noticed that it was larger than most houses in the area. However, because of the family's financial difficulties, the extended part of the house is currently rented to a family from Malawi. For an extra bit of income, Zukiswa's mother takes care of the Malawian family's baby while they work during the day.

The financial strain has not made it easy to make a permanent home in the settlement and at times Zukiswa wishes that she could go back home to the Eastern Cape where she still has family members living. Compared to the Eastern Cape, life in the settlement is more expensive, partly because there are certain traditions which are

different from those back home, such as cooking with wood. In the settlement the residents would complain that cooking with firewood is unsafe. Even having this "shack", as Zukiswa calls it, in the settlement (and possibly benefitting from the settlement's upgrade), she does not consider it "home" because home is in the Eastern Cape where her father's remains are buried and where her ancestors are. In the Xhosa tradition, the ancestors act as intermediaries between the living and God; they are honoured in rituals in order to bring good fortune. For Zukiswa, the closeness to her ancestors is integral to her conception of home.

One of the most important things for Zukiswa is having a proper house for her children and, someday, for their children. The shack in which she currently lives is small and in constant need of repairs, especially during the winter months. According to Zukiswa, the shack cannot be considered a home because it is not a real investment, partly because of the insecurities associated with its materiality: fires and storms pose a danger to the entire structure.

Essentially, her dream family home would be built in the Eastern Cape. While she does entertain those dreams, it is striking that Zukiswa is not big on future plans or having her heart set on things before the time.

She says she plans only when there is money, otherwise she does not want to get her hopes up and suffer disappointment.

Moving down the trench

Professor (Lindile) Mhlaba | Sophie Oldfield | Naomi Samake | Zulike Wyngaard

ON METHOD

The research team walked the settlement to document and photograph waste and standing water, conducting short interviews with residents about household waste management strategies and the experience of living alongside dumping and wastewater sites.

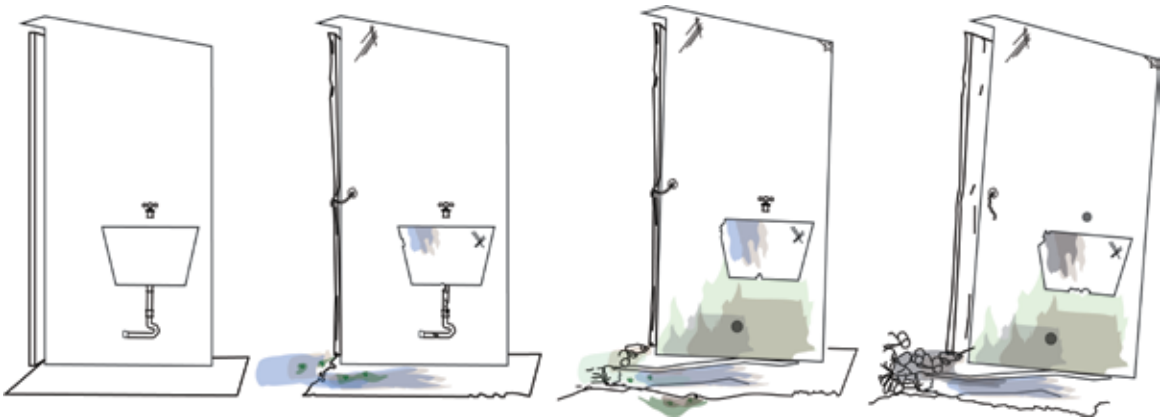
INTRODUCTION

From a far, the settlement appears dry. The problems of waste are in its interstitial spaces: between blocks of housing, in the settlement's alleyways, accessible only on foot. Missing pipes at sinks and leaking toilets are the primary culprits. They are sources of leaked water, which collects and spills into surrounding areas. The rule of thumb is, "where there is water, there is garbage". Around the foundations of municipal-provided toilets and sinks, standing piles of water attract waste: from garbage to algae on the surface of puddles, to weeds that flourish in damp areas between housing blocks. In these areas, wastewater finds it way downhill, carving out deeply eroded trenches which, in turn, collect more waste, moved by the wind, by animals, and discarded by residents. Trenches catch discarded bottles, remnants of building material, plastic wrappers, and broken household goods. Households have strategies to manage waste on their plots and in their homes, but without, formal drainage infrastructure, they have to dispose of wastewater in public areas.

It is difficult and unhygienic for everybody to live with stagnant water and the waste it attracts and carries down the settlement's hills and alleyways. A young boy plays barefoot next to a trench as we pass, a soggy teddy bear caked into the mud of the trench close to his foot, a discarded mattress behind him. Nololo, a mom who worries about the waste affecting her children's health, tells us, "I feel very unhappy about the children playing here. I tell them it's dirty. I skell [yell] at them". Professor explains, "It's very hard for small kids. They don't know this is dirty. They play in [the gully] … you shout at them to get out [and] they go off and play elsewhere, in another bit of waste area."

The waste problems affect surrounding households. We met Thabisa standing at her fence next to the gully. Swatting away the flies, she said she did not feel safe. She stressed, "The flies are from here. They go straight into my home. Our health is in danger. I feel very bad about it. But I have no choice, I have to live with it".

THE DOMINO EFFECT



"NEXT TO EVERY BROKEN TOILET AND LEAKING PIPE, THERE IS A DUMP"

Broken toilets, pipes, and taps are the source of the settlement's biggest waste problems. Pungent odours, disintegrating garbage, and shards of glass can be found dispersed around broken toilets. Taps and sinks attached to toilets are a critical communal space within the settlement. This is where daily tasks of cleaning and washing are done and where children play, and chickens scavenge for food. These sites generate a domino effect: leaking water from these sources create gullies and carry waste downhill.

LIVING NEXT TO A LEAKING TOILET

Damp, polluted ground surrounds the toilet less than a meter from Professor's garden and chicken coop on the edge of his plot. The area is muddy, wet with wastewater, garbage, and toilet contaminants. As it is damp already, neighbours throw wastewater here, which makes the problem worse. We examine the sink on the outside of the toilet. The pipes are broken. The water drips persistently, when the sink tap is turned off and flows rapidly through the cracks in the pipe when the tap is turned on. The smells from this area penetrate his house; the pollutants affect his chickens and the tomato plants he grows around his fence and plot boundary. "This rubbish is always stuck in this water. It feels bad, very bad to live next to this because this water will cause me to die," he explains.

Professor has repeatedly reported this problem to the municipality, "I am complaining every day about this". They responded only partially he explains, "First, they put in a new pipe. Then it was broken again. Part of the problem are kids playing, they jump on the sink and it breaks". Professor has a solution: "I said [to the municipality], 'Change the material. Put the black pipe on, it's better than this. The black (pipe) is stronger. It is tougher plastic and has only two joins. It won't break like this one [the white piping]'". He is also sure that if his neighbours saw that the area was dry and clean they would not throw their wastewater there either. "Where it's dry people are not throwing wastewater and garbage," he observes. He is desperate to solve this problem. He considered asking the EPWP worker "to close it so it'll never work again". He thought of "blocking the toilet and water so the basin and toilet can't be used". He stresses, "That would be good for me, but a disadvantage to others. That is why I am living with this problem as it is now".

ERUPTING PIPES AND BROKEN TOILETS

When a toilet is blocked, waste backs up inside the underground sanitation pipe. In some situations, this backlog can cause the pipe to break and for waste to erupt. One resident recounts such an experience. He discovered the pipe when he was building an extension to his shack. "I didn't know the pipe was there. I broke the pipe. Shit came out. The shit exploded on the inside [of my house]. It came from this side, from the hill above and the houses there. It was like a volcano". Officials from Bredasdorp assessed the problem. They fixed the problem initially. In early 2019, they explained they would redirect the sanitation pipe away from house structures. But, since then, the owner explains, "I didn't hear anything back from them".

This situation is so dire that the owner checks the toilets (to which the sanitation pipe connects) frequently, because the pipe erupts in his room when the toilets are blocked. He explains, "I must be close to the EPWP worker to make sure they unblock [the toilets]". When an eruption happens, the problem is traumatic.

> "Everyone knows. You smell it. Everyone comments on the smell, that it's [my place] stinking. I have no place to run. When it explodes, even friends do not visit. I have to be alone inside. I can't blame them. I have to be alone".
>
> Resident

STRATEGIES TO TACKLE WASTE IN SETTLEMENT SPACES

Community Cleaners

Some community members consistently work to clean public spaces adjacent to their homes. A woman explains that near her house, "Our African brothers who stay here ... clean the gully, once in a while…They take the stuck rubbish out of the water so the water can go down." Maria and her husband live next to a set of toilets. To prevent waste entering their plot, and to alleviate the smell of wastewater build-up next to the toilet, they dug trenches that divert the waste away from their plot. Their pumpkin plants and rose bushes grow along the fence, a visual shield from the adjacent build-up of waste. Maria explains that, "My husband cleans the trenches. He picks up the garbage" to control the flow of waste. "It works for us," she explains, "my man [keeps] it clean." These individuals are community fixers. Their actions make the settlement environment cleaner adjacent to their homes.

Individual community members cannot, however, tackle the structural infrastructure deficits that produce waste and negatively affect the quality of settlement life. Residents are clear on viable solutions. Ma Bhayi, who also lives close to a set of toilets, is clear that proper cemented trenches, linked to a drainage system, need to be built and maintained. Nololo, her neighbour further down the gully suggests, "If they could put pipes in, the water can run through the pipes, underground. It would sort out the problem if the water was underground".

Other residents propose that people from the community could be appointed to maintain and clean these areas. They know to come in between the housing blocks and alleyways where the problems are at their worst. But all agree that there is only so much that individual community members can do, given the current lack of infrastructure and the failure to maintain leaking taps around toilets.

"This place belongs to the municipality so they should sort it out," a local resident reasons, as he points to a pool of waste that spreads around the municipal toilet he must use daily. "No [municipal employee] cleans this area," another man explains as he stands at a sink attached to a toilet, cleaning his uncooked chicken.

"The municipality needs to help clean this up," stress our community research partners.

CLEANING THE TRENCH OVER AND OVER AGAIN

"It is very stinky," warns Ma Bhayi, pointing to a roughly 30-centimeter-deep trench that passes the edge of her plot. Her house is less than ten meters downstream from a set of toilets, where the four toilets that are working, are leaking. Ma Bhayi has expanded channels in the trench, to create more space for the wastewater to flow. She explains, "I am cleaning this trench myself. I am taking stuff away". Dumped by individuals and carried by the wind, wastewater moves trash down the trench, despite her efforts. As Ma Bhayi explains, "I will clean the trench today, but it doesn't help; on Monday it is dirty again".

Ma Bhayi has reported her concerns to EPWP workers, but, she explains, they told her, "No, we cannot clean up this". She explains further that the EPWP workers themselves told her they had reported the problem, its location and severity, to the municipality. However, she adds, the workers told her that, "the municipality don't even respond to us." She emphasizes,

HOUSEHOLD WASTE STRATEGIES

Household solid waste strategies

Residents have strategies for collecting waste on their plots. Households systematically separate out and collect waste. This is evident in the waste bags and buckets visible across the settlement, hanging on fences, and placed on the edges of plots.

Thabisa, whom we meet in her yard which backs onto the gully, explained, for instance, that she has her own bag to collect garbage. It hung on the pole close to where we were standing. She explains that she uses "the bags the fynbos flowers come in from the farm," because she doesn't get the garbage bags the municipality provides. Instead, she said, "I get the sacks from work. I work with fynbos flowers. I collect plastic myself".

As we passed another household, a woman scraped the leftover food from her pot into a bucket that hung on her fencepost farthest from her door. Many households separate food waste from garbage in this way. Pig farmers in the settlement provided the buckets and collect the food waste for their pig feed. Outside the house of one of the settlement's pig farmers, food-waste buckets were lined up, waiting for collection. A bigger bin held the consolidated waste the farmer collects to feed his pigs, which are kept on the far edge of the settlement.

The settlement is linked to the municipal waste system as well. Thursdays are garbage days in the settlement. Full and tied up, many garbage bags can be seen placed up and down the settlement's main streets on garbage day. In theory, every three months, more-or-less, each household receives a bag of black garbage bags free of charge from the municipality. While largely effective, some families, whose plots are off the main street, or who are out at work during the day, do not receive bags.

Homemade wastewater drainage solutions

Many households have designed homemade drainage systems to remove wastewater from their houses and plots. These strategies are effective at the household level, and most plots appear dry. However, once off the plot, wastewater ends up on the street. A well-crafted drain, for instance, draws water from a washing machine, to the edge of the plot. The drain ends just beyond this household's plot, running under the fence. The drain is carefully designed and built, just like the fence, a piece of artwork that separates this home from the street.

Other households without a self-built drain must dump wastewater directly onto the street. As we pass block B, for example, a man walked out of his house with a laundry-sized bucket full of wastewater. He threw the water onto the edge of the street, so it ran down the slight slope outside his house. One household's wastewater running downhill creates a domino effect. As Professor explains, "When the water starts [at each household], it is running okay. But, then next to me my neighbour throws their water. All of us do the same, the same, the same. That's the problem". Growing rivulets of wastewater mark each main settlement road. Without a street-level drainage system; without a place to accessibly dispose of household water, wastewater consistently runs down the settlement's three main streets. Where there is wastewater, problems grow: each rivulet catches garbage as it runs.

Professor's articulation of the frustrations and systematic failures in dealing with waste in the settlement provided a lens that no report could have prepared me for. He led Zulike, who lives down the road in Smartie Town, Sophie and me to deeply eroded trenches that lie in and between the housing blocks, on paths hidden from roads, through alley-ways, only accessible on foot. Most were filled with solid waste, carried by drain water from leaking taps, broken toilets, and old cleaning water that had been dumped by individuals who have no other suitable place to dispose of it. My lack of understanding about waste became an entry point to really glimpse and get to know the vulnerability Professor and other residents face from waste, the toxins and odours that penetrate home spaces and public areas, that shape everyday life in the settlement.

Research Essay excerpt, Naomi Samake

Voices from the Cape Agulhas Municipality

"The Napier informal community, we have a very good relationship with them. We did a survey on a project where we can find out why do people dump illegally. You will see in Napier, there will be a few stuff lying around. The main cause of illegal dumping is people don't put out the bags on collection day. You will never find that in Napier. You can go there on a Thursday morning. You will see the black bags are outside."

When we met Mr. Walter Linnert, the municipality was in the process of piloting a dedicated EPWP team for solid waste management in Napier informal settlement from March 2020. He mentioned,

"Nolwethu came to me and said she want to help me. And we discussed it. So, it will be like a pilot so we can see how it will work and if there's good satisfaction and the result is okay, then we will really start implementing a team permanently out of the EPWP projects. So, this is just like a pilot. But she comes here and says she wants to help me, and she makes suggestions. Now you see, she's living there. She knows what the challenges are. If someone comes and makes a suggestion and we can keep him or her happy, maybe the community will also be happy. So, all she need is some help, that's all, and I will do that. And I have the budget at this time, so yes, I can help her. She will do the supervision and if there's any complaints, she will handle it and just inform us. So, I think the idea was coming from her."

Walter Linnert, Manager, Solid Waste Management

Walter Linnert has worked at the municipality for more than three decades. He started work at the water purification plant, and later, waste management was added to his portfolio. At present, Walter Linnert is the Manager of Solid Waste Management, responsible for waste collection, conveyance, recycling, and disposal.

Home is where work can be found

INTERVIEWEE: Zolile Eric Fetile
INTERVIEWED BY: Geetika Anand, Romeo Dipura and El-May Pelser

As we toured through the dusty streets of Napier informal settlement, I could not help but wonder which one was Zolile's house. Initially, his composed, shy temperament, made me anxious about entering his house. While we were walking, Zolile (also known as Zoli) told us about his love for pap (Afrikaans for maize porridge) and meat as well as his obsession for soccer. He was part of the neighbourhood soccer team. Zoli patiently led us through the neighbourhood to his house. He did not appear shy, but confidently led the way with his head high. The streets were surprisingly quiet, except for the shouts of children and the geese traversing the neighbourhood.

He calmly opened his small gate; we were not sure what to expect. His plot was relatively small, enclosed in an unorthodox barrier of wooden planks and barbed wire. The next-door property to the left, consisted of a Wendy house whilst the space to the right was unoccupied. To the front of his plot was a gravel road and beyond the road on the opposite side were other structures. Zoli's plot lay at the edge of the settlement, and behind it was the commonage.

Regardless of its relatively small size, Zoli's yard was extremely smart. Seeing his home at closer proximity, we could not help but get a sense of pride from Zoli's presence. His house was a modest, two-roomed structure. In a fashion typical of the structures in the neighbourhood, the external facade of his house was made from corrugated iron sheets. Wooden poles provided support for the roof, which was also made of iron sheets. There was only one opening into the house: the door.

Zoli's property was not only neat on the outside, but also on the inside. Sack material was tightly fitted against the zinc sheets to prevent the condensation of water on the metal during very cold days. As we entered his space, we noticed a small pushable table with a two plate stove on top right in the entrance. On the other side was a bed which occupied most of the space. He kept his clothes on the side with the bed. After being warmly welcomed into his home, we struggled to find places to sit, but within a small space of time we were all comfortably settled. Once settled, I felt a sense of security as all the anxiety that I had initially felt had been dispelled by Zoli's hospitality. There was a moment of silence as we all settled in. While we wondered how to start the conversation, Zoli smiled, showing off his gold tooth and informed us that we could start. He began to tell us his story.

Zolile is 25 years old and from Queenstown in the Eastern Cape. He came to Napier in search of work. According to him, in the Eastern Cape, there is a perception that there are jobs in the Western Cape. "My uncle is working at a white person's garden in Napier. I used to think, our uncle is surviving, we could also survive," he explained. Zoli grew up living in a bungalow (wooden shack) until he was seven, when his father who worked as a security guard received an RDP house in Queenstown. Zoli passed his matric and got a driver's license. He worked for a while in the Eastern Cape as a community liaison officer. However, the expiry of his contract left him unemployed. This forced him to attempt to find employment elsewhere. In July 2019, he moved to Western Cape to live with his uncle and cousins in Smartie town. After staying with his uncle for a month, he felt he needed to be independent. Furthermore, Smartie town was boring for him and he used to come to the informal settlement to have fun. This prompted him to want to look for his own space.

His cousin offered him space on his plot in the informal settlement for him to put up his own structure. With the help of his aunt, Bulelwa Fetile, Zoli managed to build his own structure. She was the one who showed him how to build the structure. Zoli's house is a two-roomed space with a division separating the cooking from the sleeping space. During construction, Zoli secured poles from the bush. He bought each of the zinc sheets he used for roofing for R15.00. He spent up to R1 200 on the entire structure.

After completing construction, Zoli applied for electricity in August 2019. He spent R300 on the connection and had to wait until December that year for it. Zoli got some furniture from his cousin for the house. The major challenge constraining Zoli is his limited access

to a toilet. He does not have his own, and he has been surviving by using the communal toilets. His aunt has access to the keys to one of the communal toilets and she lends the keys to him when he needs to use the toilet. He also does not have a bathroom and takes his bath in a basin in the house.

Furthermore, his house leaks when it is raining, and is not properly insulated which makes it uncomfortable, and noisy in the rainy season. He also had challenges with the geese in the neighbourhood which constantly mess up his yard. This prompted him to put up a fence around his yard. When we asked him whether or not he had any security concerns, he suddenly stood up and grabbed a metal bar from behind the bed and jokingly exclaimed "I can defend myself with this!" He then returned to his seat and continued with his story. To him the structure felt like home and he planned to extend to three rooms.

He hoped the municipality would build more toilets and hire people from the community to clean the settlement. He told us, "They must hire people from here. Like my case, I can assist on the site issues". Moreover, he hopes the municipality improve access to water. He thinks the municipality should create job opportunities, allowing foreigners to work as well. Then he joked, "We [South Africans] are quite lazy, but those guys [foreign nationals] can work". He added,

"They came here to look for jobs like us, if there's an opportunity, we must share".

To finance the development of his structure, Zoli has taken many temporary jobs. Having migrated from the Eastern Cape, he had hoped to secure a permanent job, however this has not materialized in the way he anticipated. The only jobs that have been available for him are labour intensive jobs in construction and on farms. This work is seasonal and as such does not represent what he had hoped for before moving from the Eastern Cape. The work is also badly paid which is also disappointing for him. When we interacted with him he was working for the NGO, PEP which was also temporary work. Zoli had also put his name in the EPWP list and had applied for driving jobs. His dream job is to become a policeman. Zoli also hopes to further his studies in Mpumalanga province by enrolling at Inkala College to study Business Management. He had sacrificed his opportunity to go to college for his sister as financial constraints could not allow them to both to go. His sister finally graduated and is now working at Capitec Bank in Queenstown.

For Zolile, home is where work can be found. He came to Napier looking for better employment opportunities. This has, however, not materialized, which might encourage yet another move to some other place. However, whilst waiting for that elusive employment opportunity, he has found independence and freedom in Napier, a place where he has built his own home.

Getting there: ambition and optimism

INTERVIEWEE: Nolukholo Mayile
INTERVIEWED BY: Sinazo Funde and Elena Antoni

Nolukholo Mayile is a 22-year-old woman, who was born in Butterworth and raised in Idutywa in the Eastern Cape where she lived with her grandmother and six cousins. When her grandmother passed away, Nolukholo and her cousins had to leave their home and go to live with their parents, who had left the Eastern Cape due to its bad unemployment situation, and moved around various parts of South Africa where jobs were to be found. This is how Nolukholo came to live in Napier in 2013.

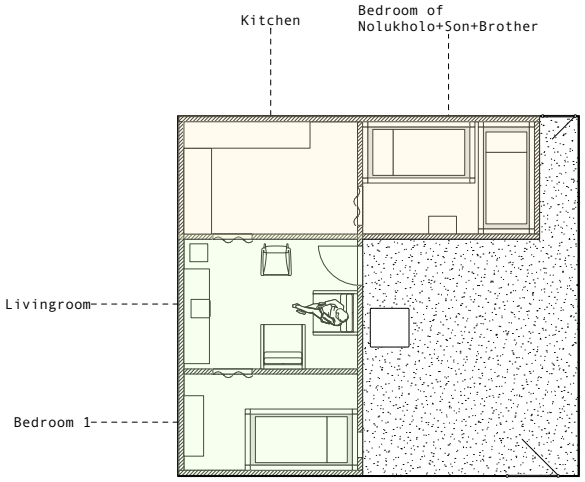
When she arrived, she lived with her mother who was already renting a house in the settlement. Nolukholo attended high school in Napier where she completed Grade 8 and 9. At this school, all the subjects were taught in Afrikaans, which was a huge problem for her because she had never done Afrikaans before. The language barrier made it difficult for Nolukholo to progress in her studies, which is why she decided to drop out of high school and go to college. She obtained a certificate in Administration from a college in Napier, through which she also got an opportunity to work for the Cape Agulhas Municipality (CAM). Through the municipality, Nolkuholo came to work with PEP (and, in turn, with us).

Nolukholo lives with her mother, brother, and her son who is a year and a half old. After getting their own plot in 2016, her mother built the house that they are living in from scratch with materials they bought for under R3 000. The only administrative task her mother had, was to register for electricity at the Department of Human Settlements in the Municipality. Their shiny house is made out of corrugated iron (painted yellow) and has two bedrooms; one for her mother and the other one shared by Nolukholo, her brother, and her child. There is also a kitchen and a living room where Nolukholo likes to spend the evenings and watch TV, which is also where we interviewed her. The living room walls are covered with wood panels, while fabrics and wooden furniture have been used to create a cosy atmosphere. Above the wooden cupboard where the television stands, Tupperware tins are arranged symmetrically according to colour. This modern-looking arrangement stands out.

In future, Nolukholo would like to have an additional room where her child can play since the living room is quite small.

Nolukholo dreams of living in an RDP house in Napier, which is home away from her "home-home" – the Eastern Cape. She hopes that an upgrading of the informal settlement would ensure that each structure has its own toilet, a proper drainage system, and paving. She also hopes, after she completes her internship, to go back to school to obtain a diploma in Office Administration.

While walking with her though the settlement, it became clear that she feels comfortable and gets along well with other residents. At the same time, she is ambitious and optimistic and hopes for more for herself and her family than what she currently has.




ARMY

I could achieve great things right from here

INTERVIEWEE: Vathiswa Siwa
INTERVIEWED BY: Joseph Dennis N. Quarcoo and Naomi Samake

Vathiswa Siwa is nineteen years old and has lived in Napier's informal settlement for eighteen of these years. Her family moved from the "Old Camp" after the floods in 2009. Growing up in the settlement has presented her with bitter-sweet experiences. The best parts of her life are her nine-month old baby boy and her fiancé whom she met here. However, other experiences have stained her view of Napier, including the death of her brother who was stabbed one Saturday evening in 2014 in neighbouring Smartie Town. Reflecting on his death, she regrets that the ambulance from Bredasdorp did not make it in time; that he had to die in some alleyway. It saddens her that, although the police arrested the presumed perpetrator, they released him after two days, due to a "lack of evidence".

Today, Vathiswa still carries this burden in silence. Although she only attended school up to Grade 8, she relentlessly aspires to be a detective one day. Nevertheless, a challenge she faces is language. "It is not easy to study in Afrikaans". Despite community member's ability, openness, and interest to transcend the barriers of language, there are formalities that Vathiswa has had trouble grasping. Her mother tongue is Xhosa and she wishes it could be taught in schools here in Napier.

In envisioning a future for her son, it worries her that many children do not go to school due to barriers such as these and that they, instead, use drugs. She appreciates the friends she spends time with here. Together they explore their imaginations of what could be. By trying out new hair styles and lipstick, Vathiswa and her friends share moments of a life beyond the settlement, like those they see on TV or on social media. To pass time, they usually hang out at each other's houses. She tells us that there are limited places to go within the settlement, especially ones that are safe. A challenge Vathiswa faces is finding work. She emphasizes that, while not many among the community have achieved greatness, she believes it is possible. She spoke of a few people from the informal settlement who have attended university in Cape Town. One has even studied medicine and is now a practicing doctor in the Western Cape town of Worcester. "So it is possible to achieve my dreams," she says.

She too, hopes one day to be able to complete school and work to help create a more just and peaceful world.


PEP

Bettering our lives

INTERVIEWEE: Lindokhule Fetile
INTERVIEWED BY: Bronwin Du Preez and Linus Suter

We are immediately struck by Lindokhule Fetile's living room as we enter. Our research partner has invited us into this room after giving us a fascinating tour of the settlement. We are already pulled in by her open and engaging conversation and want to know more. On one side of the room are a sofa and an armchair with a teddy bear sitting on it, and on the opposite side, shelves upon which sit a television and some decorative pieces, all lovingly arranged.

The floor consists of pretty tiles, partially covered by a carpet. It is a hot day outside, but inside, the temperature is lovely. There is a contrast between the inside and the outside of the shack which is made from bare corrugated metal sheets prevalent all over the informal settlement. As the interview progresses, what we get to see here is indicative of Lindokhule's story as a whole: her move to Napier, her studies, her drive to make her shack and her settlement better and to improve her life and her family's lives.

Lindokhule, who likes to go by Nocc (both c's are pronounced as if spelled out, making the nickname sound like Nosisi), is understandably proud of this living room. She says it is what she likes most about the house. It's also the place she feels most comfortable having her picture taken. "House" might not be the right term for the structure; Nocc always speaks of it as a "shack". When we ask her about this, she explains that a house is built of bricks, whereas her corrugated metal construction is a shack. When Nocc, now 25 years old, moved here in 2016, it was the first time she had not lived in a formal house. Growing up in the Eastern Cape, she stayed with her grandmother and two younger brothers in the family house. Her parents had moved to Napier in search of work. The Eastern Cape is where Nocc went to school and spent her youth. However, in 2014, when her grandmother passed away, she and her brothers joined their parents in Napier.

Her parents lived first in the informal settlement in a nearby valley where it was located before floods in 2009. They now live in a house in the town. Her father tends the gardens of households in Napier and his employer built her parents a formal house after they had lost their shack in the floods. This is where Nocc re-joined her parents. She tells us that moving to the Western Cape was not only about being with her parents. She also moved so she could study. She enrolled at Boland College in the town of Caledon (some 70km away) to study Safety and Security. It is easier to study there she says, because transport to and from campus is organised. During this time, Nocc met Patrick, her fiancé. They have been together since 2015 and in 2016 she made the decision to move in with him to his place in the informal settlement. Nocc felt that she needed to be more responsible, and not rely totally on her parents any longer. She also explains that, while the house was big enough for the five of them, she needed space of her own to study in peace. She's been staying with Patrick ever since.

GETTING STUCK IN

Once she had completed her move to the settlement, Nocc wasted no time - neither in taking on the task of making the shack beautiful, nor in getting involved in the community. She has always had an interest in politics, so she joined the settlement's committee. This forum is where community concerns were discussed, and which met with the municipality to negotiate work provision projects and also screened residents to participate in these projects, choosing those who needed work most– all while pursuing her studies in Caledon. The move was a relief. Nocc's new home was much quieter and conducive to studying than her parents'. Still, getting involved in the committee meant extra work and clashed with her studies at times. Nocc explains that the committee was very involved in protests for more land in the settlement. The existing plots were becoming overcrowded, leading to fire hazards and tensions. It was no easy process, however. Nocc tells us that she had to miss exams once to attend a protest march in the settlement. She was allowed to retake the tests at a later stage.

Finally, the community's struggle was successful and an additional strip of land on the upper edge of the settlement was ceded as plots for the settlement's residents. The committee then undertook the task of distributing the individual

plots. It was decided that those who had agitated for the land and who had fought for the community, should be given priority. Thus, Nocc, who had applied for her own plot, was granted one in 2017. She says there was a lot of bad blood with other members of the community who claimed that she and others were too young to be given their own plot. However, she remarks dryly, these people "didn't say we were young when we were there fighting for them."

BUILDING UP

With Nocc's help, her father built a shack on this plot within a day. We are astonished at that, but Nocc explains that really "it's not too much." The process involves digging holes to anchor the wooden poles that form the general structure of the shack and then nailing corrugated metal sheets to them. The time and labour are not that hard to come by. Her father has the knowledge (as do many in the settlement), but materials are expensive. Nocc's fiancé was luckily able to scrounge up some left-over construction materials cheaply.

Nocc has, however, never lived in her new house. Instead, her cousin, who arrived from the Eastern Cape recently, is staying there until he finds his own place. He pays no rent, but Nocc is happy to help him out. In any event, because she is living with Patrick, allowing her cousin stay there ensures it remains occupied. It is a different case with Patrick's brother, who rents a room annexed to the place where the couple live in the middle of the settlement. He pays his rent and his share of the electricity for the plot, generating a little extra income. The additional structure has a separate entrance but is joined to the main shack. Nocc hopes that her fiancé's brother will be able to move out soon though, because she has plans for the place. Even though she says she's responsible for the inside, whereas Patrick is the one looking after the outside of the house (meaning its structure), she has designs for that as well. She wants to move the living room to where Patrick's brother is staying at the moment and expand the front yard into a garden. The materials are there already, so the plan is very actionable.

ENTRANCE TO EXTENSION

The couple have an income from Patrick's work in construction and as a taxi driver on weekends which Nocc supplements through a small business selling clothes. Small, though, is relative. Her small business is in some ways an extremely global one. She regularly takes a taxi to Belville, Cape Town, where she orders and collects clothes from a Chinese export firm, taking them back to Napier and going house to house to sell them. That income, though, is not to be invested into the shack in Napier. Instead, Nocc says she would love to pay for the education of her parents' youngest children, especially her little brother, paying them back for the effort and money they invested in her. She would also like to by her father a car before thinking about her own house. Any surplus money flows to the Eastern Cape, where the family home is being maintained and expanded.

HOMES

Nocc would love one day to go back to the Eastern Cape; ideally if she got a job that allowed her to transfer there. The Eastern Cape is still very much her home. When we ask her if Napier could ever become that, the answer is different from what we expected. Yes, she says, it could, but that is not a function of time; of becoming more and more rooted. Instead, it could become a home if she had a permanent, formal house in Napier. The shack cannot be home, because, in its very essence it is impermanent. While the living room is nice and the décor chosen with care and style, when it rains, the metal roof makes incredible noise. Furthermore, it leaks, storms rattle the walls and whip tiles off the roof. With the increasing density of the settlement, fires have become a concern. Nocc keeps her documents at her parents' house, fearing that they might be lost in a fire in the settlement. Nocc and Patrick must frequently repair the shack and buying new sheets of metal can be expensive. Patrick works seven days a week, so they sometimes have to have professionals come in to do the job, which increases costs.

While she is living in the Western Cape, however, Nocc prefers to stay in the settlement. Here, Nocc feels a sense of safety. People know each other and, for instance, should there be an attempt at a break-in, they would report the perpetrator to the police. The police are very present, with a car patrolling regularly, and Nocc is happy about that. That spirit of community she mentions in relation to the lack of crime, comes through in how she talks about how people in the neighbourhood help each other out, with small things like sharing the clothesline in her front yard, to bigger things like helping with repairs or lending money. "It's almost sharing everything," Nocc says. According to her, there is a spirit of ubuntu present in the settlement. She also enjoys the

diversity of people here. While in the Eastern Cape she only got to interact with Xhosa-speaking people, Napier is more multicultural. Nocc says that is how she learned Afrikaans. She also talks about learning to cook different dishes and says her horizon has broadened. She mentions foreign immigrants, saying that sometimes they teach people their language and invite South Africans to their cultural events.

Nocc does not deny, however, that the density of living and scarcity in the settlement sometimes leads to conflict. Sharing a toilet and especially a tap with other people is hard and sometimes she has to wait for a long time to take her turn. She stresses that in the Napier settlement, people don't shoo immigrants away from such amenities but let them take their turn. Still, there are tensions and things that could be better. She is happy to share her clothesline but wishes people would come and ask before hanging up their clothes as she feels that it is still hers and she should come first when she is in a hurry and needs to hang her clothes.

From an upgrading process, Nocc hopes for more toilets, more taps and better rubbish disposal as the settlement is filthy. There are other things she would like to change about the settlement as well. While working as an RDP programmer, she was in charge of organising after-school sports activities for the children. She really enjoyed this and explains that because the kids were occupied, they learned new skills and were kept out of trouble. As we experienced first-hand, children still come up to her and ask her if she'll come and play, calling her "coach". You can tell she enjoys being with the kids and feels bad to have to tell them, no, today she's working with us.

As our conversation draws to a close, we ask Nocc what else she would like us to know about her story. Her answer is both humble and beautiful:

> "I think I don't have a special story to tell, but it's almost a story for everyone here, that everyone came here to better their lives."

Her life has improved through being here, she explained. She has achieved a lot, collected work experience, learned a new language and encountered new cultures. She has built up her own small business. Most of all, she has got over her fear of talking to and in front of people through going to university and through her work as an EPW. Sitting in her beautiful living room, it is easy to see why she feels a sense of accomplishment. It might be harsh at times, it might be temporary in its materiality and as a station in Nocc's life, but she had to fight for it and struggled to make it beautiful. It might not even be home, but it is a step to something better and Nocc has achieved a great deal with and within this space.

Youth and daily life in ‘Napierality’

Mildred Nakkungu | Nolukholo Mayile | Joseph Dennis Quarcoo

Ezethu is edgy and stylish at twenty years old. She is a mother of one who moved to Napier more than a year ago. In the midst of lots of laughter, she tells us about her boyfriend, who works on the farms nearby. They have been together six years. She likes it in Napier. It is more of a city then back home in the Eastern Cape. With her parents' support and the little income from the farm jobs, she tries to make ends meet. Her jobs are temporary, however, so she often has to ask her parents for help or her brother who also lives in Napier. If she could change anything, she would like a job so she can support herself and her child. Her dream is to get married in Port Elizabeth, to have a big white wedding. When will this happen, we ask? "Tomorrow" she jokes but knows that it is still some time to come.

Ntombi is also 20 years old. She shared with us the struggles of her youth. She grew up in the Eastern Cape under the care of her aunt. Her father suggested she moves to Napier to find work, but she has not been able to find a "proper" job. Since moving, she has had her son, now three years old. Her father and the father of her son support her. Ntombi takes life seriously, she explains that when you have a child "Your life is changing, you must take responsibility." Perhaps this is why she emphasizes her need for a job above everything else. She is practical even in her dreams. If she could change Napier, she would have the government offer youth-centered programs to give them something to do.

Unathi is 20 years old. Her mother encouraged her to move to Napier because she wasn't doing anything in the Eastern Cape. In Napier, since 2018, she has not been able to find a job. Luckily, Unathi has a network of family support in Napier, her mother, cousin and uncle, who help her with what she needs. She splits her time between her mother's house, an RDP house outside the settlement, and her cousin's place in the settlement, where she helps with the house and childcare. With her mom, she attends church devotedly. Her friends are in the settlement, here outside Vuyiseka's house. If she could, her dream would be to start her own fashion business, selling clothes.

Nolukholo is 22 years old. She is put together, a force on first impression, perhaps a product of her upraising by strong women, her mother and grandmother who support her. Growing up, she split her childhood between Napier with her mother and Eastern Cape with her grandmother. She has a son, who is nearly two. They stay with her mother and younger brother in the settlement. She is grateful for this support. She currently works at the Cape Agulhas Municipality as an intern. She enjoys the work and the friendly environment. The internship has given her a chance to learn on the job. She believes this experience will make it easier for her to secure a permanent role. Her dream job is to work with the Community Participation Services Department at the Municipality where she is undertaking her internship. They interface with communities. She aspires to work in this department because she wants to "support informal settlements". This sense of responsibility comes from her life experience living in the settlement and her desire for longer lasting change.

The process of active waiting, persistence, camaraderie and communal support are strategies that ordinary people employ to secure and build their lives amidst everyday struggles and their accompanying challenges and frustrations.

Research Essay excerpt, Joseph Dennis Quarcoo

SMALL

Small, whose full name is Msimelelo Sonkos, is 25 years old. He moved from the Eastern Cape to Napier to live with his brother, who has been living in the informal settlement for many years. When we stumbled on Small, he was busy watering his brother's garden, blossoming with spinach, tomatoes, and potatoes. Caring for the garden is his responsibility, it provides their food. Gardening is also one of his passions. He learnt how to garden back home in Butterworth.

Small left school in Grade 11 because his "parents were suffering" and he had to get a job in order to support them. His big challenge now is finding a job. He has been looking for two years. Small explained that life is hard. But, at least, in the settlement, "If I am suffering here, I can ask another guy. We can barter trade. Like maybe rice for a piece of chicken with my sister. It is much better here, that's why I am here." He and his brother live in the same house but stay in different rooms and live independently of each other. He wanted it that way because he did not want to be a burden on anybody. "It's not easy, I don't feel alright. I am just living", he explained. He likes that he can make his own way in this community, but he misses the Eastern Cape, his family, his girlfriend. He stays connected to them through WhatsApp and phone calls.

There are some things Small would like to change in the settlement. He points to the shack and emphasizes "we need better shelter. It is so dirty here… If we could even we get some houses, even a one room with a sink. You could wash, you could pour water into it. Now, how many people are here and how many toilets are there? Seven to ten people are using one toilet…. Something needs to change for everyone". When we ask him to take a picture, rather than taking the picture in front of his garden, he tells us to take it by the toilets and makeshift sewers. He wants people to see the living conditions.

Small wishes to live up to his name, Msimelelo, which means, "You are the family strength." His parents were hoping for something, he explained, when they named him. He hopes to go to college to get a certificate, perhaps in construction, to live up to their and his expectations.

LUCAN

Lucan is a vibrant guy, someone committed to always learning. Most of what he knows, he feels he learnt either by himself, through his peers, or in his interaction with his elders: parents and people from church. He has learnt through working too. He was forced to drop out of school in grade 8, after the local high school in Napier closed down. "At that time, my parents were struggling with an income, my father working only two to three days in a week. I had to find a job to help my parents to look after my siblings. I was 17, I was ready to work." Luckily he found a permanent job in 2019, working as a security guard.

Lucan and his girlfriend have two children. They live next to his family. He explains "They are getting old, I must look after them. As far as I am alive, there is nothing they must want. Even if I need to divide my salary." Lucan is a family man. His wife and children, and his extended family, are the center of his life. He explains that "When I had my first child, I had to spend my time with my wife and the children. I did have friends when I was younger, but [not now].' His faith is also very important to him. "I am religious. In my house every night before we eat our food, we will also have a prayer session. We pray. Always. God is in my house, I know." He finds the church very supportive.

An optimistic person, Lucan told us, "God works in mysterious ways, I tell you, every time I pray. But you must be patient. It's a test of your faith. You have to keep faith."

Lucan has clear plans for his children. He told us that when he started his permanent job "the first thing I did, was to pick an [education] investment for the children so when they are going to university, I know there will be money. I want to see them be well off. I want to see my children graduate, that is the thing, and I want to be alive by that time. When I am old, I don't want them to be dependent on other people, because I know that feeling, it's not nice. I want to see them owning their own houses. I want to see them doing things for themselves." He is committed to his children having a chance for a stable life. Investing in his children's education he feels is key so "your child is successful in life."

For Lucan, Napier is home. "I grew up in the informal settlement, I know the life here, I know the people's struggles here, I know how sometimes it can be very difficult, especially in the weekend time with all the noises and all the fighting." Nonetheless, he explains

"I like it here, this is where I was born, this is where I grew up, this is where I was getting a young man, this is where I will make my children, I am going to be here forever, until forever I am going to be here."

Contradictions and complications youth face

Themes that connect the diverse array of experiences youth shared with us.

Belonging

- Many migrant youth from Eastern Cape spoke of not belonging in Napier.
- Some have children in the Eastern Cape and would go back if there were opportunities.
- One youth said he wasn't interested in making friends here because his were in Eastern Cape.
- But Napier provides opportunities. It is more vibrant economically than the rural Eastern Cape from where they come.

Finding friends and partners

- Everyone had family of some kind that prompted them to come to Napier; nobody came alone.
- Phones are a link to families and friends back home. Young people communicate on WhatsApp and Facebook.
- Instead of being bored, young people have created areas to sit and to chat, to pass time.
- They've made networks here, but need to figure out who to listen to: friends/family back home or friends/family here?
- Some listen to advice from elders, some to their impulses, some learn growing up.

Seeking independence, struggling to survive

- All want independence, but rely on parents, siblings, friends to survive.
- Some rely on money coming from parents in the Eastern Cape, some rely on family in Napier.
- Many have children, and balance taking of them and supporting themselves.
- Though it is hard, some fight to be independent.

Young women have a community amongst one another, but do not "feel alright." They stress their constant hunt for a "proper" job at potential workplaces around town, in Bredasdorp, on farms nearby, through the Expanded Public Workers (EPWP) programme. Caught up in what Jeffrey (2008) calls 'surplus time', it is hard to have no job to order and differentiate days. Their experience of unemployment is shaped by 'heightened expectation: the object of longing – a job'. With jobs so hard to come by, they are caught in what he calls a sense of 'lost time', unable to account for years without 'progress.' This process of looking for a job generates both 'panic and inertia', the panic of watching for opportunities to send out applications, an 'inertia' whilst they wait to find out if the job hunt was successful. In the midst of these struggles, the quality of a 'proper job' is determined by the stability it provides.

Research Essay excerpt, Mildred Nakkungu

"We are all about delivering services in the municipality. It's not the mandate of the municipality to create jobs, but to create an environment. So local economic development is one of our priorities. We've got a local economic development unit. They're helping the entrepreneurs. But physically we can't really create jobs. We've got this EPWP, which is again a national program, but you see this is quite small jobs, and it's not permanent. Youths' jobs, that's not our priority to create, but the priority for the community, they want jobs. […] We are a very small municipality, so our budget is very small. Our whole budget for this whole area is like, less than lots of other municipalities' just one department. So, we don't have huge budget."

Lindy Valentine, Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Officer

Lindy Valentine has worked at CAM for the past ten years, at first part-time, and later, permanently appointed as an IDP Officer. Two years ago, performance management was added to her portfolio. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is a strategic document, outlining the plan of the Council. It is put in place every five years, when a new Council is elected.

Voices from the Cape Agulhas Municipality

We care for the community. We are the community

INTERVIEWEE: Nolukholo California Gwagwa and Atabile Gwagwa
INTERVIEWED BY: Joseph Dennis N. Quarcoo and Naomi Samake

Twelve months ago, Atabile Gwagwa took the leap, moving from the Eastern Cape to Napier. It was a journey of hope, pregnant with possibilities and imaginings. After all, a life in the city promised much more than her experience in the rural area. Many before her had jumped, embracing the risks that accompany the uncertainties of life in the city. Atabile joined her sister, Nolukholo California Gwagwa who had moved to Napier in 2011.

Informal settlement dwellers are, sadly, much acquainted with death as a result of their precarious living conditions, violence and other risks associated with living in informal conditions. In 2015, Nolukholo's auntie, with whom she was staying, died, leaving her to survive alone. Today, Atabile and her sister rent a shack together and hope to one day have a home of their own. They each pay R100 per month in rent.

Being relatively new to the settlement, Atabile sees more clearly, conditions such as filth, drugs, disregard for education, alcohol and crime. She has concerns for her community, particularly the children and youth. If she could, she would help the children and mothers who do not have birth certificates to obtain one. She has observed that a key reason why children do not go to school is their parents' lack of identification documents. In her words, "Without the identification card, the children will not be accepted into the school. And you cannot get an identification card without a birth certificate".

Perceiving the research team as being in a better position to lobby, she entreated us to inform the municipality to organize a clean-up exercise within the settlement. She would also like social workers at the municipality to carry out regular sensitization programmes for the children and youth to stop using drugs, and also for parents to keep their children in school. These issues are close to her heart because they have a direct impact on her life, and that of Nolukholo. The sisters consider safety a major concern. On several occasions, their house has been broken into and their belongings stolen. Once, Nolukholo's phone was taken and on several occasions, washing from the line.

The death of two people at a tavern close to where they live in December 2019, is something they cannot forget. A fight broke out – something that is not unusual especially on weekends - however, on this occasion, the two deceased were stabbed to death with a knife. "The man was 25 years old the lady was born in 1995," Nolukholo told us. It was the desire for work, the quest for a decent livelihood that drove both sisters to Napier, and to the settlement in particular. But, to date, Nolukholo has not found any tangible opportunities. Instead, they have come much closer to death than they ever expected. "Many of the children in the community do not go to school because of drugs. They deal drugs and the municipality don't care about us," Nolukholo said.

Atabile maintains that, "The municipality receives support from government, the municipality is supposed to give support to us. The municipality is to open job opportunities". Yet the sisters strive on their own, not knowing where the next source of sustenance will come from.

Faith and belief has also created ties amongst the community. Atabile, and other community members, walk up the mountain for fasting and prayer twice a month. They ascend on Friday and return on Sunday morning by 9 am. Community members of various backgrounds and nationalities come together. The pastor himself, is from Zimbabwe.

The experiences of these two women, have shaped their expectations and future plans for themselves and their community. Atabile aspires to be a plant scientist. She holds a Level 4 certificate in Plant Science and is looking forward to Level 5. Nolukholo aspires to be a seamstress. They know their rights and responsibilities as members of the settlement and the larger Napier community. They require their voices to be heard and are calling for action.


B11

Perspectives from a 78-year-old man and his wife

INTERVIEWEE: Hans Ruiter, Johanna Ruiter, Rachel Ruiter
INTERVIEWED BY: Joseph Dennis N. Quarcoo and Naomi Samake
NAPIER RESEARCHERS: Atabile Gwgwa and Vathiswa Siwa Kuhle

Hans Ruiter is 78 years old. His wife, Johanna, is 70. For them, life in the settlement is not palatable. Mr. Ruiters moved with his wife to this settlement after having lived on a farm where he and his family had worked on for what he described as generations. His daughters slowly followed and now live here too. In total, Mr. Ruiters tells us that he and his wife have five children. They are all Afrikaans speaking. One lives in Cape Town, two have their own structures here in the settlement and the last born, Rachel, lives with them. She supports them financially when she can, through her farm work gathering flowers. Mr. Ruiter tells us that at his age he is no longer able to work. Besides Rachel's support, grants from the national government help too.

The condition of their house makes life difficult. While they own the house in which they stay, it is not in good condition. There are many holes in the roof and ceiling, which makes it unbearable when the rains come. The municipality gave them some roofing sheets, but they have not solved the leakage problems. "They do not fit properly," Mr. Ruiters explains to us. He emphasizes that it does not feel okay to be living in this house. He stressed that he has have worked all his life and it is frustrating to end up living in such a place after all his labour. These conditions also exacerbate his health problems. He has asthma and living in this structure is taking a toll. When reflecting on the state of his house and its surroundings, he frowns in thinking about the prospect of the future.


PEP
PEOPLE & ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
Tue 18 Feb 11:05

A strong inspiring woman, a born leader

INTERVIEWEE: Nolwethu Kakana
INTERVIEWED BY: Sophie Oldfield, Tracey Lee Dennis and Wesley Vorsatz

The coordinator of the Napier research team, Nolwethu Kakana, known as Lele, squeezed in time for our interview on the second morning of our research week. We sat in her beautifully put together lounge, warm on what was an unseasonal rainy day. Together, Lele and her boyfriend put a lot of effort into building this home. Her boyfriend bought the plot with a shack on it from a woman who got married and moved in with her husband elsewhere on the settlement. Her boyfriend demolished the former shack and built this one from materials he sourced from his work site. Initially, it had two rooms, then he extended by building a third, together what now comprise the kitchen, bedroom and lounge. In 2015, he built a garage, planned for a time when he could afford a car. Lele enjoys her home, its planned spaciousness, its comfort, its careful decoration in warm fresh colours. It has taken her a long time, hard work, and much heart break to reach this point.

Lele moved from the Idutywa in the Eastern Cape after she passed grade 12. Though she wanted to study sports management, her family didn't have the finances to fund her studies. As she put it matter-of-factly, "I thought, ok, fine, I have to go". With that said, this decision was not easy. She had aspirations to work in sports, an area in which she excelled. But as her father was not working, there was no money to go to college. She had no alternative but to go to Cape Town to find work.

Just under 20, just out of school, Lele took a bus from Idutywa to Cape Town to stay with her older brother, his girlfriend and his girlfriend's mother in Khayelitsha. It was a hard transition. Within two weeks of staying in Khayelitsha she was robbed by two men. She felt like returning home to the Eastern Cape. She missed home. She missed her family. She had to remind herself "if I go home, I'm going to starve. I have to stay here." Unsuccessful in finding work in Cape Town, after sometime her brother recommended that she moved to Napier.

When she first arrived in Napier in February 2005, it felt familiar, similar to Idutywa, minus the rondavels, as in Napier there were only shacks. In the settlement, then located in the valley, they had to cook outside in the woods. There was no electricity. It was tough. It was awkward. But, Lele explains "I tried to adapt myself, though it was hard, I settled in".

Napier lived up to her work expectations. Within two weeks she found a job working on a road construction team. She directed traffic, kept cows off the road, and ran the wheel barrow. Language was a huge barrier, though, with everyone around her speaking in Afrikaans. The culture, the calling of people, even her age, "Aunty", it all felt foreign. "Kids called me Auntie, but I'm not a grownup. All my cousins and aunties are grown-up women".

But, two weeks after moving to Napier, calamity struck. The settlement was hit by devastating floods, what residents called the tsunami. Lele described this moment vividly. "It was a Sunday. It started raining late in the afternoon. It continued. It wasn't so heavy when we went to sleep." But, after midnight, the rain intensity increased. "Around three a.m. we heard someone screaming outside. We jumped out of bed and tried to open the door. It was locked. We tried and tried to open it, pushing hard. When we managed, a lot of water flooded inside the house. The water was waist-high". The settlement was devastated, destroyed. The police moved all the settlement families to the community hall, in the part of Napier that was classified racially white under Apartheid. They camped out for two days in the community hall. But, Lele remembers in particular the ways white people chased them away, complaining about their presence in 'their area' and telling them to go back to the settlement. They returned to the settlement and found their homes destroyed, their clothes and furniture ruined.

Following this traumatic event, Lele moved back to Cape Town. The flood had terrified her. She was afraid of experiencing it again. She stayed in Khayelitsha for two years. In this period, however, she found no work. No work for two years went against her grain,

her practical and concrete need to earn a living. It went against her energy, her sense of herself, her purpose. To try to find work, Lele returned to Napier in 2007. She moved in with her boyfriend. They stayed together in the relocated settlement, in rooms attached to a tavern.

In 2008, they had a baby girl, their first child, whom Lele's mother named Isipile, meaning "God given" in isiXhosa. Lele was 23. Her relationship with her boyfriend was rocky, intense, and abusive. They fought a lot. She explained: "I was that girl who always goes when I have so much to handle." In those hard and painful moments, she retreated to Cape Town. He would persuade her they were fine, she would return. It was a hard struggle. Her family encouraged and supported her. In 2009, for instance, she worked on Talllbos farm, a fynbos weeding job. She hated this job, however. There were snakes in the Fynbos, between the weeds, which she found too much to cope with. She quit and returned to Napier – and her partner – in the later part of 2009. She found a seasonal planting job on an onion farm in the area.

In 2010 Lele had her second child, a baby girl called Iviwe, which means "God hears us." In this period, Lele stayed in part in Cape Town, then found work in Villiersdorp, where she stayed with her boyfriend's cousin who lived there. Her moves were a strategy to cope with the abuse in her relationship, a means to stay safe, places where she found family support, and others where she found work. In these periods, her own mother and her grandmother helped her care for her beautiful baby girls.

Her partner asked her to return repeatedly. She did and found out he was ill. She stayed with him because he was sick with TB and he needed her to look after the tavern. It was hard to manage these roles while caring for two babies. To make ends meet, she interspersed her work in the tavern with EPWP work through the municipality, jobs involving manual labour, like sweeping the streets. At one point she collected census data. It was a hard juggle, looking after her sick boyfriend, her babies, managing work, managing the tavern. She tried to manage everything. She tried until he was getting better. But it reached a point when she couldn't manage anymore. This was the point when she made a hard choice to take her babies to her mother's home in the Eastern Cape, where her mother agreed to care for them. A heart-breaking decision, Lele shared how much she missed her children, proudly showing us a photo of them.

Once back in Napier, Lele found a new job. In 2015, she worked on Virfontein farm picking berries. She had a contract for one year. They recognised her capacity and abilities and promoted her to supervisor, a role that involved managing those picking, checking the quality of the berries, making sure that they were picked effectively, that none were left on the trees. It was hard managing people, very hard, but she loved the position of supervisor, a position that she was made for as a born organiser, a leader, and an incredibly hard worker.

It was in this period that tragedy struck. In December of 2016 her boyfriend passed away. She was two-months pregnant with their third child. He was so ill he was sent to Somerset Hospital, where he passed in her own hands, as she cared for him, and carried his unborn baby. She described this period as a very tough time. One in which, nonetheless, she had to keep going, to take care of herself, to not stress too much, for the sake of the baby. She gave birth to a baby boy on the 4th of June 2017, a little boy the spitting image of his Dad. When the baby was delivered, and she held him, when she saw him for the first time, she cried because he looked just like his father and because her boyfriend had so wanted a boy. She explained "he was always asking for a boy. Now he's gone and a boy is here." Her mother named her baby son Lime, "the one who must build up the home." Since his father passed away, he must build up the home for his sisters and his mother. "Life had to go on," she emphasized.

Lele is clearly so proud of her three children. The middle daughter is an athlete, like her mom, competing to represent the Eastern Cape Province in athletics. She really wants to make her Mom proud; she has already. And, her oldest daughter plays netball. The girls have inherited these abilities from Lele, who is a multi-disciplinary sports woman, who plays netball, soccer, softball and baseball, and can run long distance. Lele works out every morning to stay as fit as possible. Now her children prefer to stay in the Eastern Cape with her mother. "They don't want to come because, since their grandparents passed away, they say there's nothing for them here, even though I am here. If I want to see them, I have to visit them in Idutywa." She is glad they are safe and she visits them in June and at the end of the year. But, she emphasises "it's very hard. It's very hard. We chat on the phone and when

they need something they call me." As a single parent it's hard emotionally and financially.

WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY

Lele found her present job in September 2018. She is the settlement "squatter controller." She saw the post advertised in the Municipal offices in Napier. She was hesitant to apply for the post. People in the settlement thought, maybe not surprisingly, this post involved "spying", watching to see what was going on, to talk about people, to turn them into the authorities, anybody doing anything illicit, like selling drugs, or shebeen owners for instance. Some even suspected it might be linked to selling properties. But, she spoke with Felicia in the Municipality who explained "no, it's not like that." She was encouraged also by others, to not listen to this talk and to explore the job, its duties and responsibilities. She did just that and she got the job.

Her job is actually crucial. It involves checking the settlement. Going around, engaging with people. When shacks are put up illegally, or when somebody extends a structure, she speaks with them. To put up a shack, or to extend a shack, you need to have a letter from the municipality. The letter says that you have permission to put your shack on this plot or permission to extend. This work is challenging.

Often people respond, she explained, "no, I'm not doing anything and it's on my land, don't tell me what to do on my land." She described how "one woman shouted at me. She reported me to the municipality for giving people plots. But I know my job. I told Michael in the municipality, 'I know what I have to do. I cannot give anyone a plot.' She described a context where she had to confront a man when he put a shack up on a plot, which was not his. She explained, "'This is not your place. You are not even on the list of people who have to get the plots, but you put your shack there. And besides that you are not staying there. You are always [away] and when you come back, you just stay with your brother." These conflicts are not easy to manage. "I am supposed to be the eyes and ears of the municipality to keep track of what is happening, to give the municipality information. That is based on what they told me the job is. It's challenging. When someone is putting up a shack, I'm supposed to go to them and tell them they cannot. I'm supposed to report them if they do not stop."

She explains that she doesn't personally have "a database, I don't have a list. The minute someone comes to me and says 'I need a plot', I direct them to go to the municipality to ask for a plot. Felicia then calls me once she processes the application and asks if there's still space for someone to put up a shack in the settlement." At the time of the interview, there were 31 people on the municipality list who wanted shacks. Some of them were backyard dwellers from the surrounding areas of Napier. Some of them were based in the settlement staying with the parents, who explained to Lele "I no longer want to stay with my parents, I want my own place."

Lele explained that "I have to be harsh when it comes to the community and sometimes I have to be harsh with the municipality." For instance, in 2019 there was a period of hard and heavy rain. She recounted how "People came to me and asked for plastic sheets, sails, to help them protect their houses." Lele called Felicia her boss, who directed her to law enforcement. The Ward Councillor however came with the plastics and distributed them to families who supported her political party. She bypassed Lele completely. For Lele this was problematic. She explained "She created political divisions. She said you're in the ANC, go to the ANC representative." Lele does not think that she should have to navigate these divisions, which the Ward councillor exacerbates. In her opinion the ward councillor "is the one responsible for the community. You don't have to divide us. Yes, we know we are from different political groups here, but you don't have to do things that divide us."

Lele explains that most people don't know her actual responsibilities and duties. "Sometimes they just come knock on the door and say, 'my electricity is off, just call the electricity truck and get them to come and fix it.' And, I have to call the electricity guys." If she says no, they say "what is your job them? You're a community leader here." They also come to her when there are incidents. In these instances "Call the ambulance." This happened on her birthday, October 26, in the middle of the night, at four in the morning. Someone knocked on my door in the middle of the night. "Lele, Lele, come wake up!". I said, "no man, go away, it's the middle of the night." He asked me to call the ambulance, because there was a guy lying on the ground. He had been stabbed. His family was there and asked me to call the ambulance. I did and asked the ambulance guys to call the police as I could see the guy was already dead." The job is clearly not "squatting control"

alone, it is emergency assistance, crisis management, conflict management, and the other day-to-day necessities of managing this settlement. We suggest, isn't she actually more the Manager of this Settlement? She likes that title, yes, that's right, "there are so many things that I am doing."

> "I'm not the 'eyes and the ears of the municipality," she is a community leader in the settlement. A position which means, in her words, that 'You have to be a strong person. You have to know what you want and also you're going to have to be in touch with the people. You have to be strong and also you must know what the people want and you have to listen and give the people the feedback that we have. And you have to have communication skills."

Her approach to the job is to "sit down and listen," which can be hard. She is fluent in isiXhosa and English, and can understand, but not speak Afrikaans so well. In the latter cases, she asks neighbours, even a kid, to help translate. While her job is on contract, she would like to do this work more permanently, to help build the settlement.

We end our interview discussing her hopes for the settlement and for herself. She hopes that as a community they can "make the community better" and the municipality can help access to the services and resources and the like. She knows too that people will have to wait for housing, as nothing has been built in Napier since 2010. Though since PEP has come, there's clearer talk of the possibilities of upgrading this settlement. For Lele personally she hopes for a house and a job. "I do need a house because maybe in two-years time, I'm going to go and fetch my kids. Though they don't want to come and stay with me, I have to get them because my parents are getting older and older. They can't look after my kids. And also I want a proper job, not on contract, a full time, full time job."

Community governance and leadership

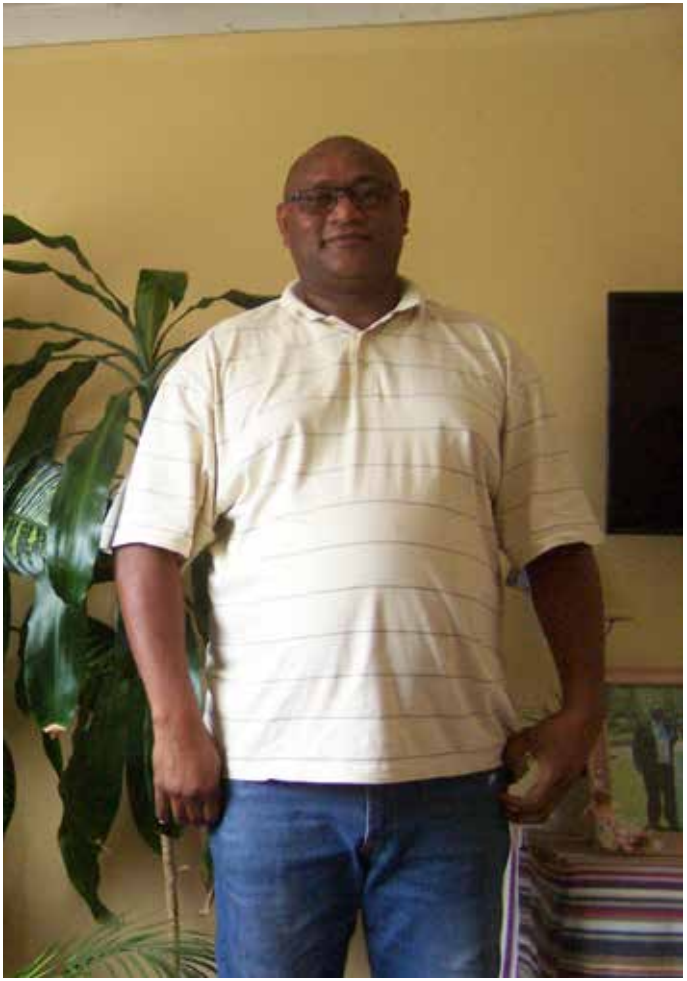
Tommaso Cosentino | Lindokhule Fetile (NoCC) | Zolile Eric Fetile | Alessandro Rearte

ON METHOD

The stories in this theme emerge from interviews and parallel conversation within our team on the challenges of leadership in the settlement. We conducted interviews with community leaders, two older and on eyounger. As the settlement's leadership structure is in transition, we aimed to understand the work of these community leaders and their approaches to negotiating conflicts and resolving issues. NoCC and Zolile made the interviews possible, through their personal relationships with these leaders and their translation and engagement. This initial analysis is illustrative, and, we hope it provides the basis for future research on this important issue.

INTRODUCTION

In the settlement context, community leaders play a substantial role in articulating and mediating life in the settlement. This work is, however, contested and complex. Official and unofficial leaders face an immense task: dealing with problems and conflicts in the settlement and surrounding area, as well as interactions with the municipality more generally. Their status and effectiveness is built on a meshwork of relationships inside the settlement, as well as linkages to institutions beyond it. The portraits of leaders featured here shed light on the challenges of and crucial roles played by community leadership in and beyond the settlement.



GAMAS VAN RENSBURG: AN ESTABLISHED LEADER

An important Napier leader, Gamas van Rensburg is currently chairman of the African National Congress (ANC) local branch and of the Taxi Association in Bredasdorp. He has been the chairperson of the local rugby team as well. NoCC arranged the interview with this important long-term leader. We met at his home, which has been in his family's hands for three generations. He is well rooted in Napier, although he spent a fair share of his life in Cape Town, where he moved after completing Grade 10 in the mid-1980s during the years of anti-apartheid student uprisings. This period had a strong impact on him. "I started to feel that I have to do something for my community," he recounts. He obtained his high school diploma and eventually joined the army, and later found work as a mechanic's assistant in Cape Town. He returned to Napier in 2007.

Although Gamas is not an officially appointed leader in the settlement, he plays a role in its governance. He is recognized as an "old leader" in several neighbourhoods along Napier's West Street, which includes the formerly segregated coloured area on one side, the post-apartheid neighbourhood of RDP houses called "Smartie Town" on the other, and the informal settlement located at the end of the street.

Over time, residents began seeing Gamas as a "first contact" person for all sorts of advice and support, ranging from assistance in negotiations with the municipality about people's financial struggles and overdue bills, and mediations between residents and the police. Many people also consult him over everyday problems, including: calls in the middle of the night because of dangling power lines and other hazards, urgent requests to mediate in escalating fights and to talk to nightly troublemakers. He plays a broader guiding role too, helping younger people with enrolment in tertiary studies, for instance. If he is unable to come up with an immediate solution, he asks the parties involved for patience until he can figure out what needs to be done. Gamas told us what he finds key to resolving problems: his capacity to listen and refraining from shouting or acting carelessly.

A crucial part of Gamas's work as a leader is the amount of time he spends "on the ground" and his capacity to network to solve problems. "On the ground" in the area is where he gathers most of the knowledge and experience that helps him navigate the neighbourhood's diverse groups and the issues

and conflicts that arise. For instance, Gamas observed the ways residents used to live divided along racial and cultural lines in the informal settlement: Xhosa people would not engage with Coloureds and vice-versa. To address this divide, he interacted deliberately with residents from different groups and communities to bring them together. From those engagements he became friends with key individuals like Frans and Siviwe, who later became leaders as well.

Gamas is clear that he does not have the capacity to handle all the issues that arise by himself, particularly violent ones, where there is risk of injury, or conflict with municipal officials. In these instances, he draws on his networks and engages others to intervene - community leaders as well as his wife. Gamas's wife is a social worker at the Department of Social Development and has great expertise in dealing with authorities and the law. Her interventions ultimately help resolve some of the more tricky and "technical" cases, such as the ongoing struggle of a woman whose tragically complicated family history prevented her from obtaining a South African ID, although she has South African parents. Without an ID, she does not receive the SASSA grant for her disabled son. Gamas's wife is helping her navigate hearings at the Ministry of Home Affairs to resolve this problem.

In another case, the police raided the informal settlement and arrested a woman whose home had several marijuana plants growing in the garden. As a result of the arrest, the woman's son, a minor, was left at home unattended. Gamas and Frans tried to negotiate at the police station for her release so that she could look after her child. When the police would not agree, they convinced the actual owner of the plants to turn himself in, in exchange, they hoped, for the detained mother's release. However, the police kept both residents locked up. Gamas' wife visited the police station and confronted the police officers, successfully arguing for the mother's release.

In Gamas's view, engagement with the police is an integral, although complicated, part of his work as a leader. This is particularly the case in relation to increasing problems at night when individuals from the surroundings areas go to the informal settlement to buy cheap alcohol and drugs. Gamas shared his experience of police engagements in the settlement in relation to these issues. At first, he welcomed the arrest of a few individuals involved in petty crimes, but he changed his view when one particular police intervention became violent. He confronted the police on the spot, arguing that, "a wrong cannot be fixed with another wrong". He explained his shift saying, "I'm rather going to stand with the community now, than with the police". Over time, he sensed that the police had understood the advantages of accepting his authority and influence. Sometimes, he suspects, the police are simply too afraid to enter the informal settlement, so they regularly consult him before entering. Some older police officers "know me as Captain Van Rensburg," Gamas explained. But, newly deployed police officers often subject him to a test so that he has to prove his position as a leader anew.

> "If you are old bull, and the youngsters come, they will test you how strong you are."

For Gamas, being "strong" means remaining patient and not letting oneself get taunted. He strongly encourages everyone to do research on their constitutional rights and make use of them, if necessary.

PASIKA ZAWULA: A FORMER COMMITTEE MEMBER

Considered an "old leader", Pasika Zawula stepped down as an official leader because he felt less and less appreciated in his role as a member of the Committee for how he governed the informal settlement. Nonetheless, some residents still regard him as a leader, asking him for mediation when they are caught up in issues they do not know how to resolve.

Pasika told us about his former role in mediating plot claims, particularly processes to "squeeze in" newly arrived people as the settlement grew over the years. In the past, this work required, on one hand, that he find residents who would be willing to give up part of their plot for new people to build on; on the other, it demanded overseeing and mediating these negotiations. He took pride in telling us the story of a particular arrangement he found for a new arrival from Hermanus who was desperate for a place to stay. Pasika organised a deal with some neighbours who offered parts of their plots.

Negotiating plot claims is not arbitrary or ad hoc, as NoCC, Zolile and Pasika explained. If, for instance, Zolile moved to another place or city without reporting the vacancy, NoCC might take notice of his absence or note that an unknown person was living on the plot. In this case, she or anyone else might make a claim to buy the plot. In such a case, the Committee would convene a meeting with the current owner and the interested buyer in order that the latter could submit

an offer. If both parties agreed to the offer, other community members would serve as witnesses to the deal and sign a sales certificate that the Committee would then forward to the Municipality for their records. After that, the former owner and any unofficial temporary tenant would receive a 30-day notice to clear the premises. In some instances, they said, former owners or temporary tenants refused to move, and disregarded the deal and the notice letter. In these instances, in his capacity as Committee leader Pasika explained, he called the police, asking them to step in to enforce the change of ownership. In some cases, police were considered observers of the process, contributing to the formality of plot allocation procedures. Pasika felt that the police seemed to recognize the importance of maintaining a good relationship with Committee members, although this did not amount to formal recognition. He and the Committee tried their best to settle disputes and even violent fights within the community, thereby avoiding the involvement of the police. For instance, the people involved in a conflict would be called into a meeting to negotiate a settlement, which could be a financial or verbal apology. If this smaller meeting ended without success, a community meeting would be convened. This had not been required, however, during Pasika's time as a Committee member.

Overall, Pasika wishes for greater recognition of leadership in the settlement, of the challenges leaders face, and the important role they play. When asked about the relationship with the municipality he argued,

"If they [the municipality] would recognise us as leaders, they would have responded to our needs". Without this engagement and recognition, the Committee has had to organise protest marches and collectively argue for their demands in a memorandum to the municipality.

PROFESSOR: A NEW GENERATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERS WHO BOTH CRITICISE AND RESPECT OLDER LEADERS

Lindile Mhlaba, known as Professor, or "Prof" for short, is a new generation of leader. His father was a community leader in his village in the Eastern Cape. Although, in this early period, Prof was too young to understand what this meant, he has many memories of elderly people convening at his house and engaging in long conversations about the state of their community. His father's child, Prof has been a leader himself. He was class representative in Grade 10 and has held positions in the settlement as well as in party politics, initially through the ANC Youth League, and now in the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). He also became a young soccer coach once he moved to Napier. Leadership in this context is demanding and challenging. It demands guts, commitment and strength, a capacity to stand up to power, to elders in the community, the police, and those in the municipality.

A few years ago, for instance, a police squad raided the informal settlement (an incident Gamas referred to as well) while people were hanging out and enjoying an evening after month-end payday. The policemen were wearing balaclavas. "Their faces were covered, yassis…" Prof remembers. He and his friends were forced to lie on the ground, face down. "If you are not interested to go down, they helped you, with a slap, slap, slap, slap", he mimed with a gesture. The police pinned them down, stamping their feet on residents' backs. They confiscated the alcohol at hand and poured it on the ground. People who dared contradict them were immediately kicked. Prof reacted to the police's brutal violence: "I asked them, 'Why are you doing this? What have we done wrong to you? We are not fighting here!'" The police allowed Prof to stand up, but as he did, he noticed that all of his friends were still forcibly immobilized. He returned to the ground, insisting on their liberation, telling the police, "No, I cannot be free alone!" The police set free Prof's friends, who fled the scene.

Prof stayed behind to continue to question the police's unjustified violence. In response, the police pepper sprayed him in the face. Instead of running away, he confronted one of the policemen directly, "Now, you have a gun and your face is covered, I cannot see you, why don't you shoot? I won't even know who shot me. I will not care, I will just die, shoot me!" In that moment, a friend grabbed him and took him away to avoid further escalation of the situation. In the coming week, young settlement residents marched to the Napier Police Station repeatedly to protest this action. Prof recalls the reassuring presence of the old Committee members at the back of the demonstration and the protesting group's eventual successful engagement with the local police chief, who agreed that police should enter the settlement in future with uncovered faces and name tags on their uniforms. For Prof, this struggle, led by young leaders and supported the members of the old Committee, was successful.

A debate on the place of youth in leadership

At a public meeting in 2016, some of the youth expressed their resentment and asked that the leadership be "a mix of the old ones together with the young ones" to achieve a better system of inter-generational checks and balances. The old leaders' Committee was active, in Prof's opinion, but overly punitive in its attitude towards young people in the community, imposing harsh penalties. "You know when a young man did a mess here, they will oppress him. It was difficult for the young ones to report something that is happening here".

Prof gives us an example of a case in which the Committee punished a young offender to explain what he meant. "Maybe, you see, you've stabbed someone… something like that. [The Committee] would say, 'No! You must pack your things and go [leave the settlement]'". He sees this decision as "too harsh", but also unacceptable. When older people are responsible for similar offenses, "they [the Committee] will not even call the community to gather [to discuss the issue] under the light" (the tall, landmark streetlight where community meetings usually occur).

Prof is convinced there are better ways to deal with situations of this kind, starting with calling the police to arrest offenders and open a case against them. In this way, he argues, the court can solve the issue and impose a penalty, after which the convicted can be reintegrated into the settlement, instead of permanently removed.

"We are living in new South Africa here; everything is abided by the law." He emphasizes, "Whether you like it or not, you must follow the code of rules". He has tried to convince older leaders to give up ways of managing justice that "belong to the past", arguing that, "small issues can be solved here, but the bigger ones cannot".

To the youths' surprise, the Committee's response to their request was drastic: they resigned and formally dissolved the Committee. Nonetheless, the community, including the youth, still regard old Committee members as leaders. However, Prof, who bears a great respect for them, is puzzled by their unwillingness to work directly with young leaders. He supposes they are scared by potential conflicts that could result. "You know, when they are taking a decision, they know that if it is a bad decision, we are going to oppose that decision, and the elders they do not like that".

What makes a good leader?

Legitimacy and recognition are fundamental for anyone who aims (or happens) to, become a leader. To be recognized as a good leader, Prof puts a lot of effort into listening to people. "You know the squatter camp is too small, I go wherever I want to go, I listen to everyone. I go to the places where there are a lot of people … it is interesting. Sometimes I talk, sometimes I don't, but most of the time I like to join them… Sometimes I start the conversations myself! I am not scared to do that." This is not a simple task as people speak Afrikaans and isiXhosa in the settlement, with English a second, or third language, if at all. For Prof, an isiXhosa speaker, to communicate with Afrikaans speakers who cannot speak English, he often mixes Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English together. In this way, he engages with community members and encourages people to participate in community meetings, calling out those who submit their complaints to him, but do not attend the meetings where these issues can actually be discussed.

Leaders also need recognition from, and links to, local institutions. These relationships are fundamental to the settlement and its living conditions. Prof feels positive that he and the new generation of leaders he is part of have fought for and built connections to local institutions, particularly a better connection between *masipala* (the "municipality") and the community, whereas, in his view, "the old leaders fear to go there". According to Prof, "Sometimes they just go there and drink some cool drinks". In contrast, "We made a difference!" he exclaims. However, he laments that officials from the municipality formally engage the young leaders only under certain circumstances, such as when they need an interlocutor from the community to implement a political agenda. On the contrary, when demands for more substantial change are made to the municipality, officials stress the lack of a formally-constituted settlement Committee to justify their inability (and, in Prof's opinion, unwillingness) to fulfil their institutional and political responsibilities towards the community.

In Prof's view, forming a new committee that includes older and younger leaders, is vital to managing the settlement internally, in order for it to stand its ground when engaging the municipality to bring about change.

KEY FINDINGS

The stories of Gamas, Pasika, and Prof, as well as helpful exchanges within our research team, and chats with other residents, provide a glimpse into the work of leadership: a mix of governing the settlement and engaging with the police, the municipality and other state institutions.

The unexpected resignation of the former Committee due to contestation, caused discontent among younger leaders, but also among many residents in the settlement. There seems to be a new generation of young leaders who have different views on how community issues should be dealt with, justice should be administered, and political struggles should be conducted. While they respect the old leaders and acknowledge them for what they have done, they believe there should be more space for the youth in the leadership of the informal settlement. This ongoing generational conflict has left a void in the self-organized governing structures of the informal settlement which remained unresolved at the time of this research.

In this shifting context, our contingent, short-term research process offered a picture that is partial, yet telling. In this context, rather than an acquired formal status, leadership is a process in the making, entrenched in the politics of everyday life in the settlement. Leadership is not only a form of self-organization, but also of self-representation, and a key site where shared values and imaginations are negotiated and articulated. Settlement residents seek out community leaders to problem-solve and mediate conflicts; to organise for and represent the settlement. On one hand, leaders need to gain legitimacy among the communities they represent and serve. This requires leaders to be present, good listeners and knowledgeable about the diverse realities, problems and demands of their communities. On the other hand, leaders have to gain recognition and legitimacy from the municipality, the police forces, and other state institutions. For a community leader, this is a fundamental precondition and a constant challenge to achieve, requiring an authority and capacity to negotiate with state institutions. In this regard, leaders have adopted different points of view, reflective of a generational divide that is currently affecting the leadership. Similarly to the differing convictions around how to collaborate with the police, the approach young leaders take towards state actors and institutions is more open, but also more confrontational.

Leadership in the settlement has the difficult task of guiding the political organization of the community and making residents' needs and will heard by local institutions. This contradictory position puts leaders in the position of mediating between different and contrasting interests, building channels of communication between the community and the Municipality and, in order to do this, gaining and retaining legitimacy from both ends of this fragile and contested space. Settlement leaders are caught up in various practical and ethical dilemmas that force them to make thorny decisions and constantly struggle to align effective tactical actions with their personal values and beliefs, while seeking legitimacy from both community and the state. These are the concrete circumstances, the various in-betweens, in which community leaders must operate, constitutively in between 'top' and 'bottom', located on the edge of officialdom and informality.

Research Essay excerpt, Tommaso Cosentino

Leadership is a process in the making. It develops in practice, in those who show the capacity to resolve problems with resources at hand. Those who can build social networks through shared organization and struggle to obtain a naturally recognised authority by residents. Likewise, if recognition is fading, so does the scope of action. Without a doubt, aspects of tradition and culture that transcend individual acts and cannot be expressed in democratic-political terms are important. But what emerges, here, is the emphasis on process, as the recognition from any actor and stakeholder is volatile, constrained, contentious, and, above all, prerequisite for any kind of action and success. Leadership requires struggle.

Research Essay excerpt, Alessandro Rearte

"You know when I was on the other side [living in informal settlement], I always [used to] say, oh, the municipality doesn't do anything; I used to say the municipality doesn't work; the municipality doesn't care. But now that I am inside, I see what the municipality does and how the municipality tries. Because when there's floods, the first thing that you think of, the informal settlement. So, it's one of those that you say, I really did not think what I said. Now you realize that it's not that easy. It's not easy to be on the other side of the table and now you have to make decisions and say, you know what? No or yes. And when you have to wake up at three o'clock, when there is a shack that has burned, you wake up and you have to be there and you're like, Really? And when there's anything you say, Really! Must I do this? Because now you are on the side where people need to see that you really care."

"In my work, I wish that I had magic. Everything to be perfect. Everyone would have their own plot. Everyone will have their own plot with electricity, with water, with the toilet. […] So that is just my frustration now that how do we make – how do we ensure that each and every erf in the informal settlement has the basics. How do we ensure that everyone feels safe? Because that's where a lot of things are happening in our informal settlements because people do as they please and you'll find that a lot of murders happened in the informal settlement. A lot of things happen. A lot of – there's a lot of illegal shebeens, there's a lot of drugs taking place and most of it are happening in your informal settlements. I just wish we can just turn that around and see how do we empower those people in the informal settlements?"

Zukiswa Tonisi, Deputy Mayor

Affiliated with the Democratic Alliance (DA), Zukiswa Tonisi is the Deputy Mayor of CAM, and also the Portfolio Head of Management Services, which includes human settlements and informal settlements. She has herself lived in an informal settlement in the past (in Zwelitsha in Bredasdorp).

Voices from the Cape Agulhas Municipality


EVERY
BEAST
NEEDS A
BEAUTY

Falling through the cracks of officialdom

INTERVIEWEE: Nandipha Awu
INTERVIEWED BY: Jinty Jackson and Tommaso Cosentino
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Bongiwe Bunga

When we meet Nandipha Awu, she is moving to and fro, preparing food, scrubbing dishes, serving drinks, sweeping, wiping children's noses. Constantly busy, Nandipha is at the centre of life around her. Her space too, is constantly busy. She lives in the heart of the settlement, and any time we pass by, we notice people there: sometimes those who come to enjoy a beer in her outside area; sometimes babies and young kids whom Nandipha looks after during the day; at other times we see women sitting and chatting there, braiding each other's hair in the sunshine. Nandipha herself hardly rests. As we get to know more about her life, we understand why.

THE PETTY RUTHLESSNESS OF BUREAUCRACY

Nandipha introduces us to her tall son, Liso. The teenager strikingly resembles his mother with his long, square face and deep, steady gaze. When Nandipha begins talking about Liso, her face takes on a troubled look. At the age of 14, she explains, he should not be hanging out amongst the little kids his mother takes care of as a job. Her child should be at school but, "Liso is not at school because they want a birth certificate to put on the system. Last year the principal took my kid, but halfway through the year they chucked him out because of this birth certificate issue," she explains. The birth certificate she refers to is not her son's but her own. The local school, apparently requires a parent's birth certificate to register a child. Making sense of her son's exclusion from school, suddenly takes our conversation into one of the most intricate and central aspects of Nandipha's life.

Born in a village in a rural part of the Eastern Cape, Nandipha was not raised by her parents. No one registered her at birth and she missed the cut off age of sixteen for registration, which means she has never had an identity document. Although there was a window period, after the formal end of Apartheid, in which the Department of Home Affairs allowing many who did not have the required identification to register, that window has since closed. Officialdom has hardened its stance in the years since, as Nandipha's experience reflects. Nandipha's friends and their extended families back in the Eastern Cape have done all they could to obtain school records in the Willowmore area where she grew up. So far, all this has been in vain. Talking about how not having official documents has affected her, the hurt, frustration and anger she feels is palpable. Nandipha breaks into sobs.

Without an ID card, she has no access to the basic rights that citizenship should give her. These include the right to vote, the right to a child support grant that many others in the settlement depend on. Neither can she register to be on the waiting list for a state-built RDP house. Nandipha's lack of official documentation not only hampers her child's chances of getting an education, but her own ability to get a job. "I am stressed because people want to see your ID to give you a job. If I know of a job, I feel I can't take the job because of the ID," she explains.

Unable to access a formal job, or get child support from the state, Nandipha finds herself in a uniquely challenging position, even measured against those of her friends and neighbours in the settlement. She relies on multiple, homebased and informal activities to bring in enough money for herself and Liso to be able to eat. She also has to think about her eight-year-old daughter who is living with the child's grandmother in the Eastern Cape. The pressure to survive explains her constant state of busyness.

ESSENTIAL SPACES

Nandipha built her home six years ago with her boyfriend, when he was still alive. It took them a week to construct the four-roomed shack. Even though he has passed away, the electricity metre in Nandipha's home is still in her boyfriend's name. Without title deeds to the land, the name in which prepaid electricity metres are registered, often serves as a de facto title to the home. As time has passed, she has not added more rooms to expand the physical structure of her home. In fact, the major modification she has made was to remove one of the rooms and turn it into the outside space that is such a hub for the communal activities of this neighbourhood. The spatial

arrangements reflects her constant need to maximise what she is able to earn by using space in multiple, adaptive ways. As a source of income, she rents out rooms, except the one she and her son sleep in which doubles as kitchen and indoor space for the creche she runs.

Standing outside, we notice a gutter has been dug into the compacted earth of her yard. The channel runs from the front door and across the yard. The reason for this makeshift gutter soon becomes apparent as Nandipha takes us inside and shows us where the rain gets in. Water seeps through the corrugated iron wall of the shack on the side that faces against the uphill slope behind the house. No amount of patching seems to stop the leaks spreading across the thin layer of cracked linoleum that covers the floor. "When the rain comes, it comes into the house. When the wind comes, it shakes," she tells us. A sturdy lock strung on a chain through a notch in the door protects what Nandipha and Liso have. The inside consists of one room that is both bedroom and kitchen lit by a single bulb. Between the two beds where mother and son sleep at night (and where the children nap during day-care), is a large sound speaker ready to be moved outside when needed. On weekends, Nandipha entertains customers who come to buy beer, with music. A double fridge by the door is decorated with pink, floral paper stuck to the outside. The kitchen space, located right by the door, provides quick and easy access to the exterior so that Nandipha can prepare and serve food to the children in her care as well as beer to customers sitting outside.

Every aspect of Nandipha's home is maximised for versatility and functionality. Overlapping as a day care facility, informal shebeen and lastly, a home for Nandipha and Liso, what we see is a vibrant, central node in the settlement. Nandipha's entrepreneurship is a matter of survival for, without the necessary papers, she herself cannot access a formal job, or state subsidies that so many others around her depend upon as means of sustenance. Sadly, despite the care and essential services Nandipha provides for others, she herself is currently denied access to the rights and services she needs to build a better future for herself and her son. For this reason, she works constantly, just to stay afloat.


NOP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VOTE ANC

Come to the people and ask what is wrong here!

INTERVIEWEE: Zimkhitha Xinela
INTERVIEWED BY: Malana Rogers-Bursen and Hend El-Ghazaly
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Ntombe Letsoafa

Zimkhitha Xinela is wearing a black and white striped dress and speaks confidently. When we meet in Aviwe and Mluleki's house, she requests that we interview her. Positively adamant, she explains, "I want my questions, not their questions." Taking her friend Aviwe, along, she leads us to her own place to have the interview. To get there, we walk through a maze of houses between two roads until we arrive at her one-room house.

The house is pink in colour, made of metal corrugated sheets like most of the houses in the settlement. It is on a small plot with no possibility for expansion. The inside is all one room, which serves as a bedroom, and a kitchen area on the side. Sitting on buckets outside, Zimkhitha explains this is her boyfriend, Athenkosi's house which he built in 2018. She doesn't like it that much, because it is just one room and there is no room to extend. Living in this context, it is hard to have privacy. She explains that people can see everything that goes on inside.

Zimkhitha's biggest concern is work which she has struggled to find, despite completing a degree in Human Resources in 2015. Thankfully, she recently found a job at the fast food chain, KFC. She adds, "If you came two weeks before, I'd be angry at you because I didn't have a job." She was originally planning to work with PEP and our UCT team on the research project. She is concerned about unemployment for herself but also for young people in the settlement in general. She explains that so many young people have problems in school because they know they will just end up working on farms. Many turn to drugs. She is desperate for the municipality to provide more jobs and skills training opportunities.

For Zimkhitha, personally, Napier is fine. She feels at home here. Her neighbours are long-time friends and family. Her boyfriend's brother and her friend from her hometown in the Eastern Cape live right next door. "Everyone knows each other here," she says. She was born in Napier, where her family was living on a farm. Later she moved to Eastern Cape for high school and returned in 2013 after matriculation. This is her first time living in the informal settlement.

Zimkhitha explains her frustration with sharing a toilet between eight people with only having access to one shared tap. In 2015, she applied for RDP housing, but she is still waiting to receive a house, which is frustrating. In the meanwhile, she feels that the municipality should "come to the people and ask what is wrong here, what can we do here, not just take the decisions themselves". From her perspective, the only time the municipality fixes things is when the roads flood or there are potholes. She hopes they will provide more toilets and taps, garbage bins, and the soccer field they promised.

Zimkhitha is keen to participate in the proposed upgrading process. She emphasizes that "it's the municipality's job to provide opportunities".

Proud in a good way and in a bad way

INTERVIEWEE: Aviwe Thintela and Mluleki Daniel
INTERVIEWED BY: Malana Rogers-Bursen and Hend El-Ghazaly
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Ntombe Letsoafa

Aviwe Thintela and her husband Mluleki Daniel live towards the top of one of the main streets of the settlement in a house they share with Mluleki's brother. We follow our research partner, Ntombe to their place. Ntombe and Aviwe grew up in the same village in the Eastern Cape, Mount Fletcher. As we enter we can see Aviwe sitting, eating and chatting with her friend Zimkhitha Xinela who is visiting. The front room is large and open. Smack in the middle is a pool table; in a corner are some big speakers; and, on the other side, a smaller room with a TV and couch. Small cracks let sunlight seep into the room through the roof's wood poles and metal sheets.

Aviwe begins to tell us about her life. She is currently unemployed and spends her time in the Napier library applying for jobs. The library, a ten to fifteen minute walk from the settlement, is open to anyone and with a library card you can use the computers for free. Aviwe has lived in the settlement for five years. She moved here from Eastern Cape to join her Mluleki, whose parents were already settled in Napier. Aviwe is used to moving. In the Eastern Cape alone, she moved to four different houses in one year.

At this point, Mluleki walks in after his day of farm work. He is curious as to why we are there and wants to engage in the conversation. Mluleki is a tall man, wearing a blue Jonsson work uniform and a red and yellow knitted hat. A long-time resident, he moved to Napier from the Eastern Cape in 2001 to join his parents. He came to attend primary school, to receive a better education. Initially, he lived in the previous settlement in the valley. After the 2009 flood, he and his parents moved with everybody else to the present site. Upon moving to the new site, he received this plot of land and built his own house. Speaking about his house, Mluleki explains,

> "I'm proud in a good way and in a bad way". He says he's proud because the structure is good, but at the same time he had to build the house in a hurry because of the flood. He wishes he'd had more time.

In addition, he says the house is not very comfortable and it is hard to shelter from the wind and rain. When it rains, they have to put out buckets to catch the water dripping inside. It is also hard to make it a quiet space; people living around them can make a hell of a noise when they are drinking. This is the first time he has had electricity, which he appreciates. Mluleki has also added an extension to the house since building the original structure. Currently the house has four rooms: a bedroom, kitchen, small room and the living room. He has laid tiles on the floor. Mluleki says his favourite thing about the house is the furniture and the pool table.

Mluleki has mixed feelings about Napier. He describes it as quiet, safe place with few people, but also with a lot of unemployment. He explains that living in the settlement is "not child's play" and remarks, "Sometimes you have to use the toilet during load shedding, and the mosquitos bite your legs all over."

At this comment, everyone laughs hard, but, he is serious. Life is not easy. In the informal settlement, load shedding can happen twice, sometimes four times a day. The toilets are always leaking sewage and the taps don't work in the wind, which he finds particularly irritating. He emphasizes, "It's not that cool, I worry about the house in the rain."

Aviwe adds, "Safety comes first. It's fine, but not that cool." While in the daytime she feels safe, when it's very dark she worries.

Aviwe's friend Zimkhitha jumps into the conversation at this point to stress, "At the end of the day people have no choice, there are no houses here." Mluleki wants things to change in Napier and hopes the municipality will listen to the community. He hopes for an RDP house, one that is as big as his current house. As he describes this dream, he, Aviwe and Zimkhita laugh, as if it is a pipe dream. In addition, he would like the municipality to give them garbage bins. While garbage is picked up every

Thursday "everyone has their own plastic bag, [and] puts it there on the road. [But] then it will be open because we don't have a bin to put it in," he explains.

Most of all, Mluleki hopes that changes could be made so that "everyone gets something to eat on their table." One of the ideas he has is that the municipality could hire people from the settlement as street champions to clean the neighborhood, especially of garbage in the streets.

After our interview they are pleased by the appointment of three EPWP (short term contract) workers by the municipality to clean the settlement, taking this as a sign that their needs as a community are being heard. Mluleki and Aviwe hope someday to return to Eastern Cape where they dream of having a car, a garden and sheep. Aviwe, in particular, would like to start a chicken project.




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Finding the silver linings

INTERVIEWEE: Reitumetse Pakose
INTERVIEWED BY: Bronwin Du Preez and Linus Suter
NAPIER RESEARCHER: Lindokhule Fetile

It's quite early in the morning on a cool day in Napier, so we're happy to take our seats in the sun in front of Reitumetse Pakose's shack in the settlement. She brings out a bench and returns to her chair next to the front door. She begins our conversation with a shyness that we can't quite help her overcome throughout the interview. Reitumetse is MoSotho. After finishing school in 2015 in Lesotho, she emigrated to the Eastern Cape with her uncle to find work. Although she did not find a job there, she did meet her husband and, also, picked up isiXhosa. Because English is her third language, we conduct our conversation in isiXhosa, with the help of our partner Nocc, who translated our conversation into English.

Reitumetse does not really feel at home in Napier. The main reason, she explains, is because she has no friends here. She gets on just fine with her neighbours. She says that even though there is a shortage of taps and toilets, there aren't many conflicts, but it doesn't go beyond these neighbourly contacts. Reitumetse thinks that the language barrier is to blame for that – her Xhosa is not all that strong and she feels self-conscious when speaking it. She wishes there were other Basotho people here, so she would have somebody to discuss her problems with; to talk about her life and her longing for home, both in the Eastern Cape and in Lesotho. Reitumetse often feels lonely and when she explains that there's not really anything she likes to do in the settlement, we get a real sense of that loneliness and isolation.

In the Eastern Cape, Reitumetse stayed with her husband's family. She looks back with fondness on that time, recalling the sense of family and how nice it was to stay with her in-laws. In 2019, she followed her husband who had relocated to Napier two years earlier in order to find work. While her husband eventually found a job working on a farm, Reitumetse so far has only secured seasonal jobs and is out of work at the moment. Staying home, she explains, though, serves a purpose. She feels unsafe in the settlement and does not like leaving the shack alone as it might get broken into. Staying home lowers that risk. She does feel safer now, but it is harder to be looking for a job. In spite of all of this, Reitumetse explains that it's better here. Unlike in Eastern Cape, there is work, and at least her husband has found a steady job.

The couple rent a shack in the settlement. Reitumetse tells us it was difficult to find a place to stay because many people want to move to the settlement, but in the end, they succeeded. Their landlord used to live in the settlement, but left it a few years back and now rents out his shack, a rather small two-roomed structure with small windows that are partially boarded up.

This is another reason Reitumetse does not feel at home here in Napier: renting is far from ideal, she explains, because it is expensive and because cannot change much about the house. She says if the couple had their own place, she could fix it up and make it her own, which would help her to feel at home. She would love to have a place with more windows. The existing ones are broken and boarded up, so the house gets very hot in the summer. This is why she likes to stay outside in her front yard where we also conduct the interview. Her dream is, eventually, to own her own house in the Eastern Cape with three bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen and a bathroom and to move back to her husband's community.

Yet, there is a determined optimism about her when Reitumetse explains that living here is better than it was in the Eastern Cape. At least here, her husband has a job and sometimes she gets work as well. What appears to be a contradiction in missing the Eastern Cape and talking about life being better here might equally be a way for many who migrate for work to keep their optimism alive in a situation that can sometimes seem bleak. But what really turns out to be the silver lining in this sombre tale of migration and isolation, is Reitumetse's reaction to her husband returning home from work towards the end of our interview. He comes in with a joke on his lips, outgoing and happy to help and Reitumetse breaks out into a smile

We leave with the hope that at least her husband can make her feel at home, in a place that to her is very far from home.

CONCLUSION

This collaborative project provided a rich and productive context for student learning. Complex and crucial, the project opened up student thinking in conversation with our Napier research partners, with PEP, and with urban studies scholarship.

RE-IMAGINING RESEARCH AND THE ROLE OF RESEARCHERS

This project surely showed us the challenges of collaboration, a process to "re-imagine and rework the relationships at the heart of our research practice" (Oldfield 2019, p24). As students we definitely immersed ourselves into "profoundly fraught and contested spaces of power and control" (p. 24), at times in ways that made us feel uncomfortable… We couldn't talk about poverty without talking about racism and power historically and currently. When we talk about productively compromised collaborations, this acknowledges the reality of working within these power dynamics and unequal spaces, but what do we want to work towards? When we work towards justice, it's always messy. But do we have to compromise? Does collaborative work always have to be productively compromised? What role do we have as researchers in shifting power dynamics? These are some questions the project left me with.

– Malana Rogers-Bursen

SHAPING OUR THINKING AND THEORISING

People who provide information on their experiences and observations should not be thought of as separate from the work that scholars generate but as collaborators in that work. In this way help is not imposed on communities, but it comes from the community itself in collaboration with other actors. Nagar (2019) writes about the importance of acknowledging the role that the "people in the so-called margins" play in producing knowledge. They are not merely "suppliers of stories" but people who, when we encounter them, shape the way we think. – Sinazo Funde

INSPIRATION IN EVERYDAY STRUGGLES

I will never forget our interview with a woman, a truly selfless mother. Her story at first did not make much sense to me, but as Perramond (2001, p.157) emphasizes "fieldwork is a constant process of learning, and often relearning, from others." In the interview, I realised there was more to her story than initially shared... I needed to speak in a language in which my interviewee was comfortable, which allowed her to share. I needed to ask the right questions without probing too much. I was new to it all, this form and type of research. She shared her story, explaining what she sacrificed for the happiness of her sons. She is satisfied in her current living because she is with her sons, something she didn't experience herself growing up. I could relate to her experience, as a soon-to-be mother, from what I see in my own mother. Like many mothers, she did anything for the happiness of her children, even if it meant giving up literally everything. – Bronwin Du Preez

DISRUPTING WHAT WE [THINK WE] KNOW

Ale and I thought it was quite straightforward to focus on the role played by affiliation to political parties in community leaders' views, choices and actions… [W]e received a full stop from NoCC and Zolile, our team partners, who strongly felt against exploring such aspect in our shared fieldwork…[W]hat really mattered was for us to accept a point of view that radically challenged something we took for granted. Pushing back the need for reaching a synthesis on an intellectual disagreement was not an immediate or easy step to take, yet it was a fundamental one that reasserted the parity between us and our partners. It disrupted the assumption that academic intellectual work -and research- is superior to non-academic forms of experience, inquiry, reflection, framing, conceptualization… [L]earning how to deal with what Nagar (2015) calls a 'refusal' from our partners without being paralyzed by it, gave us a chance for mutual recognition and prompted attempts of further translation of meanings across the members of our research group.

– Tommaso Cosentino

INCREMENTAL (UN)LEARNING

Vulnerability during collaborating is accepting that no one or everyone is an expert… While conducting interviews with community residents, we as a team learned what questions to ask, when to ask them, how to best articulate certain expressions, how they then could be best translated, and so on. With every conversation, we were able to add a new rule or define a new word to this language that our dynamic was creating. And every once in a while, our language would be disrupted with a 'ahh, I don't know if that makes sense' or a 'hmmm, how do I say that'. Perramond (2001) describes these moments as being "[in] between-ness of place, an awkward step into [what is] unknown to us" (p. 156). But it was these awkward moments of friction that helped bridge our ways of understanding and our ways of being in collaboration.

– Naomi Samake

BUILT ON LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS TO JUSTICE?

The long-term relationships between Napier residents were essential for the research to be productive. … [M]any Napier residents were sceptical of our motives and how the research might help their current conditions. It was challenging working with an NGO that was relatively new and not yet fully embedded or trusted in the community, and where the participatory process was not fully defined. Nevertheless, Napier residents and leaders were able to connect us with their friends and family. The relationships between leaders like Lele and Prof and PEP led to some buy-in from the community that helped the project move forward. Still, this experience demonstrated how collaboration thrives on long-term parallel commitments and buy-in from all partners, and how this requires years of work. As researchers, I think we can aid this process by being humble, building trusting and caring relationships, and demonstrating our commitment to justice.

– Malana Rogers-Bursen

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- Oldfield, S. (2019) *In Everyday City Housing Struggles: Experiments in Collaborative Research*. In: Ananya Roy and Hillary Malson, Housing Justice in Unequal Cities, Institute on Inequality and Democracy, UCLA, pp 23-28.

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This collaborative approach to research built student learning in the expertise of our Napier research partners, in PEP and its experience in the housing sector. It grounded this book and its research in lived realities in the Settlement, and in Napier, in the challenges that shape urban change in small towns in South Africa and in other deeply divided contexts like ours. It situated the project of learning and the work of research in the complexities and powerful interventions that collaborative work opens up. The first part of the City Research Studio, a core course in the MPhil in Southern Urbanism, this type of collaborative research project gives students an immersive experience, provides context, and lays the foundation for the rest of the urban studies programme. In creative and concrete ways, it humanises the theoretical aspects of our field and provides an inspiration for why a programme like this matters.

This book offers important insights, which we hope will help shape ongoing work by community leaders, the Municipality and PEP on the development and upgrading of the Settlement.

The qualitative research shows the tensions and realities of life in the Napier informal settlement. It shares with nuance and care the ways that residents find incremental ways to navigate hardships and to attempt to secure homes. It explores the settlement's complex housing histories, the varied stories of households and individuals, their strategies for building and extending, repairing and maintaining homes, the hard and often negative realities, as well as the opportunities for home building the settlement offers. It shares residents aspirations for the future, for dignified homes, for stability and permanence. It documents the productive and creative ways gardeners bring the settlement to life. It shares experiences of work, from farm work to entrepreneurs, building businesses against the odds, and the realities of waiting and hoping for work, the predicament many youth face persistently. The research makes sense of the infrastructure of toilets and taps, a crucial service in the settlement. It tracks the ways in which residents navigate access to toilets, the precarious ways in which these systems work, for some around networks of neighbours and for others the limits of access to collectively used toilets and the hardship of the bush. It shares the challenging difficulties of waste, its polluting affects, a product of a lack of drainage and broken and leaking taps. These realities shape the settlement's governance, the challenging work that leaders take on, the resonances and disjuncture with municipal perspectives on these critical issues.

The research provides a lens on this particular settlement and its stories, its context in Napier. In this work, it offers a perspective on the tensions of informality and the possibilities for creative solutions and innovations in governance in small town contexts like it in Cape Agulhas and elsewhere across the Western Cape.

Concluding Perspectives from Our Partners Settlement Leader's Perspectives on Why this Research Matters

Lele Kakana and Lindile (Prof) Mhlaba

When asked about the experience of being a research on the research project, Lele Kakana and Lindile Mhlaba, leaders on the project and in the Settlement, felt very positive. Lele explained, I don't want to lie. I never thought I had the potential of doing such job as coordinator or maybe I underestimated myself. But I am glad I was part of the research. I discovered another side of myself I never knew about. For Prof, the research was good, I really enjoyed it, working on the project was a good moment of my life. Highlights of the experience included working with people from overseas, from other countries and parts of South Africa. Prof loved interpretating, translating English for Malawian was great, for instance. For Lele, everything worked, from going around sharing my story, the tour to Agulhas, to Arniston, because it was my first time going to Agulhas. And, the closing ceremony, everything was perfect, good and exciting. Prof explained, WOW! It means a lot. It gave me the best memory ever since I came to Napier. Since I came to Napier I have never before been a researcher. It's not easy to forget these kinds of memories. Lele agreed, adding To me it means a lot because I think we were so lucky enough to have the students in our informal settlement. It makes us important as the first settlement in Agulhas to be part of a research project.

When asked about this book and its most important messages, Lele Kakana and Lindile (Prof) Mhlaba commented: the book is very important because it carries the good and the bad stories about iKasi [settlement] life, the poor conditions we are living under, how we are helping each other and how we help ourselves. The book is important because now we understand what each individual is going through. It is really telling the truth.

Because I've been living here most of my life, I understand the struggles here, Lele reflected. But, as a leader, the book helps me understand better the struggles that people are facing in their day-to-day lives. It gives me a fuller understanding, which will help me have much stronger relationships towards people so I can help as much as I can.

I also hope we can use the research to make sure that leaders do not try and divide us as they did. They must treat us equally as residents, despite the party politics we have [in the settlement and area]. We must be treated equally. And, the municipality needs to have good communication with the community so their work can be a bit easier. Because if they do that their work, it will be much easier working with the people.

And, we want others – those outside the settlement - to understand the struggle that we are going through in the informal settlement. Life has never been easy. The book shows how bad the situation is. We hope the book and its stories help others [the municipality and others in Napier] understand so they can meet us halfway to help us here and there. If they read it, they will understand. Whatever they're planning to do in the informal settlement, they must include us. We must be part of the planning because it is us who are staying here not them.

The Cape Agulhas Municipality's commitment to upgrading in Napier

Michael Dennis, Manager – Human Settlement, Cape Agulhas Municipality

In an interview, Michael Dennis, the Manager -Human Settlements in the Municipality explained that the Municipality welcomed the Western Cape Human Settlements Department's Informal Settlement Support Programme (ISSP), which has made it possible for the Municipality to work with PEP and the Napier Settlement.

"In terms of Napier, we have welcomed the [ISSP] program since its inception… When the [Western Cape Human Settlements] Department launched the program, we grabbed the opportunity because we have limited funding, [and] they will provide the funding for the upgrade program. They appointed the NGO PEP that has since then done work within our communities. They are working very hard with the locals that they've appointed, and it's much needed information that we need to have, as well as the Department of Human Settlements need to have, in terms of doing our planning and future planning for informal settlements, their erf…, basic services and even housing projects at the end of the day… So we welcome this program very much. We've got the opportunity here to upgrade the residents' lives at all informal settlements in terms of basic services. So we're just waiting for PEP to finish all their groundwork so that we can step it up to the next level where we get our engineers in, sit with the community and look at the plans in terms of infrastructure, how and where. And then also housing, there is the opportunity for Napier to do an in-situ housing project. Province already indicated that they will support it."

He added in further discussion on the way forward for the Napier Settlement:

"You will have qualifying beneficiaries and then you will have non-qualifiers. That is unfortunate. But the majority of residents in Napier will most probably qualify for a housing opportunity. What we foresee, what we can do for non-qualifiers is either create a social housing opportunity where people can maybe rent a room, maybe build a hostel type of thing with a communal kitchen where people can rent a room. That's the one idea that we are looking at. And then the other idea is making available a serviced site where people have their services on the plot. You can erect your structure and then you pay your services to the municipality. That would be for the non-qualifiers. And then obviously the qualifiers will then in terms of policy be able to get a formal structure."

This future planning process will be work that PEP undertakes with the Settlement, the Western Cape Department of Housing and the Human Settlements section in the Municipality.

PEP's Perspective on Ways Forward

Noah Schermbrucker, Project Manager – People's Environmental Planning (PEP)

PEP plans to use the outcomes of the research, what has been shared in this book, to add substantive contextual detail into the forthcoming Napier project Milestones, the community driven planning for an incremental in-situ upgrade.

Incremental upgrading is a complex, difficult, and long-term process with many moving technical and social components. So, what does this collaborative research contribute?

It produces a set of detailed qualitative themes that can challenge, augment, or change existing upgrading plans. For example, having a deep picture of housing histories will allow the PEP team to better understand the community dynamic. For example, housing histories may elucidate divisions within the community between competing groups from different backgrounds or deepen our picture of how family units are comprised inputting into housing typology selection and design. Armed with their own housing histories the Napier community can challenge the municipality for a more rapid roll-out of an upgrading plan. A clear story of a 25 year struggle for housing can be a powerful political tool in the hands of a community to organise for more immediate action when a municipality drags its feet. Another example of how the themes explored can contribute to future upgrading is the work done around gardens. Given the high rates of unemployment in the area PEP has been very keen to explore opportunities for the community to generate extra income as part of their long-term upgrading process. The research demonstrates an existing interest and expertise in gardening, work can be done with PEP to explore how these initiatives could be built on and turned into income generating ventures. It also means that a future upgrading plan could include space for community food gardens managed by those identified through this research.

The themes explored by the studio around toilet use and access have a direct bearing on upgrading plans – both in the short and long term. Using the information collected PEP may be able to advise the municipality on tweaks to maintain and manage toilets. Or even suggest establishing a local sanitation committee within the community to monitor toilet functionality and cleanliness. Given the COVID 19 outbreak this is especially important. In the longer term this type of information will provide the basis for exploring possible alternative sanitation models. What students may not know is that sanitation provision in South Africa has not, with any great success, explored more communal toilet block models such as those so successful in India. If PEP is ever to introduce alternative communal sanitation models -which may well be part of in-situ upgrading the information collected by the studio around toilet usage and practices will be invaluable. The same can be said for waste and drainage with PEP already working with other communities in CAM to establish solid waste management plans. The patterns of usage captured by the research hence contribute greatly to building people centred plans to manage services as part of an in-situ upgrade.

An understanding of the leadership structures and dynamics in Napier, as explored as a theme in the booklet, will also assist PEP in working with the community and mitigating conflicts. An important issue in CAM, and the settlement, is understanding the dynamics between South African citizen's and foreign nationals and how foreign nationals with and without documents can fit into the upgrading process. The research on the ways shop owners organise is new information to PEP and as we, and the municipality, grapple with how to include foreign nationals in upgrading plans we can certainly consult this committee. Without the research PEP would not have been aware of this important structure.

We hope participation in the research and the material in the book gives community members the confidence to negotiate with the municipality. As a collaborative process the research has included community members, exposing them to wider conversations and ideas from academic institutions.

One of PEP's key principles is building processes and structures of deep community participation, a commitment the project research methodology embraced.

These principles and experiences we hope can be applied to the forthcoming collective upgrading process. We hope too that this book can help draw in the Western Cape Department of Housing and make them aware of the work being done in Napier. Garnering their support for the research project, and by proxy the community, means that down the line when an alternative upgrading plan is developed the chances of their support is higher – especially if the plan contains upgrading and housing ideas that fall outside normative models. We hope the book and its research helps bring this important stakeholder closer to the the coalface of projects, a positive way to encourage their support for Napier's upgrading.

Finally, the partnership with ACC is valuable to PEP as it allows us to introduce new skills and energy to support communities. PEP's documentation capacity is limited, and the publications produced through this partnership are of great assistance to us in documenting our work and simultaneously, making public the personal stories of the residents of these informal settlements and the incredible work been done by them. This meets an important internal goal for PEP and allows us to share our work with others.

For PEP it is hence clear that the studio, while not defining the upgrading process to follow, will certainly feed key components and ideas into it. Informal settlement upgrading is difficult, messy, and complex, an intricate dance of multiple actors. The evidence of this is in the fact that it has rarely been successfully achieved. The collaborative research helps PEP and the community pull together some of the parts needed to achieve an upgrade but is not the driving factor in the upgrade. Patience and commitment to a long-term upgrading process can bear dividends and produce a far more holistic and spatially inclusive upgrade for Napier. The research project is an important steppingstone in this journey.

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