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Introduction

This project aimed to explore the social, economic and political changes which have occurred over the last fifteen years in several areas in Cape Town, including Eastridge. To do this, interviews were conducted over a three week period. The researchers were supplied with some initial contacts in the area by the research coordinator, and from there the snowballing technique was used to acquire more informants. The people interviewed by the researchers represented a diverse spectrum of interests and roles within the community. For Eastridge, the following informants provided the information on the area: a representative of a local school; previous and current ward councillors, a local general practitioner; a representative of the Mitchell's Plain Urban Renewal Program (URP); a member of the Mitchell's Plain Concerned Hawkers and Traders Association; representatives of the Eastridge Community Centre; activists in the Eastridge anti-eviction Campaign; a worker at the National Institute of Crime Prevention (NICRO); a housing activist from the Cape Town Community Housing Company (CTCHC) village; and a real estate agent operating in the Eastridge area. This document is organised into three sections: first, a brief description of the area is given, through information from the informants as well as from the researchers' perceptions from their time spent in the area. Second, an analysis of the key issues in Eastridge is explored. This is organised into two parts; the first looks at the key themes which emerged in the interviews with the key informants, while the second part looks at the themes covered in the literature regarding the area. The third section is a photograph album of the area which the researchers took during their time spent in Eastridge. While this document is by no means supposed to represent all the issues that Eastridge faces, nor the many opinions present in the neighbourhood, the key informants show a diverse spectrum of interests and roles within the community, and thus provided useful insight into the key issues in Eastridge.

Section 1: Description of the Eastridge neighbourhood

Eastridge is situated approximately 25 km south-east of the Cape Town CBD, and is one of 13 areas which make up the larger area of Mitchell's Plain. Eastridge is surrounded by the suburbs of Tafelsig to the South, Beacon Valley to the North, Mitchell's Plain Town Centre to the West and Khayalitsha to the East. To the Southern extent of the larger area lies the coastal belt of False Bay. Eastridge is divided by a large arterial – A. Z. Berman, to East, referred to by one woman when asking for directions as 'Old Eastridge', and 'New Eastridge'. Hence the social, economic and political lives of residents extend beyond the immediate vicinity of Eastridge, tapping into broader processes and livelihoods.

As you enter Eastridge you see informal traders selling fruit and vegetables, potatoes, brooms, clothes and food along the pavements. Numerous roads connect Eastridge to the business and shopping hub located in the nearby Town Centre – a ten minute walk from the centre of Eastridge. This is also where the police department and day hospital serving the entire Mitchell's Plain area are located. However, it is questionable whether the benefits of nearby economic growth have trickled down to the residents of Eastridge.

The Mitchell's Plain Town Centre holds a bustling ambiance. It is the locale of the larger area's main transport centre – with a taxi rank, bus terminal, as well as a train station. Walking into the Town Centre, informal traders sell spices, fruit and clothing outside the mall. City Council offices

are located in the new development of the Urban Renewal Programme, and a covering due for the formalization of the informal traders currently stands vacant, waiting for the City to move the traders into their designated areas.

Next to the Town Centre is the Liberty Promenade, which was built through the Urban Renewal Program seven years ago. When walking through the mall two considerations were evident. The first was the presence of national and international brands – Bata Shoes Store, Foschini, Truworths, Pick 'n Pay Supermarket and all the national banks of South Africa. Although the mall offered some economic opportunities to shop assistants and till clerks, it was clear that the main profit was being sent into the pocket of the companies which do not have an investment in the local community. The second factor noted was the large number of black people utilizing the facilities and working in the mall. The development of the mall has thus resulted and will continue to promote racial integration in Eastridge.

The suburb itself has a number of landmarks worth mentioning. Turning left off A.Z. Berman Road into 'Old' Eastridge one immediately notices the well-tended garden in the shape of an AIDS ribbon in front of a school. Around the back of the school there is a vegetable garden run by an NGO. Across the road from the school are the NICRO offices which serve the entire Mitchell's Plain area. A small church is also located nearby (this is one of numerous churches which we noticed in the area).

Following the road into Eastridge one passes a high school on the left and vacant fields on the right. A local school representative (27 May 2009) told us that the vacant fields on the right had been developed by local government as sports facilities. However this had fallen through as rival gangs fought on the fields and they were therefore unsafe and much of the infrastructure has been stolen.

Turning right just past the fields in Don Carlo's Street, one now enters the more residential part of Eastridge. On the left, doctor's offices are clearly visible. Nearby the community centre can be found. The centre has volleyball classes, dance lessons, activities for the elderly and even runs a soup kitchen once a week. As we entered a number of children were playing "kerrim" (a game similar to pool). The centre was well run and maintained and definitely provided much needed activities for the youth in the area.

The housing situation in Eastridge is similar to that in many poorer areas of Cape Town. There are many people living in backyard dwellings. This is due to massive overcrowding, unemployment and the younger generation's inability to afford housing. They thus have little choice but to erect makeshift homes in their relatives' yards. The houses themselves are not RDP housing but older Council stock which was used to house many coloured people who were evicted under the Group Areas Act from places such as District Six and Harfield Village.

The CTCHC in collaboration with the City of Cape Town completed a subsidy scheme in the Western region of New Eastridge, south of the Town Centre. This area seems to have more foot traffic due to the close-by facilities. The subsidised houses are built very close to one another and so there is little place to play for the children. When driving through the scheme, we saw young teens playing soccer in the streets. On the other side of A.Z. Berman – in Old Eastridge, Council box-shaped houses border the streets, painted purple, green and yellow. This side of Eastridge has more parks and open fields for the children to play, and around lunchtime daily,

children – both coloured and black Africans - fill the streets waiting for their buses to arrive to take them back to the neighbouring areas of Nyanga, Khayelitsha and Gugulethu.

Economic opportunities in Eastridge itself seem to be very limited. There seem to be very few small businesses in the area itself. As previously stated the nearest economic centre is the mall in Town Centre. However, most people told us that this didn't provide many jobs to people as competition for jobs was high and came from the entire Mitchell's Plain area. The lack of economic opportunities is also evident in the number of people walking in the streets during the daytime. We noticed many house shops and roadside vendors (mainly selling fruit and vegetables) in the area. This is clear evidence of a sizeable informal economy. This also points to the fact that although there has been economic investment in the nearby areas this has not necessarily "trickled down" to Eastridge.

Section 2, part 1: Main Themes Emerging from Interviews Conducted in Eastridge

Economic Issues and Changes

As with many areas in the Cape Flats, Eastridge has a high level of unemployment. All those to whom we spoke raised this as a serious concern. A URP official (10 June 2009), among other residents, spoke about underemployment and lack of skills being a problem in the area.

Although there has been major economic development in the form of the Promenade shopping mall which was built 7 years ago, it seems as if this has not created many jobs for the people of Eastridge. Many people stated that unemployment has increased over the last decade. All those to whom we chatted were quick to point out the linkage between unemployment and an increase in drug abuse and gangsterism. One interviewee stated "More people are scratching in dirt bins than they did fifteen years ago. It's sad you know."

Some respondents also felt that black people, many of whom worked in the Promenade mall, had taken all the jobs which had not gone to local residents but people living in other areas. This insinuated discrimination according to race- as the local residents are mostly coloured. However, they did not know of any racial violence that had occurred because of this.

A large informal economy operates within the Eastridge area. That is many people have house shops and salons on their properties, rent out their garages or sell fruit and vegetables in the Town Centre or at the traffic lights. A representative of one of the informal traders' associations to whom we chatted (5 June 2009) came from Eastridge, as did many other traders. There are almost no formal businesses in the Eastridge area, apart from doctor's rooms for example; these are all found in the nearby Town Centre and Promenade.

Another economic development was the formalisation of the informal traders. They were being moved to a massive, roofed market near the taxi and bus terminus where they would each receive a stall. There had been some resistance to this move by factions within the organisation. Many of the informal traders were foreign nationals (Somalians, Nigerians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Congolese). We were informed that there had never been any tension or violence between local and foreign traders and they all co-operated together. However, on the

other hand, some informants suggested that the foreign nationals were taking job opportunities away from the local coloured community, which once again referred to differential access to economic opportunity based on race/nationality.

Both the ward councillor (8 June 2009) and the URP official (10 June 2009) believed that the economic changes over the last decade had created jobs for the people of Mitchell's Plain. These economic interventions not only included the Promenade Mall, but also the construction of a taxi and bus terminus. We were also informed of various housing projects which were underway in the area. It is debatable whether these jobs "trickled down" to the Eastridge community as many people said that unemployment had got progressively worse. This issue is undoubtedly further exacerbated by a lack of skills and education in the area.

Housing Issues and Changes

As with many areas in Mitchell's Plain the housing situation in Eastridge is characterised by people living in backyard dwellings. Every single person we spoke to was aware of this issue. A local real estate agent (8 June 2009) told us that "...sometimes there are three generations living on one plot." The situation was due to the fact that children cannot afford to move out and end up erecting a structure in their parents' or relatives' backyard when they start a family of their own. There is hence a serious overcrowding issue in Eastridge. This is not only socially difficult, but puts pressure upon services and infrastructure in the area. A school representative (27 May 2009) explained that this living situation was especially difficult on teenagers as "...they had no space of their own."

An estate agent who has operated within Eastridge for many years, explained that houses cost up to R250 000 in the area (8 June 2009). If one considers that many people are unemployed this price is simply unaffordable. She explained that when people first moved in 35 years ago, they had been given City Council houses "for almost nothing." However, property prices had since increased exponentially and people could hence not afford to move into their own homes. She also explained that many people in the area could not afford to keep their houses and were selling in order to gain a disposable income. They would then move into their own or a relatives' backyard. Furthermore there had been 40-50 bank repossessed houses in Eastridge over the last 6 months. The estate agent (8 June 2009) also pointed out that many people moving into Eastridge were "downscaling" as they could no longer afford the monthly bond payments on their houses. She had also stated that she had sold around 6 homes to black people who came from places like Khayelitsha. She had not noticed any tensions between them and residents.

Another aspect of the housing issues which will undoubtedly impact Eastridge is the planned housing developments. The URP representative (10 June 2009), amongst others, explained that there were plans to build 2000 houses in Eastridge and neighbouring areas, such as Tafelsig. Over 500 of these homes were to be situated in Eastridge. Developments have already begun, however, one respondent suggested that it takes many years to complete these projects. Therefore slow delivery is an issue connected to housing.

Whether these houses would go to people from Eastridge is debatable. It would depend if they were on the provincial waiting list. However it is plausible that these houses would bring in outsiders from other areas many of whom may be black. This would undoubtedly change the racial composition of the areas surrounding Eastridge some of which were already quite mixed.

Services and Infrastructure

In terms of basic services (water, electricity, sanitation) Eastridge seemed to be relatively well-provided for. A number of problems were brought up during the interviews and warrant mention. Due to overcrowding, sewerage systems were under pressure. There were also some people who had not paid their water bills were placed on the “drip” system (restricted access). On the whole people were satisfied with the levels of primary services provided.

There were numerous complaints about secondary services such as hospitals, schools, and the police and sports facilities. Many people spoke of long waiting times at the hospital and the lack of a day clinic in the area. A local school representative (27 May 2009) told us that his school was severely overcrowded and that there were simply not enough schools in the area to cater for all the children. A number of informants also told us that the police were poorly trained and corrupt.

There was a general sense that things had improved but there was still much work to be done in the area. Another aspect highlighted by a representative of the community centre (26 May 2009) was the lack of facilities for the youth. There were no activities for the youth in the area and many turned to gangsterism and drugs. A soccer field had been built by Council, but was in a state of disrepair because gangsters used to fight on it and steal the equipment. All those interviewed stated that drugs (especially methamphetamine, or *tik*) was one of the biggest problems in the area. They felt that not enough was being done by the police and local government to combat this problem.

The ward councillor (8 June 2009) was aware of many of the service issues in the area. He said that there had been concerns over water but it was actually provided free of charge. The current and previous ward councillors explained that the City of Cape Town recently developed the Water Management Device which is an alternative to the drip system which many respondents unsatisfactorily referred to. According to the officials, the Water Management Device can be installed free of charge, and water becomes a limited free commodity of 10kl per day. “People believe they have to buy water. But a user platform goes out and trains people about the real facts of the device.” (Current ward councillor, 8 June 2009). Issues around service delivery and access are clearly hindered by constraints in communication with community members and local authorities. A URP official (10 June 2009), who deals more with the whole of Mitchell’s Plain than Eastridge, said that facilities and services were satisfactory in the area.

Racial Composition and Integration

Note: There were extremely mixed views about the racial composition of Eastridge. Most respondents stated that the area was predominantly coloured and had always been so. However, a number of people said that there were quite a few black people living in the area that had moved in over the last few years. Our general sense was that those living in Eastridge were predominantly coloured but that there was substantial racial mixing in the Town Centre and Promenade shopping malls. This was also perhaps occurring to a smaller degree in Eastridge.

The representative of the community centre (26 May 2009) believed the area to be a 70-30 ratio (coloured-black), while a local general practitioner (29 May 2009) thought it was 90-10 ratio

(coloured-black). A locally operating estate agent (8 June 2009) believed it to be 65-35 ratio (coloured-black). Having spent such a brief time in the area it is difficult for us to accurately state what the racial composition of the area is. We must wait for the next census to find out.

A URP official (10 June 2009) stated that when he first started working in the area it was 99% coloured. Now in areas such as Tafelsig (bordering Eastridge) there is a 50-50 (coloured-black) racial split. He also mentioned other areas, such as Mandalay and Westridge, where there has been racial mixing. He believed that infrastructure upgrade (transport) had led to the area being easily accessible and people came from surrounding predominantly black townships to work and shop there. This was further fuelled by the construction of the Promenade shopping mall around 7 years ago, which attracted shoppers and work seekers. He also stated that housing developments in the Mitchell's Plain area had "...brought people in..." from the surrounding townships.

Some interviewees spoke about there being a few foreign nationals in Eastridge, mainly Somali shopkeepers. One respondent stated that they "sold drugs to children" and didn't care about the community. Despite a number of comments in a similar vein, everybody stated that there had been no racially motivated attacks in Eastridge, and Mitchell's Plain as a whole, with specific reference to the xenophobic attacks of May 2008. The representative of the Concerned Traders' and Hawkers' Association (5 June 2009), stated that many of the traders were foreign nationals and there had never been any tension. Some of them were also part of her committee. She described further that coloured people rented out their stalls to foreign nationals. A local school representative (27 May 2009) also told us that around 209 children in his school were black. Although they did not live in the area they were bussed in from other townships. The URP representative (10 June 2009) told us that this was happening in many schools across the Mitchell's Plain area. The school representative (27 May 2009) said that there had never been any racial tensions between pupils or parents. Driving through the area we also noticed that many of the children in schools were black. A housing activist (8 June 2009) told us that things were better under apartheid because at least white people knew how to run the government. She, like many, felt that black people had "stolen" jobs from the local population. It is important to note that throughout many of the interviews there were racist undercurrents, as mentioned above, mainly revolving around black people and foreigners taking jobs which were "meant" for local people. Most people differentiated between black people who they knew and black "outsiders" who "stole" jobs. It is thus probable that people constructed two classes of the "other", those known to the informant, who are considered safe (faced the same problems who were understandable and approachable) and the "unknown". We would argue that this attitude was more about fear of the "other" than about race. Race was perhaps the vernacular with which it was expressed, but it could also have been nationality or class depending on the context.

Engagement with Government (Community's Perspectives)

Many of those interviewed in Eastridge did not feel that local government was doing enough to address concerns in the area. The representative of the Community Centre, who worked on the behalf of the City of Cape Town, felt that herself and her colleagues were excluded in the decision-making process. She felt that those at higher levels didn't listen to their concerns. There were similar sentiments from other residents too; a local housing activist noted that she

did not trust the commitments of local authorities. She stated “they have a forked tongue...that means they say one thing and do another.”

On the other hand, a school representative (27 May 2009) believed that things had improved for his school. One of the major changes since 1994 was that the school had been well managed and received substantial funding from the Department of Education – around R1.2 million a year. He felt that people in local government were accessible and listened to him when he spoke. However, one of his major concerns was that there were not enough “safety nets” for the youth and this led to drug abuse and gangsterism. He believed that the community had to meet the government halfway and couldn’t just expect to have everything handed to them.

Engagement with Community

The ward councillor (8 June 2009) believed that he was doing what he could for the area. His wife, who had been ward councillor for two terms prior to his election, told us how people always had come to their house for advice. The ward councillor (8 June 2009) engaged with the community through meetings which he expected the community to arrange. When this was in place, he would then organize a hall for them to meet at. Therefore, he saw the responsibility of community-councillor engagement to lie in the hands of both parties. He explained that he had to deal with issues well beyond his mandate as a councillor and it was difficult to cope. The URP representative (10 June 2009) also felt that the community was involved in the URP and that they were consulted in the decision making process.

Political Issues and Mobilisation

Finally, most people to whom we chatted told us that there was not much political activity in the area. It mostly occurred during election times when all the parties were canvassing for votes. Otherwise things were relatively quiet in terms of meetings, rallies and mobilisation. The area is governed by the Democratic Alliance. It was clear that political affiliation was based on racial discrimination. The ruling class – the African National Congress (ANC), is labelled as the black party. Some respondents, such as a local estate agent (8 June 2009), stated that the community would not even allow the ANC or the president of the country and party, Mr Jacob Zuma, into the area.

One notable exception regarding political activity was housing mobilization. Both housing activists spoken to (17 June 2009 and 27 May 2009) had helped in protests against the Cape Town Community Housing Company. Not only did they have to pay more than the agreed monthly rent, but the homes which they received from the company had been of extremely poor quality (well below national standards). They had taken the company and government to task, organising protests and rent boycotts in order to draw attention to their plight. They had also linked up with the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign in this struggle.

Section 2, part 2: Overview of Literature available about Eastridge

Background

Mitchell's Plain is located approximately 25 kms south-east of the CBD of Cape Town. It is also bounded by the Philippi horticultural area to its west. Eastridge is one of 13 areas within Mitchell's Plain. It is predominantly a coloured community, and is separated by the predominantly black community of Khayelitsha by the waste site to the east. The southern extent of Mitchell's Plain is bound by a green coastal belt separating the area from the False Bay coastline (City of Cape Town Department of Economic and Human Development , 2008).

Mitchell's Plain is the home to 283, 187 people, while Eastridge alone has a population of 22, 124 (University of Stellenbosch and Transformation Africa, 2003). The area was planned under the apartheid regime. It was conceived of largely in the 1970s, as a coloured group area accommodating many people from the forcibly removed places, such as District Six. (Ibid)

Demographic profile

The demographic information discussed in this literature review has been collected from the 1996 and 2001 Census. In addition, information was drawn from a reports compiled by the City of Cape Town Department of Economic and Human Development in 2005/2006 and 2008 as well as research done by the University of Stellenbosch Department of Theology and Transformation Africa. Some of the statistics drawn for these reports were classified according to municipal wards. Eastridge falls under Ward 79, along with Beacon Valley, Khayelitsha, Portlands, Mitchell's Plain Town Centre, as well as Bongani. Due to this nature of the categorization of the statistics available, the demographic picture painted refers to a slightly larger area beyond the boundaries of Eastridge.

The racial composition of the area, according to the 2001 Census, consists of 96 % of the coloured population. Of the remaining 4 per cent, 3.6% was identified to be black African. The black population group as a percentage of the total population in Mitchell's Plain had a 5.6 % growth from 3.% to 9.5% between 1996- 2001 (Transformation Africa and University of Stellenbosch, 2003). The Indian and Asian community made up 0.4% of the population, while the composition of white people was 0.13 %. This information paint quite a different picture to that which was described by respondents, what was seen in the Town Centre – the economic hub located on the border of Eastridge, and when we were walking through the streets of the area. The eight years which have passed since the publication of the paper has shown a major influx of black Africans, as well as foreign nationals, whom the Census did not include as a 'racial' category in its data collection. In addition, with regards to religious affiliation, 70.1% of people living in Eastridge are Christian. Eastridge holds 30 churches. The majority of the community is coloured and Afrikaans/English speaking (Transformation Africa and University of Stellenbosch, 2003).

The largest section of the population fall between the ages of 18- 34, constituting approximately 30 % of the population, while the persons over the age of 65 years only make up a mere 3 % of the community (Census 2001). The high rate of unemployment in the area has led to inactive youth getting involved in gang activity and substance abuse, both which have led to increased

violence and high risk behaviour of sexual and other natures. Perhaps these factors, coupled with the everyday realities of living in poverty and limited access to adequate health care, may influence the drop in numbers in those in the age categories above the bracket of 18 to 34 years.

The Census 2001 further identified in terms of education that over half of those people living in the area leave school when they are in Grade 8 to 11 (around the ages of 14 – 17 years). This was also evident in our discussions with community members. People may leave school in order to assist in bringing in income into a home of a single mother, or to perhaps look after a parent who is not well. Data suggested that a minority of 17.5 % of the community received a school-leaving certificate. It is apparent that the realities of poverty and leaving school early influence work opportunities in the future and reinforce the cycle of poverty of those living in this marginalized community.

In-migration is a phenomenon which has hit the Western Cape since the Abolition of the Group Areas Act of 1989. Many people from the previous branded 'homelands' in the Eastern region of the country have moved to the Cape Town Metropolitan Area in search for economic opportunities. Most of the people whom arrive are black African. However, the broader coloured area of Mitchell's Plain, has not experienced the same kind of influx of people, which say the neighbouring Khayelitsha has. In contrast, the Census identified that 89 % of people who moved into the area were from within the Western Cape, followed by 3 % of people coming from the Eastern Cape. In-migration has led to approximately 80 000 people arriving into the city annually, and as a result has created increased demand on housing and services – core issues around which people mobilize and contest.

The percentage of unemployed people in Eastridge ranges between 16, 68% - 29, 34 % (University of Stellenbosch and Transformation Africa, 2003). An unemployed person, according to the Census 2001 is a person between the ages of 15 and 65 who cannot find work and has taken active steps to find employment. However, the way in which employment is classified – both in the Transformation Africa report, as well as that public by the City of Cape Town's Department of Economic and Human Development - does not explain what is considered as employment. Employment as classified in these cases may refer to temporary work, casual labour or work in the informal economy – all of which do not offer economic stability and protection.

Notably, the unemployment rate in Mitchell's Plain is noted to be on the rise. Between 1996-2001, the unemployment rate grew in the entire Mitchell's Plain area from 11, 6 % - 17 %. Research by the University of Stellenbosch and Transformation Africa indicated that Eastridge has an average household income of R42 321 –R52, 522 per annum, while Census data suggests the annual household income ranges between R19 201 – R76 800 per annum of 56 % of the population.

Approximately 40 % of the population live in a house or brick structure on a separate stand. Some of these homes are those which were received by the Council during apartheid by the generation above the respondents to whom we spoke. Just under half of the community lives in a town house or semi-detached home. Despite this apparent wealth of secure housing, overcrowding is commonplace in most homes, and homes may have more than one family living in the house. Furthermore, over half of those who do live in a home on a separate stand are

paying off their homes. Those who are unable to afford the monthly instalments for their homes are in arrears. In response the City Council may cut the home-owner's water and electricity supply.

The Census also identified that around 6.5 % of the population live in backyard dwellings, where residents will rent out the property at the back of their home, and/or request payment for water and electricity in order for a family to live there. Although this informality exists in the area, people erect free standing informal shelters, which is commonplace in other areas of the city. When asking why this is the case, respondents suggested that it is a coloured cultural perception of dignity, respect and privacy which hinder people from erecting informal shelters in public.

In terms of service delivery, almost everyone in Eastridge and the surrounding areas of Ward 79 have access to electricity (99,6 %), water (97%) and flush toilets (97%). However, in recent years Council has water and electricity have become commodities. Although people have access to these services in their homes, they are unable to pay for these services (with a minimum basis free) and are cut off by the Council. Refuse is removed in a black bin by the council on a weekly basis for almost all the residents of Eastridge. According to the service profile of the 2005/06 Economic and Human Development report, the area has three schools, one library, 4 taxi terminals (the CBD bus and taxi terminals have recently been established by the Urban Renewal Programme), 1 railway station, 1 bus station and 1 clinic.

The study by Transformation Africa and University of Stellenbosch found that the number of liquor outlets in Eastridge (29) is one of the three highest areas in Mitchell's Plain. Most of these outlets are shebeens, where people sell liquor without licenses from their homes as a means to bring in either primary or supplementary income. The research also found that Eastridge has 16 locations from where drugs are sold illegally. It is one of the top three locations for drug merchants in Mitchells Plain. These two statistics indicate that Eastridge has a high incidence of substance (drug and alcohol) abuse in comparison to the rest of Mitchell's Plain.

Central social development needs

In 2003 Transformation Africa and the Unit for Religion and Development Research in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Stellenbosch collaborated in a project addressing the major social development needs of local communities and establish the potential impact of faith-based organizations on the community. The scope of the research covered the Cape Town Peninsula, consisting of 20 units of approximately 150, 000. Mitchell's Plain comprised two of these units. We collected this report from one of the interviewees.

The report identified four main issues which respondents of the area identified. At the root of these issues is poverty. The first issue related to criminal activity, gangsterism and security. Gangsterism is associated with high rates of unemployment, and boredom as a result. The second issue related to crime is substance abuse. Interviewees identified the need for public and indoor sports facilities to provide activities for the youth. Parents want recreation facilities where their children are not confronted by the threats of crime, gangs and drugs. The police are not quick to respond to calls regarding crime, and people do not trust the police - they are viewed as corrupt, poorly trained and illiterate. The community has mobilized in order to tackle

crime which they the police do not sufficiently do. Neighbourhood Watches voluntarily patrol the streets in order to tackle these issues.

The third issue considers the insufficient public medical care for people in Eastridge. Respondents remarked that the local day hospital has very long waiting periods and people are unable to pay for the medical care. Fourthly, there are high rates of unemployment, and many people remarked there is not enough money to buy food. An interesting remark by one respondent shows how people associated employment opportunity with race: "People don't get work. The black people get work easier than what we do. We have been promised work but haven't heard anything again. Coloureds are discriminated against – black people are favoured."

Political dynamics

In the recent Cape by-elections, the Democratic Alliance (DA) won the almost outright support of the coloured population of Mitchell's Plain (Creamer Media, 2009). From the literature and discussion in interviews it seems that political affiliation is closely related to racial categorization. Voters remarked they voted for the Democratic Alliance as "they were tough on drugs and delivered services" (Creamer Media, 2009: 1). The South African Broadcasting Corporation (2008) also noted the strong presence of the Cape Town mayor and the DA leader, Helen Zille, had a strong presence in the area of Eastridge and neighbouring Beacon Valley.

Other parties competing for control in the by-elections included the African National Congress, Congress of the People, Independent Democrats and the African Bond of Unity. The current ward councillor (8 June 2009), to whom we spoke, is the ward councillor for ward 79, including Eastridge, Portland and Beacon Valley. He was previously an Independent Democrat (ID) councillor, and is now a DA councillor.

In contrast, another voter considered how poverty and desperation is taken advantage of by the ruling political party of the ward, the DA: "You rely on the fact that us poor bastards have got nowhere else to put our vote." (Creamer Media 2009) A representative of the Concerned Hawkers and Traders Association, (5 June 2009) agrees with the view of the supporter, in a letter published on the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign website in discussing the issues surrounding informal trading in the Town Centre. In this letter, she states: "It's shocking to see what the DA (Democratic Alliance) stands for, empowering the rich rather than the poor [...] We are sick and tired of being cheated. The DA is using our own people to fight against us, and this is dividing our country." (Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, 2009).

Housing struggles as meeting point of community-authority relations

The Cape Town Anti War Coalition, Indymedia, Abahlali baseMondjolo (a national shack-dwellers movement that mobilize around housing and evictions), the Anti-Eviction Campaign, as well as other locally-based social movements have published a series of press releases and articles surrounding the relations between the City of Cape Town and the CTCHC, and residents of the beneficiaries of the homes in a low cost subsidy scheme in Eastridge. The below views are expressed in these papers, and are supported by the interviews with various respondents, including housing activists (17 June 2009 and 27 May 2009). These respondents are two key community members who contest the residents' eviction from their recently received homes.

In 1994, the president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, promised to build one million homes. In 2000, the CTCHC, a private company, was entrusted to make this a reality by becoming a

housing delivery vehicle for the government in a private-public partnership (Anti-Eviction Campaign, 2008). That year, the City of Cape Town in partnership a 50/50 with the Cape Town Community Housing Company, funded by the National Housing Financial Corporation built 2188 houses in nine communities around the Metropole. Eastridge was one of these areas.

Critics of the service delivered remark about lack of consultation of the CTCHC with the beneficiaries of the houses, the major defects in the design of the houses, as well as the conditions under which contractual agreements were made. The houses were built on a wetland area and as a result have developed cracks and the damp shortens the lifespan of the homes. Furthermore, the beneficiaries are receiving eviction notices from the homes due to their inability to pay the monthly instalments. Residents understood that they would pay R150, R250 or R350 per month for a one, two or three bed-roomed house respectively over a period of few years. However, when moving into the homes, the company requested residents to pay R750-R800 per month for their homes. Most of the residents are unable to afford this. (Cape Town Anti-War Coalition, 2006) In 2006, residents from seven out of these nine communities were facing threats of eviction.

The way in which the community has attempted to mobilize around these issues highlights where and how the community and City authorities meet, and illustrate how residents of Eastridge contest the government's policies of privatization around service provision. Meetings were held with previous and current ward councillors and Dan Plato, who was at the time a member of the mayoral committee for housing and with Members of Parliament. However, these meetings "failed to yield any results." (Cape Town Anti War Coalition, 2006: 2)

Residents sought alternative ways of attracting authorities' attention. On the 12th of September 2005 a group of residents in Eastridge erected burning barricades in protest against the "shoddy housing built by the Cape Town Community Housing Company (CTCHC)" and against the eviction of people from their homes by the CTHCC. Then on the 25th of May 2006 residents facing eviction protested outside the office of Dan Plato, the Exco member of Housing. Another instance was a march instigated by the Eastridge Anti-Eviction Campaign, which was held on the 21st August 2007 outside the Cape Town City council offices in the city centre. (Cape Town Anti War Coalition, 2007). A rent boycott for six months also took place in Eastridge. Furthermore, a documentary was filmed of the Eastridge community's experiences with the authorities, screened and won awards at the South Africa Encounter's Film Festival 2008. These actions culminated in attracting the attention of the MEC of housing, Richard Dyanti, as well as the head of national political party, De Lille of the Independent Democrats (Cape Argus, 2008). These relations with the authorities, where the City and CTCHC have since repaired some of the defects in the homes, and to a degree some of the evictions have been halted.

An Example of Local and National Government Developments: The Mitchell's Plain Urban Renewal Programme

In April 2004, the Urban Renewal Programme (URP) of over R80 million was launched at the Mitchell's Plain Town Centre. The project aimed to regenerate Mitchell's Plain by boosting the socio-economic, environmental and infrastructural prospects of the area. Developments included the Mitchell's Plain Northern Terminal Project consisting of a covered taxi terminal to cater for 400 taxis, a cover bus terminal to cater for 20 buses, a new market area to cater for over 800 informal traders, as well as four administration and public facility buildings. It was

developed in order to also benefit the populations of Nyanga, Gugulethu, Khayelitsha and Philippi. (City of Cape Town Communications, 2004) Another aspect of the URP is the development of 1838 housing opportunities in four areas of Mitchell's Plain. Eastridge is one of these areas that are due for the development of 543 houses. (City of Cape Town, 2008)

Work was done in collaboration with the Mitchell's Plain CBD Steering Committee to ensure that the factional facilities would respond to the needs of the community, said Mfeketo- the 2003 Mayor of Cape Town. The committee was said to consist of representatives of the City of Cape Town, traders, retailers, property owners, taxi industry, sub-council, the Mitchell's Plain Development Forum, the SA rail Commuters Corporation and Metrorail. This committee was said to meet on a monthly basis, and in addition an informal traders' task team was set up to guard the needs of the traders. "This project is a shining beacon of urban renewal. It conforms to the major criteria by promoting partnerships and community involvement. It is also multi-sectoral, sustainable and representative. Nearly 50 % of the labour for the entire project comes from the area. This will bring economic growth to Mitchell's Plain and its surrounding areas." (Ms Mfeketo)

According to the City of Cape Town webpage (15 April 2009), the specific objectives of the URP are to:

- Promote local economic development to relieve poverty and unemployment;
- Provide a safe and secure environment by fighting crime;
- Support education, training and skills development;
- Create a quality urban environment where people can live with dignity and pride;
- Develop efficient, integrated and user-friendly transport systems;
- Create job opportunities through the Extended Public Works Programme.

It is interesting to note the disparity in how transparency and consultation throughout in the project as portrayed by the Mayor of Cape Town is remarkably variant to the views perceived in some of our interviews. Interview transcripts highlight that informal traders did not perceive sufficient consultation in the process of the URP. Furthermore, community members of Eastridge consider that the URP has not brought economic opportunities to the residents of Eastridge.

Conclusion

The literature highlights the conditions within which people live and the key issues which are perceived as challenges within the community. It further indicates the kind of projects are that taking place in order to tackle some of these issues – relating to housing, transportation and developing economic opportunities and where authorities and community members meet in these processes.

Section 3: Photograph Album of Eastridge



Cape Town Community Housing company homes



House shop



CTCHC houses



Litter next to the railway tracks leading towards the town centre



Alley ways with small shops in town centre



The overhanging roof of the new traders market (background)



The Police station



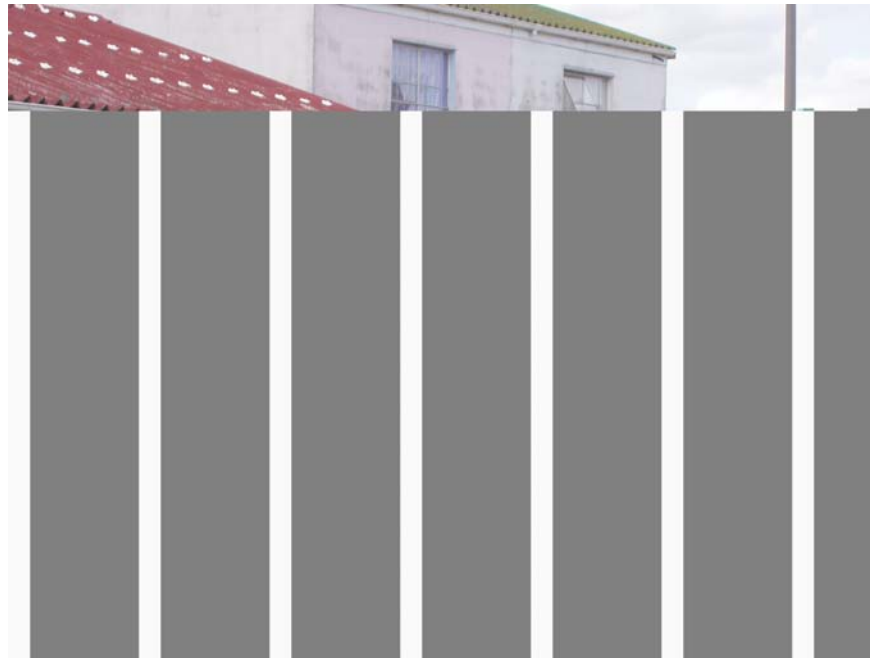
Main entrance to Eastridge (North of main road)



Garden in front of a school



A field behind some of the houses



Murals opposite the Community centre



A playground in the area



One of the many churches in the area



The hospital in town centre



Some informal traders



The Public Library



The Promenade Shopping Mall

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