

AN OVERVIEW OF CROSSMOOR

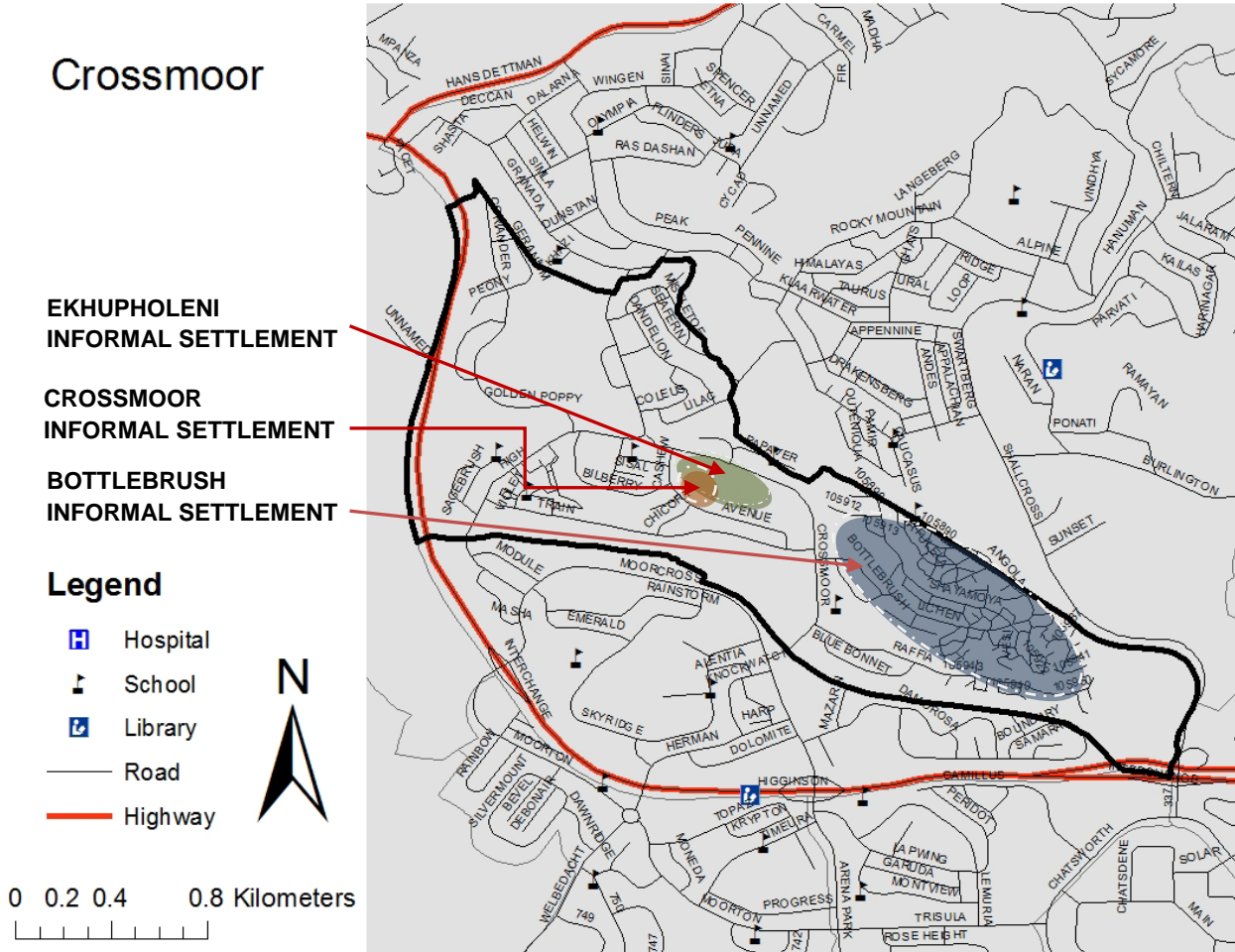


Figure 1: Map of Crossmoor according to Municipal boundary demarcations showing the three predominant informal settlement areas

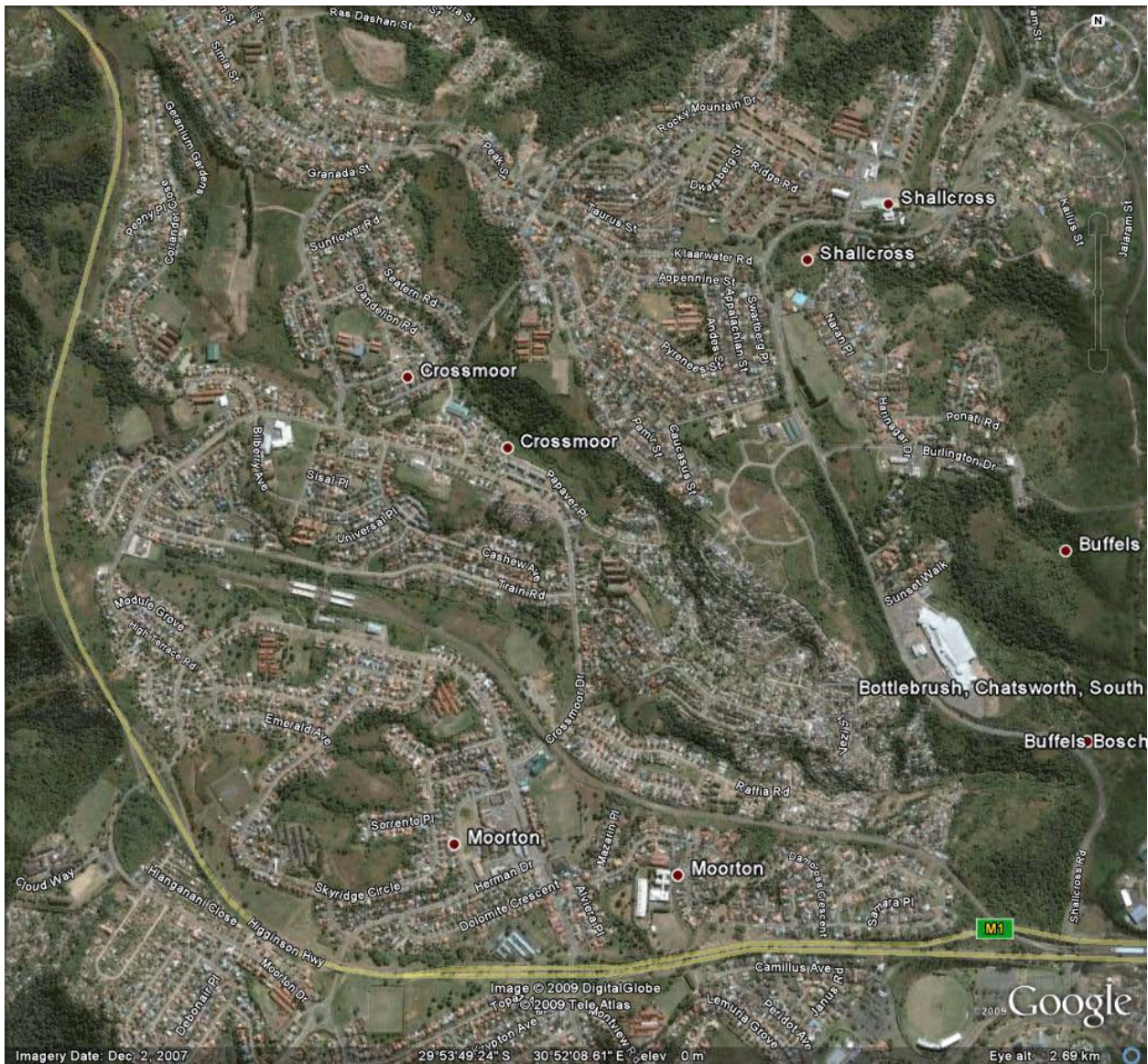


Figure 2: Google Earth image of Crossmoor and surrounding areas within Chatsworth

SOCIO-SPATIAL LEGACY AND DEVELOPMENTS

Chatsworth had historically been segregated as a predominantly Indian area under the 1950s Group Areas Act, characteristic then for its ‘townships’. As the infrastructure was adhoc and of poor standard, there was a desperate need for housing. According to a respondent of Crossmoor, Chatsworth was only developed from the 1970s, with the introduction of housing developments by the former Durban City Council. Within this process, Crossmoor was the last area within Chatsworth to receive these housing opportunities. These developments are partly attributed to the influence of the House of Delegates of the Tri-cameral System that also activated the rollout of other services around 1984 in Crossmoor, as indicative of the Indian community’s active mobilization during apartheid. At the time however, the

Durban City Council had declared that the land where Bottlebrush is now situated was unsuitable for development due to its topographical constraints. However, initially a local Indian resident had reportedly leased out portions of the Bottlebrush land to a few African families. Consequently from the 1980s, this same land was occupied by an ever increasing African population of shack dwellers. There were no control measures over growth at the beginning, partly because the Group Areas Act had prohibited their formalization within the area. Thereafter, some of the areas of Bottlebrush were taken over by the council with compensation given to the Indian owners, in their failed efforts to control the growing African population. The influx of Africans is thus considered a significant event in the history of Crossmoor and Chatsworth, but also because Bottlebrush was the first area within Chatsworth to have an informal settlement. Due to this influx from the 1980s the general population of Crossmoor has not only increased, but almost racially equalized between Indians and Africans.

In the 1980s, Indians and Africans lived side by side albeit with little contact. The presence of Africans was however not a new phenomenon. African migrant laborers had long been present in the segregated Indian areas to work on infrastructure projects. There are reportedly various reasons Africans had moved into the Bottlebrush area of Crossmoor, aside from accessing job opportunities. It is said that some moved for security reasons, to escape the political violence between ANC and IFP areas as Indwede and Umlazi. It was also a viable area to live in due to the availability of public transport as the area is close to rail transport, making it easier to travel to places of work. There is also a river which provides a source of water. Bottlebrush settlement expanded because people had a relative temporarily staying with them while seeking work that eventually established themselves by building their own shack there. Another phenomenon widely practiced has been shack farming, where shacks have been rented out to tenants, which reportedly still continues today as an income generator. This is one of the main reasons why Bottlebrush settlement is said to be densely populated, currently estimated as holding around 1,000 households.



Left: Predominant housing typology in the formal areas, of detached and semi-detached houses as built by the Durban Council from 1970s (Image source: Author, July 2009)



Left: North view of Bottlebrush informal settlement of dwellings built within and against a valley that is part of in-situ upgrading, with formal housing surrounds (image source: Author, July 2009)

Right: North West view of Bottlebrush informal settlement that has not been developed with RDP houses directly opposite Brooklyn Heights Primary School (Source: Author, July 2009)



Moreover, based on rumours that there would be housing developments in Bottlebrush around 1996, there was a greater influx of people through land invasions. More people came into Bottlebrush settlement in significant numbers, from Inanda, Zululand and mostly from Eastern Cape. In addition to this, there also was a demand for housing amongst poorer Indians especially those renting in council flats or homes in the Chatsworth area. Subsequently, they also started building shacks in the Bottlebrush settlement in order to access houses. However, according to one respondent, there had in fact been very few developmental changes in the area since 1994. After 2000, the local government had thought that the Bottlebrush informal settlement

could be relocated to a peripheral housing development. However, this was misconstrued because the people would not move away from their jobs in the Chatsworth area, and with expectations of RDP houses within Bottlebrush. After strong mobilization with support from organizations such as SCARA (Shallcross Civil and Ratepayers Association), they had not only managed to stay on the land but later on, had been one of the first communities to get standpipes and toilets without the city relocating the settlement. Moreover, around 2006 their demands for housing had materialised with the RDP housing development as in-situ upgrading currently underway in Bottlebrush, identified by most as the only major government driven development project to have occurred in the Crossmoor area. However, subsequent to its initial development process, another significant event was the evictions of the tenants or shack renters in 2006, as they could not be accommodated in houses; which were given to the original owners only. Additionally, the RDP housing had been allocated to only Africans. Consequently, in 2007 there were invasions of land between Bottlebrush and Crossmoor Drive which was initiated by the Indians that wanted access to housing, and the displaced Bottlebrush shack dwellers followed suit. It is speculated that around 300 families occupied this Bottlebrush extension during the original occupation.

Although a relatively recent occurrence, this new occupation has also been identified as a unique defining element in the history of Crossmoor, as Indian and African shack dwellers have been more visibly living side by side. The area contains two sections separated by a valley, into the upper and lower section. Originally around 2007, mostly Indian people occupied the lower section of what came to be known as Crossmoor settlement along Cashew Avenue; coming from the surrounding council flats that were living in overcrowded conditions and/or those that could not afford to pay rent in these and other homes. However, the municipality came soon after and demolished their shacks and any structures that protected them from the elements and the people were reportedly lived out in the open for several months. During this time, many of the original Indian shack dwellers were evicted by the municipality or chose to leave, and only a few of them remained. Shortly after, towards the end of 2007, the displaced Africans from Bottlebrush settlement invaded the upper section along Crossmoor Drive in significant numbers, and because they were reportedly more organized and aggressive; they were able to resist forced removals by the municipality. This upper section later came to be known as Ekhupholeni (the place of peace). After the initial destruction of the shacks, there was an interdict brought against the city around 2008 by mostly the Indian shack dwellers and few Africans as facilitated by the LRC (Legal Resource Centre). This was so that their shacks would not be destroyed by the municipality and they would not be forcibly evicted from the area. During this time, there was reportedly 24 hour police and security presence which had escalated with violent confrontations. This state of events had received public outcries from activists and gained media attention. This forceful response by the municipality was based on their claims that it was the city's land that had been allocated for housing. However, as reported by an activist that documented this event, no one from the city has yet produced documented evidence of this.



Left: Crossmoor Settlement along Cashew Avenue showing the mix of shack and tent dwellings (Image source: Author, August 2009)

Right: South view from Crossmoor informal settlement along Cashew Avenue looking into formal housing surrounds (Image source: Author, August 2009)



Moreover, this is said to have reflected the sentiments of the KZN Slums Act which sought to oblige land owners to evict shack dwellers as a strategy to help eliminate slums in the province. Despite opposition, the city returned a number of times to destroy the shacks

and another court appeal ensued. Subsequently however, the city eventually withdrew from the case and built tents for people, but mostly in the lower section which had been subjected to most of the shack destructions. This is how the settlements have grown, as currently it is speculated that there are about 360 households on the upper section with predominantly African residents with a small number of Indians amongst them. However, the site visit confirmed that there is only one Indian couple living in the upper section. While the lower section still has tents and a few shacks that were left standing, with around thirteen Indian families and a couple of Africans living amidst them.



Left: Ekhupholeni informal settlement in foreground with municipal installed tents of Crossmoor informal settlement behind it in the lower section, with formal housing cluster in the distant (Source: Amy Kracker, August 2009).

NATURE OF 'INTEGRATION'

Interestingly, a local police spokesperson mentioned that despite the history of organizations such as African National Congress (ANC), United Democratic Front (UDF) and South African Indian Congress (SAIC) which have always had a history of integration between blacks and Indians, the reality on the ground has been different. This is despite the fact that Chatsworth has had a history of involvement in the political struggle against apartheid with prominent and respected Indian leaders having lived in the area. However most interviewees commented that there has been significant 'mixing' and cooperation between the formal and informal areas with regards to community struggles, they have however remained largely separate. The unique case remains that of the Crossmoor and Ekhupholeni settlement that has both African and Indian shack dwellers living in one space. Therefore there has been some collaboration between the races due to their similar socioeconomic positions in areas of common interest, as access to basic services and housing.

a. Community structures and the effect of crime

Most interviewees reported that the tensions between Indians and Africans have largely been aggravated by perceptions and concerns that Bottlebrush settlement has resulted in an increase in crime. However, it was also suggested that this could be baggage from the past, as there had been historic tensions between Indians and Africans due to the 1949 Inanda riots where some Africans had violently invaded Indian areas. On this, a local police representative argued that racial tensions should not be mistaken for racial intolerance, as there have been no cases of racial violence in Crossmoor.

There had been conflicts between Zulus and Xhosas and the ANC and the IFP members in Bottlebrush settlement. The settlement historically had their own chiefs and civic leaders based on political groupings that would cluster in different areas, however this has reportedly phased out after

1994. Similarly, a resident of Bottlebrush settlement, who has resided there since 1989, mentioned that the lack of racial mixing and tensions including the tribal and political conflicts abated to some degree after 1994; and also as the settlement developed solidarity through community mobilization. The community was also supposedly free of warlords as most people came straight from the farms so they did not know about drugs and crime. The hierarchy was based on whoever was vociferous and these are the people that became leaders. To the extent that whoever called the meetings became the leader, and if the leader did not deliver as expected from the community, they would be kicked out. Since 1994, the police reportedly became aware of these structures and linked into their committees to affect any influence or change. Thus the relationship between the community and the police is based largely on specific contacts with the community. Moreover, to penetrate the 'no-go areas', the police reportedly started establishing regular meetings and awareness campaigns with the Bottlebrush settlement community to enable user-friendly services. In dealing with the high cases of rape in the settlement, the Police reportedly made better impact with door to door awareness campaigns than with large meetings. The police have also assisted other organizations in delivering welfare grants, and where they have created a one-stop advice system that is taken to the community who use this to discuss legal and social matters. The Community Police Forum comprising community, police and other officials as the Ward Councilor has reportedly been effective in terms of networking and generating links with other departments (such as water, grants, etc). They had therefore played a developmental role which has reportedly only recently been forced to focus on crime. Yet a resident of Bottlebrush reported that the policing forum is not functioning, with a need for racial transformation within the predominantly Indian police personnel. Here, it was mentioned by a religious leader that religious organizations were involved in pressuring the SAP to transform its personnel. On this, a police representative informally mentioned that this has been happening as senior and policing positions are assumed by Africans.

A political representative reported that there were a lot of tensions between Indians and Africans due to the escalating crime levels. As there were several murders of Indian shop-owners in the shop adjacent to Bottlebrush, and the issue of drug abuse as 'pills' and 'sugar' prevalent amongst both Indian and African youth. Interestingly, a resident of Bottlebrush settlement mentioned that the underground personal relations between Indian and African criminals as having thrived over the years. On this, a religious leader added that '...the people in Bottlebrush are good, hard working people... (but where) criminal elements infiltrate their good nature...' Thus it is perceived by many people that criminals use Crossmoor and Bottlebrush informal settlements to hide. To mitigate the escalating crime levels, a political representative mentioned that meetings were called to campaign and conscientise the residents and Indian flat dwellers about crime, which eased some of the concerns of the surrounding Indians. Other actions that helped to ease crime concerns later on, was the presence of the mixed racial cohabitation in the Crossmoor, Ekhupholeni and Shallcross informal settlements that were neighborly and peaceful adjacent to Bottlebrush, and the presence of small church groups that preached to the community. These elements reportedly helped to stabilize tensions and led to better acceptance of the shack dwellers in general.

It was said that people in the formal areas often leave due to the escalating crime levels, which some attribute to high levels of unemployment and drug abuse. A police representative was however skeptical that unemployment is the root cause of crime as he perceives that it is a matter of the lack of repercussions as people come away with little or no punishment. He added that the system has ‘... given people the notion that crime pays in this country’. He added that the two different races generally experience different dimensions of crime. Where Indians often experience economic crimes such as breakings and thefts, and Africans experience more violent crimes as rape, murder and assault. Interestingly, a resident of Ekhupholeni mentioned that Indians make themselves more vulnerable as targets of crime because they stay away from Africans in public spaces. This suggests that crime could be better dealt with collaboratively if there is more mixing between the races. In Bottlebrush, it was mentioned that there have always been street committees that took law into their own hands with violent consequences. However, there have been renewed efforts by the leadership to make these committees work with the police, with support from the ANC Branch Executive Committee (BEC). With regards to the Community Policing Forum (CPF), it was mentioned that there is one in the broader Ward 71 under the Chatsworth CPF since 2003 which is held once a month. A respondent added that there is good participation from the community side, and perceived that it has ties with the ANC. However, since 2007 there have been efforts to set up sub-CPFs in Crossmoor to decentralize the CPF to make it more representative of different areas, and people from different political affiliations. In Ekupholeni and Crossmoor settlements, the initially tight policing has been replaced by a permanent security guard on site as observed at site visits. This is to ensure there are no more people that come to live in the settlement. However, a leader in Ekupholeni mentioned the good working relations with the police as they work together to control crime in the area. He also mentioned his intent on developing good relations with the surrounding neighbours and police to enforce an effective community policing system which has yet to be launched in this area.

b. Community support post-1990s

Before the 1990s, there was very little interaction between the surrounding Indian communities and the Africans of Bottlebrush settlement. This is because of some Indian perceptions of Bottlebrush settlement’s synonymity with crime and their socialized racial baggage from apartheid. However, from 1990s onwards there was increased interaction. A respondent from Bottlebrush perceived the relations to have been good as Indians living in formal areas supported the settlement with water and other basic services. Moreover, as the city had attempted and failed to remove the shack dwellers due to the organized resistance from the informal dwellers as supported by SCARA (Shallcross Civil and Ratepayers Association). Religious organisations have also been identified for their role in facilitating racial interactions through aid such as the provision of food, water, household amenities and education material in the settlements. However, a political representative perceives that there is only ‘mixing’ and not any kind of meaningful integration which was driven by the land occupation.

After the municipal destruction of shacks in Crossmoor settlement, there was an awareness of health issues as people were living in the open with no basic amenities. It is mentioned that during the protests, the Crossmoor settlement received more support as it was a predominantly Indian settlement.

This brought a level of resentment from some African community members from Ekhupholeni as they felt excluded and others felt it was undermining the real cause, in the fight for basic services. However, Ekhupholeni also received a measure of assistance from political leaderships and organizations such as Gift of the Givers. Because almost all the different political parties had visited the area in being compelled to show their presence and concern, particularly the ANC; it was described as ‘the biriyani politics’ of the day.

c. The dynamics of the inter-racial informal settlements

At the height of the shack destructions by the municipality in Crossmoor and Ekhupholeni settlements in 2007, many of the African and Indian occupants were reportedly forced to live out in the open. The activist that documented this period mentioned that it was a racially integrated time as people cooked and rebuilt their shacks together, and the surrounding households were giving people water and helping out in one way or another. She added that ‘...what united the people was that they were facing the same struggles as they were mobilizing together in maintaining a place to live...’

However, another respondent who is not a shack dweller argues that there are no working relations between Indians and Africans as they simply live side by side. It was acknowledged by the activist that there were some divisions between the two races due to political and tactical disagreements around how best to stay on the land. The majority of the people in the Indian section wanted to follow a legal route and the African section wanted to follow a political route which caused some squabbling and tensions. Thus, after the original destruction of shacks, most of the African (and some Indian) shack dwellers wanted to continue rebuilding their shacks, while most of the Indians wanted to wait for the court proceedings to give them the right to build on that land. Furthermore, as the court case was lodged with almost all Indian plaintiffs and a few Africans on the original list, this list had created a rift because some of the Africans perceived they were not going to gain anything if the court case was successful. Nevertheless, the city eventually withdrew from the court case, seemingly because the Crossmoor residents were going to win. This success is attributed to the work of the LRC, which gave shack dwellers the security to remain in the Crossmoor and Ekhupholeni settlements. Concurrently, a leader of Ekupholeni had built alliances with political leaderships as councilors and organisations in petitioning the municipality for standpipes and toilets, as there had been no basic water and sanitation services on the site for almost a year. The leadership of Ekupholeni was reportedly instrumental in community mobilization, in using political tactics as they marched into the city hall and put up a strong political fight. They had also started a shack-dwellers organization around this time. Eventually, both settlements were given standpipes and mobile toilets that came through their mobilization.

Around this time, it is said that there was quite a bit of confrontation and tensions between the informal settlement residents and the surrounding formal areas, as the ‘shack dwellers’ were quite radical in their demands for water standpipes and toilets. They were producing memorandums that they were going to occupy the surrounding council flats, burnt tires and blockaded a road and some made threats that they would defecate on the road. Thus the surrounding communities were worried that things would get out of control as the shack dwellers got more militant in their service delivery demands. However after the standpipes demand was met, the shack dwellers reportedly realized they were able to

stay in the area and the political antagonism had subsided. Moreover, in Ekhupholeni, energy was channeled into positive activities as growing vegetable gardens with the water supply from the standpipes which was supported by an NGO. Here, the activist reflected that ‘...having gone through the legal route benefited everybody, which ... the leadership (at Ekhupholeni) understood over time...and when I spoke to some of Indian people, the Africans’ more radical tactics (...) ended up bringing the standpipes and stability as well (...) so the two-pronged approach ended up benefiting them all’.



Left: Communal standpipe servicing Ekhupholeni informal settlement (Source: Amy Kracker, August 2009)

She added that when the police had come to demolish their shacks again, ‘... there was a beautiful moment where everyone (Indians and Africans together) surrounded the shack and joined arms...and in the collective memory of the community as the tensions rose (between them) they forgot that this unity had happened... and then we watched the film together in the community hall, it was pretty interesting because they saw that they had seen each other through the really hard moments and the common struggle that they had embarked together, as they were both at the frontline where they had to take risks (...) both sides understood that there was a collaboration which was powerful in the end...’ Moreover, around 2008 when she revisited the site, there was less tension as there were about four Indian families living in the African part and vice versa. This served as evidence that the rift was

not completely divided on race lines but more according to who the people’s personal alliances were, based on how they were going to live on the land.

d. Potential for racial ‘integration’ and social healing through a common class struggle

The activist added that in the struggle to stay on the land, the Africans from Ekupholeni were struck by a lot of Indians suffering where they had to share their food and other resources, and they realized they were in the same situation. This forced them to learn to live with each other in spite some of their differences which was largely tactical, and for some cultural; which have been overcome over time. Here, she elaborated that a powerful element of having interacted with the communities of Crossmoor and Ekhupholeni settlements was that people began talking about the historic tensions between Indians and Africans. These included perceptions of Africans that Indian people hate them and the hostility they felt from the Indian police that were too many, and the Indian people feeling the African people are dangerous and that you could not talk to them. She postulated that what it really reflected was the lack of knowledge about the other’s personal stories, cultural practices and habits, and this became apparent when they lived together. Adding that the poverty in these settlements easily aggravates antagonisms between people over resources as a question of survival. However, when people are able to have a home,

water and are able to send their children to school, a lot of these tensions disappear very quickly. She compellingly posed that racial integration based on people that share the same socio-economic position ‘...is hiding the base of why people are apart, which is economic – you can’t just allow a few people to get rich and assume it will erase the racial inequities...and are we really content to see integration at every level of social stratification where we have an economic apartheid? - where every single class from lower to upper are integrated in their economic divisions...’

Similarly, another respondent alluded to the potential for greater integration amongst people of lower-socio economic groups as he referred to the neighbouring community of Welbedacht that are living in a RDP housing development. As he had observed Indians, Africans and Coloureds living together with neighbourly and peaceful relations. He added that ‘...there’s a sense of spirit, an attitude of enjoyment and protection (...) as the residents attend each other’s parties and funerals...the common struggle for their basic needs has been a source of unity (...) There is better quality integration than middle-class formal areas – the middles class don’t want to live together because of racism and because they have everything, they insulate themselves from others as they don’t even know when there is a party or funeral happening next door’

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In terms of the class stratification, the interviewees generally responded that the Crossmoor area consists mainly of a mix of middle and lower class households. This was described by an interviewee as a mix of ‘...pockets of deep poverty beside middle or lower middle class people’. A respondent mentioned that there have been no meaningful changes in terms of economic development since 1994. However, the police representative perceives that the economic development of the area has picked up. Here, the Ridge Shopping Center was mentioned as serving the people from Bottlebrush community. On this, a leader of Ekhupholeni mentioned this centre provides retail jobs for some people in Bottlebrush.



Left: North East view of Bottlebrush informal settlement edged against a valley with the Ridge Shopping Centre (image source: Amy Kracker, August 2009)

However, it is difficult for these employees to access as it is across the highway without a pedestrian bridge. The police representative suggested that a majority of the lower-socio economic groups are working as labourers in manufacturing jobs in the nearby Woodhurst industrial area. This

area consists of numerous small manufacturing operations making tires, shoes and bakeries which are not municipal initiatives but run mostly by Indian entrepreneurs. It was mentioned that economic opportunities for residents in informal settlements are actually better because the place is well situated with good transport which enables them quick access to their places of work.

It is widely mentioned that the lower socio-economic groups have continued working in jobs in and around Crossmoor as domestic workers and gardeners for Indian families, labourers, construction workers, and working in garages. The informal settlement upgrading of Bottlebrush has reportedly been providing a few people with jobs, as those with building skills. For the lower middle class, Chatsworth Centre, Pinetown, Crofton and Mobeni remain the main areas of economic activities. Though, unemployment is widely perceived to be a big problem in the area. Informal businesses have reportedly thrived since 1994 as the main form of survival strategy for the poorer communities. Many informal shops as spazza shops, salons and tuckshops were named.



Left: Dual purpose tuck shop and shack dwelling at Ekhupholeni informal settlement (Source: Amy Kracker, August 2009)

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

a. General overview of infrastructure and services and their role in 'integration'

From the 1970s the Durban City Council built mostly detached houses, some semi-detached houses and a few council flats in the area. However, a respondent speculates that almost half of the population live in shacks which are overcrowded, with several incidents of shack fires. It is generally perceived that housing prices have depreciated due to the presence of the informal settlements nearby. There are reportedly high levels of homeownership especially in the developed areas that are driven primarily by inheritance, and Indians are the highest homeowners. The flats are still owned by the municipality and full transfer of ownership is under way and is expected to take place in a year or two. However, the council flats are reportedly occupied largely by poor Indians, and are overcrowded which highlights the

problem of poverty amongst this group. As many that were unable to afford their rent were the people that had initially occupied the Crossmoor Settlement. A Minority Front (MF) representative asserted that RDP housing developments are in fact contributing to segregation, as government is making a mistake in the way they are delivering them in terms of both quality and locating them. This was alluding to the issue of in-situ upgrading or housing developments that occur in detached and clustered spaces, which are usually underserviced due to topographical constraints as in Bottlebrush. The fact that there were many shack renters in Bottlebrush, and the council flats that continue to be occupied by poor Indians highlights the potential to developing cheap rental flats. However, there was no evidence of this type of development in the area.



Left: In-situ upgrading of Bottlebrush informal settlement (Source: Amy Kracker, August 2009)

It was mentioned that Ithala Bank came to Chatsworth in Crossmoor in 2003 as the first 'black bank'. Their clientele include mostly people of lower socio-economic positions, and more Indians than Africans. A respondent suggested that the Crossmoor area is lacking police stations and personnel. Recreational facilities are generally deemed enough by

some, although an African respondent alluded to the issue that these are largely still considered Indian areas by Africans. Although there is reasonable access to health centres, there has been an increased demand for hospitals and clinics by people from the informal settlements by virtue of the poor environment. There is relatively good public transport as buses although limited, and the railway which are used by both lower and middle income people from both Indian and African communities. Here, a leader of Bottlebrush settlement mentioned that there are safety concerns where the taxis do not deliver people closer to their homes, and where the railway does not provide a crossover bridge. It is often noted that the schools of the Crossmoor area are racially mixed as the principals are committed to integration, and the children themselves do not recognize racial differences. On this, a MF representative mentioned that integration will take time, however the schools are the best places for it. The Brooklyn Secondary School has been widely identified an exceptional case where it transformed from having predominantly Indian to predominantly African students that are mostly from the nearby Bottlebrush settlement. This is partly because of its exemption fees that assist learners from poorer households to attend the school. However, a representative from the school acknowledged the challenge that the teaching staff are

predominantly Indian. Here, an African respondent added that he perceives a challenge where the African children are unable to read or write their native languages which are not offered in the schools.

b. The challenges in informal settlements

It is stated that currently there are low standards and lack of basic services in Bottlebrush settlement, which have been compounded due to overcrowding. Although there is access to standpipes and prepaid electricity connections, it was reported that illegal connections to water and electricity lines from the neighbouring formal areas continue to exist, despite efforts to minimize these by the service providers. It is mentioned that although the state of housing is getting better in Bottlebrush settlement, there are only a few people that are benefiting as only around 900 houses will be built. Moreover, a leader of the settlement mentioned this is being aggravated by the fact that those that are unaccommodated are refusing to move and there are still new people coming into the area. However, there is reportedly a development committee maintaining the housing waiting list. Lastly, as Crossmoor and Ekupholeni settlements exist under precarious conditions and unofficially upgraded as of 2007 with standpipes and mobile toilets, the sentiments there are that they are poorly served in terms of infrastructure compared to other areas.

LOCAL POLITICS AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

a. The role of Civic/Religious Organisations

From the 1990s, the Shallcross Ratepayer's Association (SRA) had supported the Bottlebrush community by helping them mobilize in their struggles against evictions. Similarly, The Westcliffe Ratepayer's Association (WRA) were said to have been instrumental to the community mobilization of the Crossmoor and Ekupholeni settlements. They reportedly shared their experiences as a community in their struggle against evictions and by putting the shack dwellers in touch with legal representation, and in providing resources. The Chatsworth struggles have largely been seen as successful in contesting evictions and cutoffs of water and electricity. By contrast it was postulated that the radical tactics of the predominantly African Ekupholeni community had different roots linked to the tactics of the apartheid movement. In the end both tactics had been successful in having benefitted everyone in both settlements as mentioned earlier. During the legal recourse process against the shack demolishments and forced evictions, the Abahlali Basemjondolo also provided assistance to the Crossmoor settlement.

It is widely perceived that religious organizations, CBOs and NGOs have contributed to greater racial interactions. At the initial stages of the birth of Bottlebrush, ANC and an organisation called Crisis Care (religious based organisation that assisted people with access to basic services) were reportedly active in the area. As it is mentioned that informal settlements approach various religious organizations for assistance, and it is given in the form of basic services, feeding schemes, distribution of educational material and writing letters. Ashrams visit Crossmoor settlement every two months and the Muslim community provides aid through the Chatsworth Aid Program (CAP) as education funds for the youth. A church in Chatsworth reportedly worked closely with the Bottlebrush community, particularly in pressuring for basic services. Interestingly, in terms of membership in this church, around 10% of the Christian congregation is African, perceived to be due to language barrier issues. However, a church representative added that they have an African member living close to Bottlebrush settlement

that goes and preaches to people there on behalf of their church. The Muslim community has around 40% Africans in their parish, partly due to the African foreign Muslim population.

Furthermore, some community leaders amongst the business and religious sector have strong political links, particularly with ANC. In addition, there is good quality inter-religious interaction amongst them as personally experienced between the Christian and Muslim leadership. The respondents interviewed from Christian and Muslim faith groups have been involved in the formation of an interfaith organisation that brings together religious leaders from Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. This organisation has reportedly been instrumental in forming Chatsworth and District Against Crime (CADAC) founded in 2004 which is aligned to the ANC. They consider themselves a pressure group that lobby the municipality on community issues.

b. Needs driven community mobilization

It was mentioned by a respondent that Ward Committee meetings are not frequently held and are largely needs driven. It was mentioned that there is little meaningful interaction between Bottlebrush community and the MF Councilor as it is the stronghold of the ANC. A member of the ward committee, who himself is affiliated to ANC mentioned that out of the ten ward committee members, nine of them are from the ANC. One observer suggested that the election process for ward committee members are flawed in that people are allowed to nominate as many members of a political party irrespective of the area they are from, and where ANC actively mobilized their followers to vote to reinforce their control in wards that they had lost. This is problematic as it reduces the potential for addressing issues from different areas.

Furthermore, a political representative mentioned that there is only a passive form of community engagement in IDP forums which are mostly attended by Bottlebrush settlement residents. The issues raised are focused around a 'needs driven' impetus. This view is concurred by a school representative, who relates that community mobilization in the informal settlements are mainly needs driven. According to the latter respondent, this is because people react to their immediate problems where housing is the main challenge facing these communities. The police representative reflected how Bottlebrush settlement has been upgraded over time, as roads were installed prior to 1994, electricity and water were upgraded around 1994, the CPF was initiated in the early 1990s and the community hall was built soon after. The community hall was said to be a municipal initiative which has facilitated better interaction between community leaders. As in the past, the police would be contacted first to assist in making contact with the community. The reason Bottlebrush had been upgraded was because it was the only informal settlement in Chatsworth at that time. The process was initiated as service providers saw the conditions and Indian political organizations put pressure on the municipality and concurrently residents from Bottlebrush started organizing. This reportedly started to happen through the networking system put in place through the CPF. Furthermore, although the housing development in Bottlebrush was driven by the previous ANC PR Councilor, they had largely materialized due to pressure from the settlement residents in their demands for water, toilets and housing since 2000. These were facilitated by mass community and flat dweller meetings. Interestingly an ANC representative said that the mobilization of the informal settlement residents were positive as it contributed in meeting their demands. Their

consistent protests reportedly forced the local government in giving them priority, as people in Bottlebrush became increasingly vociferous by marching to the police station and getting media attention. This in turn forced the municipality to appease them and then people would be quiet for awhile then start again. Here, it was mentioned by the police representative that the SAP prior to 1994 were seen as an organization of government but this had shifted to their role as more developmental as there was a realization ‘...that if you shout to the police others will listen’.

Similarly the marches led by the leadership of Ekhupholeni, where the community confronted various high-ranking officials at the City Hall demanding water and toilets at different occasions were quite contentious and emotive. However, there were reportedly a lot of negotiations and discussions as personal phone calls were made to the leadership around how to best mobilize resources. There were also confrontational marches by African and Indian shack dwellers from Bottlebrush, Ekhupholeni and Crossmoor settlements demanding houses in 2008. This is believed by some to reflect the politics between ANC and MF as there were allegations that MF was mobilizing Indians to build shacks so that they could also access housing opportunities. In terms of the level of success of community mobilization, the outcomes achieved by Crossmoor and Ekhupholeni settlements are deemed successful by most respondents. They used a variety of tactics that worked together, and which enabled them security as they are not under threat of eviction at the moment and were able to access to some services. However, these events highlight the new kind of mobilization that is needs driven around service delivery demands. It was also mentioned that although there is limited contact with local government departments in Crossmoor, people on the ground make themselves active during special events as ‘the 16 days of service’, woman’s day and child protection day. These events bring service providers together and based on immediate urgency of needs identified at these events, the relevant department from local government then assists them.



Images sourced from: <http://shannoninsouthafrica.blogspot.com/2007/05/crossmoor-residents-blockade-road.html> (Shannon Walsh, 2007)

Top left: Informal settlement residents from Ekhupholeni marched to Durban city hall in demand of housing, water and sanitation in April 2007. Top right: Rally leaders in front of the Durban city hall as they were waiting to deliver the memorandum to city officials in June 2007



Images sourced from: <http://shannoninsouthafrica.blogspot.com/2007/05/crossmoor-residents-blockade-road.html> (Shannon Walsh, 2007)

Bottom right: Informal settlement residents from Crossmoor marched to Durban city hall in demand of housing, water and sanitation in June 2007. Bottom left: Community mobilization rally in April 2007 with burning tires blocking Crossmoor Drive

c. 'Biryani Politics': political party dynamics and voting patterns

The main political parties named were MF (dominant in Crossmoor since 1994), ANC and IFP. It is added that DA and COPE have also come into play recently. The Bottlebrush settlement is largely an ANC stronghold, with IFP and COPE featuring in the last national elections. Both leaders from Ekupholeni and Bottlebrush settlements serve on the ANC BEC. Here, it was mentioned that the ANC BEC has an equal number of African and Indian committee members. Furthermore, respondents pointed to Chatsworth's struggle history. Despite the strong ANC affiliation of these leaders, MF has a stronghold in the area. This is alluded to by some respondents as the unpredictability of the Indian vote that usually leans in favour of MF. As an ANC political respondent elaborates, 'Indians have respect and belief in Rajbansi as an individual as he has a track record in Chatsworth and Phoenix, having served as the leader of MF... as a representative of the Indians'.

Interestingly, the recent nearby Warwick Triangle upgrading project by the City was at the centre of debates amongst the religious leaders interviewed for this project. All of whom have at one point engaged political activities and have strong links to political leaders, particularly in the ANC. One of the motivating arguments provided by the city is that the informal traders of the area are exploited by their Indian employers who are not present in the precincts themselves. It is reported that some city officials have even made racist remarks against Indians. Activists argued that this represents a betrayal and is leading to divisions in the historic Indian support of ANC. They emotively reminded that historically, the struggle against apartheid led by ANC was learnt from the Indians, through the indentured labourers and Gandhi. And the work of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) that fought the apartheid struggle on the frontlines when ANC was underground. Although the official subsequently denied having made these

alleged statements, the anger it roused amongst these and other Indian leaders engaged in politics is indicative of perceptions that they are being sidelined for their active role in the politics of the country, in the past and present, by the predominantly African ANC.

d. Leadership

A striking element in learning about this community has been the encounters with various strong leaderships, albeit the elements of internal politics where a few had criticisms about the other leaders. An MF representative had been eager and comprehensive to speak to this research project and laid the foundation for interviewing other key stakeholders of the area as he has working relations with the ANC PR Councilor and the leaders of the informal settlements, and various other people from different sectors. He was always ready to connect us with members of the community and spoke in measured and realistic tones with regards to political issues or personalities. A member of the Crossmoor ward committee that is ANC affiliated reported that the Bottlebrush community has good relations with the MF representative who is deemed very intelligent.

Within the informal settlements, the current leaderships have been instrumental in mobilizing the community in their demands for basic services. It was mentioned that a leader of Ekhupholeni had been an organizer within Bottlebrush, and had been instrumental in the formation of Ekhupholeni. He has reportedly worked with the community to foster cohesion as they built a crèche, a small church and ran prayers before meetings, and the Indians living with them were integrated into these activities. It is mentioned that Ekhupholeni is strictly run with laws that include prohibition of woman abuse (according to a respondent, this is because of the difficulty in discerning whether the screams are due to police invasions or criminal break-ins) and no shebeens are allowed in the area. Some of their activities include the collective farming strategy where they sell the vegetables in the market and to the community as well. It is mentioned that the community also deals forcefully with crime. At Ekhupholeni, a resident informally spoke about how the community beat up the suspected perpetrator of a murder before calling the police. This highlights the common problem as in Bottlebrush settlement, where the communities are often forced to take crime into their own hands due to the high levels of violent crime that they are faced with. Here, a leader of Ekhupholeni mentioned that during the xenophobic tensions in 2008, some foreigners came to Ekhupholeni for protection knowing the strict laws that govern the area. It was

however mentioned by one leader that a leader of Ekhupholeni is currently under pressure as the people are demanding houses seeing that the upgrading of Bottlebrush is well underway.

Left: Collective vegetable garden at Ekhupholeni (Source: Amy Kracker, August 2009)



The Bottlebrush settlement is also said to be well organized by an ANC affiliated leader who has been a resident of the area since 1989. There was reportedly a pocket of xenophobic attacks on foreigners in 2008 in the Bottlebrush area which was reportedly in his jurisdiction. Furthermore, there is a sense of reverence from other leaders for a previous ANC PR Councillor that served in the Bottlebrush settlement for his more hands-on approach and accessibility. He was deployed to organize basic services for Bottlebrush which included standpipes to be installed for the first time in the area, and secondly housing. This was because of complaints that the other Councilors of the areas had not been accessible to everyone, and that they were not residents of the area. He was instrumental in developing the housing project with other municipal officials, and the plans have been underway since 2006. This included developing 963 housing units as in-situ upgrading. Shallcross based SCARA (that has reportedly aligned themselves to the ANC) and a leader of Bottlebrush were also reportedly instrumental in making demands for upgrading of flats for flat dwellers, and for basic services for shack dwellers. Thus his commitment and his affiliation to ANC and the collaboration between himself, the resident leader of Bottlebrush settlement, resident civic associations and an MF representative had facilitated the installment of the standpipes and the housing development.

In the predominantly Indian Crossmoor settlement, an African resident formed part of the central leadership of the Crossmoor Committee to lodge the court case against the municipality's forceful evictions. This informal group has an internal structure as a treasurer and a chairman. Interestingly the activist added that Crossmoor Settlement consists of predominantly women who have been the backbone of the community, but where the men have been more outspoken. A member of the Crossmoor Committee mentioned informally that a particular strength of the leadership in their settlement is that they have a group of people that collectively make decisions. Here, he and others alluded to perceptions that autocratic leadership as in the other informal settlements are problematic as the leader is seen to be fighting for their own personal agendas. Other striking individuals include local representatives of the South African Police (SAP). They were all said to be collaborating to control crime in the Crossmoor/Ekhupholeni area. A police representative was as eager to talk to this research project, as most other key stakeholders of the area which in part reflects their commitment to their area. Aside from the police representative's commitment, his comprehensive understanding of the history and development of the community and his views on the developmental role of the police force was refreshing to encounter.

CONCLUSION

Based on the framework of this research project, Crossmoor is a unique case study as an example of people-driven 'integration' due to the invasions of Africans into the vacant lands in and around the Bottlebrush area, which expanded over time as informal settlements. However, the nature of integration is dependent on its definition. For the most part, the influx of Africans into the predominantly Indian area promoted, what is described as 'mixing' or 'racial interactions'. This is reflected by the assistance and support from resident civic associations, religious groups and surrounding communities with

resources, and in assisting the shack dwellers to organize and mobilize in making demands for upgrading the area from the local government. Although it was mentioned that there were concerns from the surrounding Indian communities about perceptions of criminality amongst African migrants, they did not mobilize to expel the Africans and instead tolerated them. The reason for the tolerance from the surrounding Indian communities may be, as alluded to by a respondent due to their fear of confrontation because of perceptions that Africans are dangerous in light of the 1949 Inanda riots. And possibly the fact that many of these Africans provided a ready labour force for their businesses. Whereas, the active support from the other Indian community members including the resident civic associations has been attributed to the history of involvement by Indians in the political struggle against apartheid, and the subsequent strong community mobilization amongst these groups. There was said to be a sense of empathy and solidarity for the Africans in having shared the same position as politically (and socioeconomically) disenfranchised people as a result of being racially marginalized during apartheid.

However, where notions of ‘integration’ fall short is in the reality as the formal and informal areas have largely remained separate. This racial clustering entwined with spatial divisions has been aggravated by the local government-driven in-situ upgrading of Bottlebrush. Although this cannot be attributed as a misconception by the local government that has relocated the people, because the people themselves have refused to leave the area and have obligated the municipality to develop the area. This is despite the topographical constraints that make it challenging to deliver basic services to the area. It was suggested by an observer that the housing development will formalize the haphazard settlements and thereby aid in meaningful integration and acceptance of the predominantly African people into the urban fabric of Crossmoor. However, it begs to question how these standardized designs of small houses that are crammed within a space can assist with better integration. Moreover, the housing challenge is being compounded by the demands for housing from the displaced renters that could not be accommodated and the surrounding poor Indians that rent in over-crowded council flats. These have led to the second wave of land invasions by both Indians and Africans.

Here, the cases of Crossmoor and Ekhupholeni settlements have provided a unique opportunity to test the concept of integration between Indians and Africans that cohabit the same space. This has also been the result of a people-driven set of events. Despite the historic tensions, cultural and tactical differences mentioned above, due to the same socio-economic position they find themselves in; they have been able to unite for their common struggle for basic services and housing, as a medium-to-long term goal. However, in the short term is the everyday lived reality; it is only natural that their context of poverty would aggravate tensions over resources in their struggle for survival. Nevertheless, the two groups are being forced to communicate and understand each other better. This points to the potential for social healing and integration as a process, if supported and developed in the right ways by the local government and surrounding community/religious leaders and organisations.