

Organisation of Civic Right's (OCR's) inner city project  
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# **DURBAN'S HOMELESS COMMUNITY SURVEY**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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My sincere thanks to Ms Rosemary Mabaso for her diligent and enthusiastic help in interviewing the respondents and administering the questionnaires. She established an excellent rapport, using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. Mrs Amina Peer and Rosemary Mabaso's painstaking analysis of the data is also appreciated. I am very grateful to both for their help and support. May God Almighty bountifully reward them and all those respondents (homeless) who live and work and are barely noticed as economically active human beings in our bustling, tourist-centred City.

## **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF OCR'S INVOLVEMENT**

## **TYPHOID EPIDEMIC**

The existence of Durban's Homeless (the "Pavement People") was barely known until 1989. The Durban City Council's warning of a possible outbreak of typhoid, instantly made the homeless a "serious health hazard". An ignored or forgotten population of mainly women, economically active, became the immediate focus of many, for different reasons.

## **INTERVENTION: OCR IMA**

The business sector and many residents saw the "people out there" as public enemy number one because of a genuine fear of the city being engulfed by a contagious disease. The Organisation of Civic Rights (OCR) which was then known as the Durban Central Residents' Association (DCRA) intervened and through a one-day intensive screening programme conducted by the Islamic Medical Association (IMA), dispelled the public's fear. While it was found that the homeless were forced to live under appalling conditions, this was as a result of the authorities not responding to the plight of the urbanised poor. The City's mere statement induced public fear and mobilised public support for what may have been an intended mass eviction.

## **SPECIAL TASK FORCE**

The OCR -IMA one-day health care intervention not only pre-empted any negative action but compelled the City to provide basic amenities to improve the conditions of the homeless in the interim. The DCRA established a special task force with the late Themba Cele (co-ordinator of OCR's informal settlement subcommittee) and other OCR members and staff, which included Krubashen Moodley, Phylis Sabela, Shanaz Khaki and Yunus Osman.

## **"MISSION OF MERCY"**

The main objective of this task force was to investigate ways to improve the quality of life. The task force invited all major medical groups (including the Health Workers' Organisation and Islamic Medical Association). It was resolved by the participants that the IMA should conduct the screening. At subsequent meetings, it was once again resolved that the IMA had the infrastructure of running a clinic; it had the experience and personnel of taking health care to the people particularly in rural areas and in neighbouring states.

The IMA introduced a health care programme with a regular monthly clinic. This was one of several facets of the "mission of mercy" undertaken by the OCR because the homeless community, *inter alia*, could not afford the admission fees or could not afford spending time in long hospital queues which would have affected their vending trade and consequently their daily income.

## **HOMOGENEOUS COMMUNITY**

The monthly clinics provided medical profiles of the homeless individuals. The close contact also revealed positive and negative aspects of the urban localities of the homeless. It was found that the health problems existed because of the unhygienic conditions, poor sanitation and the absence of basic amenities. The medical team were therefore treating the symptoms not the cause. They could not do otherwise.

The joint OCR-IMA services, to some extent, restored human dignity to a homogeneous community. The monthly clinic also became a conduit for the different localities of homeless people, (e.g. from Warwick Avenue, AK Block and Brook Street) to meet with each other. Different linguistic and ethnic groups met as one family.

### **FIRST SURVEY: 1990**

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As the months passed by it became obvious that a Needs Assessment Survey was crucial. The survey was conducted by Phylis Sabela and analysed by Libby Ardington (in her individual capacity) of the department of Sociology, University of Natal. Some of the results of the survey highlighted the problems faced by the homeless and the areas they came from:

### **SECOND SURVEY: 1993**

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#### **The Brook Street Eviction**

OCR continued its close relationship with the street traders and homeless over the years. During June 1993, the Brook Street homeless were threatened with eviction. It became apparent that the City intended mass eviction once again and the OCR was asked to intervene. The OCR was informed by the City that there was no such intention. On the contrary, the City was considering the formation of a forum to discuss matters affecting inner city homeless and informal residents (“squatters”) and would welcome the participation of community based organisations. There was no mention of a resolution passed in May 1993 to evict the Brook Street homeless to make way for a taxi rank. The adverse publicity led to the taxi rank being shelved although the homeless were harassed by certain taxi operators. The OCR succeeded in getting barriers installed to prevent taxis from encroaching on the homeless settlement.

A more sensitive approach was emerging to matters affecting the homeless by the City, at least theoretically. This “sensitive” approach seem to be in keeping with Resolution 1993/77 of the United Nations on Forced Eviction and the Right to Housing a copy of which is attached to this (1996/7) study as Annexure B.

### **SURVEY: 1996/7**

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## INTRODUCTION

Why *this* Survey on Durban's homeless community?

This is a third survey in seven years undertaken by the OCR but the first under a democratic government. Questionnaires and structured interviews were used in November and December 1996. The results can serve as a form of evaluation especially to those who are in a position to remove obstacles and implement change. Survey is the best tool used by social scientists for generating usable knowledge, (Lindblom & Cohen, 1979 quoted by Robson, 1996). It is hoped that more than just generating usable knowledge and gaining an understanding of the situation, those in local government and all concerned stakeholders will work towards implementing solutions. At the very least, there ought to be evidence that a development process is in place to examine a range of solutions.

From intensive meetings over the past eight months with various relevant departments of the Councils and key figures, it was evident that there are no plans, no vision and no reaction and interaction between the policy-makers, department heads and the homeless community except for the "muti" sellers. This survey hopes to start a "dialogue" between the parties concerned. It is hoped that the results of this Survey is of practical importance to the policy-makers, solution-providers and theorists. The message is one of urgency to *fast-track* solutions and not waste time and money in costly research.

### OVERALL VIEW

Nine settlements were surveyed with an estimated population of 6000 people including 700 children, (these are not "street" children). The Umbilo respondents, in fact, commute daily and are therefore not part of those who sleep in the streets or in make-shift shelters and shacks, while the AK Block community were re-settled at Mansel Road in December 1996.

Respondents from the Beachfront to Umbilo expressed serious misgivings absent the Informal Trading and Small Business opportunities department. The Umgeni Road respondents expressed anger and frustrations at this department, because they felt "left-out" of the Mansel Road project. However, the Mansel Road area would not be able to accommodate even a portion of the Umgeni Road community.

### OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

The survey on Durban's homeless (DCRA : 1990) estimated 2 000 people living on the pavements in and around the Durban area. The purpose of the previous surveys as the present one was to assess the immediate needs of the homeless community of mainly women. Seven years later, women are still the predominant gender and their plight seem to be very much the same. Seen from a structural perspective, one can see that few opportunities exist for the poor to improve themselves. The existing opportunities are structured to advance the privileged at the expense of the underprivileged (Derman & Poultney: 1984).

This survey (1997) found that there is approximately 8000 people living on pavements and streets in Durban, an increase of 65% since the 1990 Survey. Durban (including Pinetown) has the second largest urban population (3.3 million) with 50% of Africans estimated to be living in "shacks" as compared to Gauteng's urban population of about 6.9 million with 20% Africans estimated to be living in "shacks". (Draft Urban Development Framework, Department of Housing, 1996.)

### **GENDER**

Most of the respondents were females. Approximately 59% of all the respondents surveyed were single, 25% married, 9% widowed and 7% divorced.

### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Sixty five percent of all the respondents attended either primary and secondary schools, 34% had no formal education.

### **REASONS FOR LIVING IN THE SETTLEMENT (PAVEMENT, STREET)**

Economic hardship (the need to support themselves and their family), was the primary reason (37%) given by the respondents, followed by violence (31%) and 32% said that they had no other place to stay or gave other reasons for living in the streets or on the pavements.



## INCOME

Most of the respondents were economically active with a daily income ranging from R5.00 to R150.00.

AREAS	MAXIMUM INCOME PER DAY
AK Block, Warwick Avenue & Beachfront	R150.00
Umgeni Station and Brook Street Pavement Dwellers	R100.00
Umbilo	R70.00
Russell Street Herbal Traders	R50.00
*Brook Street Shack Settlement	R40.00
*Umgeni Shack Settlement	R20.00.

\* It appears that those living in shacks had the lowest income.

## AFFORDABILITY FOR ACCOMMODATION

The response varied from those who said that they could afford R10.00 to R250.00 per month rental. A few could not afford to pay rental at all. Most of the respondents could afford between R10.00 to R50.00 per month rental. The exception is the Umbilo settlement where all the respondents commuted daily. The Russell Street Herbal Traders and the Brook Street Pavement Dwellers did not respond. This was probably because this particular question was inadvertently omitted from the questionnaires.



Below, each settlement's response to OCR's Survey.

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**AREA :BEACHFRONT**

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Total number of people surveyed :40  
Estimated population : 640  
(including 160 children)

**DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS****AGE**

Ninety two percent of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 60 years, 5% were between 21-30 years, 3% between 61-70.

**GENDER**

Thirty nine were females and one male. Thirty five percent were single, 30% married, 23% widowed and 12% divorced.

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Eighty percent had attended primary and secondary schools. Fifteen percent had no formal schooling at all. Twenty seven percent had attended grades 1-2, 33% grades 3-7 (standard 3-5), 17% attended grades 8-10 (standard (6-8) and 3% attended grades 11-12 (standard 9-10). Two persons did not respond.

**REASONS FOR LIVING IN THE SETTLEMENT/PAVEMENT**

Violence was given as the main reason (30%) followed by approximately 43% who gave economic hardships as the reason for coming to the city to earn a living - the need to support themselves and their families.

Twenty seven percent had no place to stay and they lived on the pavement.

**TYPE OF ARTICLES/COMMODITIES SOLD**

28% sold bags, mats, caps and ornaments, 40% sold baskets, 23% sold clothes, 5% sold refreshments and 2% sold pots and dishes. One person did not respond. Thirty six were self-employed and 39 had families to support. Four were selling for someone else.

## **INCOME**

Income varied from R20.00-R150.00 per day.

## **NUMBER AFFECTED BY CRIMINALS :17**

Twenty eight percent was affected by theft, 5% by pickpockets, 5% by street children and 5% by policemen.

## **THE RESPONDENTS CAME FROM THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

Melmoth, Umdloti, Umzinto, Kranskop, Dundee, Bambai, Mooiriver, Umtata, Indwedwe, Pietermaritzburg, Flakstaf, Transvaal, Tongaat, Inanda, Shakaskraal, Stanger, Dududu, Howick, Portshepstone, Lusikisiki, Ladysmith, Newcastle, Luanda, Lusaka, Empangeni, Transkei, Maoti, Dunhouse and Umzimkhulu, Zimbabwe, Soweto.

## **LENGTH OF RESIDENCY**

Most of the homeless (50 %) lived on the pavements for a period of 2-4 years, 13% for a period of 8-11 years, 18% for 5-7 years, 7% for less than 2 years and 12% between 19-23 years. The settlement was approximately 23 years old.

## **TYPES OF AMENITIES**

Two toilets, sufficient refuse bins and taps on the beach for water. There are no playgrounds or recreational facilities for children except for the ones on the beach. There are no health or educational facilities.

The nearest health facility used by the respondents is at Addington hospital

## **AFFORDABILITY FOR ACCOMMODATION SHOULD ONE BE AVAILABLE**

Five respondents were not interested in any accommodation, eight respondents said they had accommodation. Eleven did not respond with 17% indicating that they could afford between R10.00-R50.00 rental per month, 17% R60.00-R100.00 and 5% R150.00.

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## **AREA: AK BLOCK**

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(This settlement has since been relocated at Mansel Road.)

Total number of people surveyed: **12**

Estimated population: 148

(61 children, no men)

## **DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

**AGE**

Eighty three percent of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 60 years, 8% were between 21-30 years and 8% between 61-70.

**GENDER**

All the respondents were females. Fifty eight percent were single, 33% married and 8% widowed.

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Seventy five percent had attended primary and secondary schools. Twenty five percent had no formal schooling at all, 50% had attended grades 1-2, 8% grades 3-7 (standard 3-5), 8% attended grades 8-10 (standard 6-8) and 8% attended grades 11-12 (standard 9-10).

**REASONS FOR LIVING IN THE SETTLEMENT**

Eighty three percent gave economic hardships as the reason for coming to the city to earn a living-need to support themselves and their families and 17% had no place to stay.

**TYPE OF ARTICLES/COMMODITIES SOLD**

All the respondents sold drums with 25% selling both drums and clothes. All were self employed and all had families to support.

**INCOME**

Income varied from R10.00-R100.00 per day.

**NUMBER AFFECTED BY CRIMINAL:**

Fifty eight percent were affected by theft.

**THE RESPONDES CAME FROM THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

Maphumulo, Mthwalume, Inanda, Dududu, Umzinto, St. Faiths, Mhlabu'yalingana, Mkomaas, Empangeni and Indwedwe.

**LENGTH OF RESIDENCY**

Most of the homeless (92%) lived on the pavements for a period of 6 years and 8% for one year.

The settlement was approximately 6 years old.

**TYPES OF AMENITIES**

2 toilets, 1 tap, 12 refuse bins.

There are no playgrounds or recreational facilities for children. The Christian Movement Centre ran a crèche.

The City Health Clinic was the nearest health clinic used by the respondents.

### **AFFORDABILITY FOR ACCOMMODATION SHOULD ONE BE AVAILABLE**

Responses ranged from R100.00 to R200.00.

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## **AREA : BROOK STREET PAVEMENT SETTLEMENT**

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Total number of people surveyed : **11**

Estimated population: **21**

### **DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

#### **AGE**

Ninety one percent of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 60 years and 9% were between 21-30 years.

#### **GENDER**

Six were females and five were males. Fifty five percent were single, 27% married, 9% widowed and 9% divorced.

#### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Fifty five percent had attended primary and secondary schools. Forty five percent had no formal schooling at all. Eighteen percent had attended grades 1-2, 27% grades 3-7 (standard 3-5) and 9% attended grades 8-10 (standard 6-8)

#### **REASONS FOR LIVING IN THE SETTLEMENT/PAVEMENT**

Economic hardships - the need to support themselves and their families, was given as the main reason for living on the pavement (55%). One respondent did not provide any reason and 36% had no place to stay and used the pavement for shelter.

#### **TYPE OF ARTICLES/COMMODITIES SOLD**

Twenty seven percent sold clothes, 18% sold boxes, 9% sold fruit and vegetables, 9% sold pots and dishes, 9% sold refreshments and 27% did not trade at all. Six were self-employed, two were selling for someone else and three were unemployed.

#### **INCOME**

Income varied from R10.00-R100.00 per day.

### **NUMBER AFFECTED BY CRIME**

Thirty six percent were affected by theft, of these 18% had their money stolen.

### **THE RESPONDENTS CAME FROM THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

Johannesburg, KwaMashu, Dundee, Portshepstone, Lusikisiki, Kranskop, Nongoma and Shakaskraal.

### **LENGTH OF RESIDENCY**

Most of the homeless (64%) lived on the pavements for a period of 2-4 years, 9% for 5-7 years; 18% for 9-13 years and 9% for 22 years..

### **TYPES OF AMENITIES**

No toilets, No taps, No refuse bins. There are no playgrounds or recreational facilities for children.

### **AFFORDABILITY FOR ACCOMMODATION SHOULD ONE BE AVAILABLE**

All the respondents did not respond.

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## **AREA : BROOK STREET SHACK SETTLEMENT**

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Total number of people surveyed : 23  
Estimated population: 350  
(including 23 children)

### **DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

#### **AGE**

Eighty seven percent of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 60 years, 9% were between 21-30 years, 4% between 61-70.

#### **GENDER**

Fourteen respondents were females and nine males. Eighty seven percent were single, 9% married and 4% divorced.

#### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Eighty seven percent had attended primary and secondary schools. Thirteen percent had no formal schooling at all. Nine percent had attended grades 1-2, 61% grades 3-7 (standard 3-5), 13% attended grades 8-10 (standard 6-8) and 4% attended grades 11-12 (standard 9-10).

## **REASONS FOR LIVING IN THE SETTLEMENT/PAVEMENT**

Violence was given as the main reason (48%) followed by approximately 30% who gave economic hardships as the reason for coming to the city to earn a living - the need to support themselves and their families.

Twenty two percent had no place to stay and the pavement provided shelter.

## **TYPE OF ARTICLES/COMMODITIES SOLD**

Nine percent sold clothes, 4% sold fruits and vegetables, 4% sold pots and dishes, 13% sold refreshments and 48% sold various other items (cosmetics, boxes, bottles). Eighteen percent did not sell at all. Seventeen were self employed, six were selling for some one else, twenty two had families to support.

## **INCOME**

Income varied from R5.00-R40.00 per day.

## **NUMBER AFFECTED BY CRIME**

All the respondents were affected by crime. Forty three percent were victims of theft, 39% did not describe the nature of the crime and 17% were affected by policemen who approached them for money.

## **THE RESPONDENTS CAME FROM THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

Pietermaritzburg, Indwedwe, Umkhumbane, Inkandla, Melmoth, Folweni, Eshowe, Umthwalume, Stanger, Umkomaas, Durban, Emahlabathini, Ladysmith, Empangeni, Umzimkhulu and KwaMashu.

## **LENGTH OF RESIDENCY**

Most of the homeless (38%) lived on the pavement for a period of 2-4 years, 13% for a period of 8-11 years, 13% for 5-7 years and 4% for less than 2 years. 17% for 16-22 years, 13% for 24-28 years and 4% for 32 years. However, the settlement was approximately 15 years old.

## **TYPES OF AMENITIES**

No toilets, no taps, 2 refuse bins. There are no playgrounds or recreational facilities for children. There is one crèche.

Beatrice Clinic is the nearest health clinic used by the respondents

## **AFFORDABILITY FOR ACCOMMODATION SHOULD ONE BE AVAILABLE**

Respondents could afford between R10.00 R250.00. One could not afford any rental. Fifty two percent said they could afford a rental of between R10.00-R50.00; 30% between R60.00-R100.00; 9% R200.00 and 4% R250.00.

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**AREA: RUSSELL STREET (HERBAL TRADERS)**

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Total number of people surveyed: **20**

Estimated population: **302**

**(103 children)**

### **DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

#### **AGE**

Eighty five percent of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 60 years and 15% were between 21-30 years.

#### **GENDER**

There were 15 female respondents and 5 males. Fifty five percent were single and 45% married.

#### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Forty five percent had attended primary and secondary schools. Fifty five percent had no formal schooling at all. Six percent attended grades 3-7 (standard 3-5), 10% attended grades 8-10 (standard 6-8) and 5% attended grades 11-12 (standard 9-10).

#### **REASONS FOR LIVING IN THE SETTLEMENT/PAVEMENT**

No place to stay was given as the main reason (40%) followed by approximately 38% who gave economic hardships as the reason for coming to the city to earn a living-the need to support themselves and their families. Fifteen percent were victims of violence.

#### **TYPE OF ARTICLES/COMMODITIES SOLD**

All sold herbs.

#### **INCOME**

Income varied from R3.00-R50.00 per day. All were self employed and 16 had families to support.

#### **NUMBER AFFECTED BY CRIME**

Twenty five percent of the respondents were affected by theft.

#### **THE RESPONDENTS CAME FROM THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

Flakstaf, Escourt, Dududu, Kranskop, Nongoma, Umzimkhulu, Emmaus, Ngwavuma, Ixopo, Mthwalume and Chesterville.

## **LENGTH OF RESIDENCY**

Most of the homeless (30%) lived on the pavements for a period of 5-7 years, 25% for a period of 8-11 years, 10% for less than 2 years, 15% for 12-15 years and 20% for 3-4 years

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## **AREA : UMBILO ROAD**

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Total number of people surveyed : 29  
Estimated population: 513  
(350 females, 50 males, 113 children)

## **DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

### **AGE**

Approximately eighty nine percent of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 60 years, 3% were between 21-30 years, 3% between 61-70 and 3% below 21 years.

### **GENDER**

Twenty five respondents were females and four were males. Eleven were single, 6 married, 7 widowed and 5 divorced.

### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Approximately forty five percent had attended primary and secondary schools. Fifty five percent had no formal schooling at all. Fourteen percent had attended grades 1-2, 24% grades 3-7 (standard 3-5) and 7% attended grades 8-10 (standard (6-8).

### **REASONS FOR BEING IN THE AREA**

Violence was given as the main reason (52%) followed by approximately 24% who gave economic hardships as the reason for coming to the city to earn a living - the need to support themselves and their families. Twenty four percent had no place to stay.

### **TYPE OF ARTICLES/COMMODITIES SOLD**

Approximately 55% sold fruit and vegetables, 20% sold cooked meat, 7% were barbers, 7% sold African beer, 3% sold pots and dishes, 3% herbalists and 3% shoe makers.

### **INCOME**

Income varied from R10.00-R70.00 per day. All were self-employed and 28 had families to support.

### **NUMBER AFFECTED BY CRIME**

Seven respondents said that they were victims of crime.

### **THE RESPONDENTS CAME FROM THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

Ulundi, Mooiriver, Melmoth, Umvoti, Umbumbulu, Transkei, Umzinto, Dlangezwe, Empangeni, Ciskei, Howick, Stanger, Lusikisiki, Umthwalume, Ngwavuma and Malvern.

**However, most commuted from nearby townships.**

### **LENGTH OF TRADING**

Thirty eight percent traded on the pavements for a period of 2-4 years, 14% for 13-16 years, 17% for a period of 8-11 years, 21% for 5-7 years and 10% for less than 2 years.

### **TYPES OF AMENITIES**

One toilet, 1 tap and sufficient refuse bins. There are no playgrounds, recreational facilities for children; no health facilities or crèches.

### **AFFORDABILITY FOR ACCOMMODATION SHOULD ONE BE AVAILABLE**

Did not apply since most of the respondents commuted from various townships.

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## **AREA : UMGANI STATION**

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Total number of people surveyed :44  
Estimated population: 2616  
(2500 women, 9 men and 107 children)

### **DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

#### **AGE**

Eighty percent of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 60 years, 16% were between 21-30 years, 2% between 61-70 and 2% were below 21 years.

#### **GENDER**

Forty one were females and three males. Twenty five percent were single, 45% married, 16% widowed and 14% divorced.

#### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Fifty percent had attended primary and secondary schools. Fifty percent had no formal schooling at all. Sixteen percent had attended grades 1-2, 27% grades 3-7 (standard 3-5) and 7% attended grades 8-10 (standard (6-8)).

### **REASONS FOR LIVING IN THE SETTLEMENT/PAVEMENT**

Forty one percent gave economic hardships as the main reason for coming to the city to earn a living - the need to support themselves and their families, followed by violence (30%) and 4% gave other reasons such as seeking employment, being disowned by the family..

### **TYPE OF ARTICLES/COMMODITIES SOLD**

Thirty nine percent sold drums, 11% sold clothes, 11% baskets, 11% pots and dishes, 9% fruits and vegetables, 9% traditional mats and 21% sold refreshments and perishables. Forty two were self-employed and 37 had families to support and two sold for others.

### **INCOME**

Income varied from R5.00-R100.00 per day.

### **NUMBER AFFECTED BY CRIME**

Nineteen were affected by crime of which 34% were victims of theft.

### **THE RESPONDENTS CAME FROM THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

Umgababa, Umzimkhulu, Dududu, Lusikisiki, Melmoth, Empangeni, Bergville, Umtata, Umkomaas, Umzinto, Nongoma, Ladysmith, Emsinga, Embongolwane, Bombela and Transkei.

### **LENGTH OF RESIDENCY**

Most of the homeless (48%) lived on the pavements for a period of 2-4 years, 11% for a period of 8-11 years, 11% for 5-7 years, 5% for less than 2 years, 9% for 2-13 and 7% for 17-21. 5% did not respond and 2% could not remember.

### **THE OWNERSHIP OF THE SETTLEMENT**

Intersite owned the land. The settlement was approximately 23 years old.

### **TYPES OF AMENITIES**

No taps, 2 refuse bins. The respondents indicated that they used the railway station toilets, which however, closed at 4 p.m.

There are no playgrounds or recreational facilities for children. Nor is there any educational facility (e.g. crèche) available.

The nearest health clinic used by the respondents was the Beatrice Street clinic.

### **AFFORDABILITY FOR ACCOMMODATION SHOULD ONE BE AVAILABLE**

Ranged from nil to R150.00. Twenty five percent indicated they could afford R50.00 per month, 11% could afford R30.00, 9% could afford R100.00, 9% could afford R40.00, 9% could afford R20.00, 2% could afford R150.00.

Eleven percent did not prefer alternative accommodation, 9% did not respond, 5% said they could not afford any rental and 2% was willing to accept alternative accommodation but did not indicate affordability level..

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**AREA : UMGENI SHACK SETTLEMENT  
UMGENI ROAD STATION)**

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**(OPPOSITE**

Total number of people surveyed : 7  
Estimated population: 30  
(22 men and 8 women)

**DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

**AGE**

Eighty six percent of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 60 years and 14% were between 21-30 years.

**GENDER**

Six respondents were males and one female. All were single.

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Seventy one percent had attended primary and secondary schools. 29 percent had no formal schooling at all. Fifty seven percent had attended grades 1-2 and 14% grades 3-7 (standard 3-5).

**REASONS FOR LIVING IN THE SETTLEMENT/PAVEMENT**

Fifty seven percent had no place to stay while 43% were victims of violence.

**TYPE OF ARTICLES/COMMODITIES SOLD**

Forty three percent sold fruits and vegetables, 43% various other items and 14% sold refreshments.

**INCOME**

Income varied from R5.00-R20.00 per day. Five were self-employed and 7 had families to support.

### **NUMBER AFFECTED BY CRIME**

Five were affected by crime with theft being the biggest problem.

### **THE RESPONDENTS CAME FROM THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

Inanda, Hlathikhulu, Nongoma, Johannesburg, Umthwalume, Empangeni and Kwamaphumulo.

### **LENGTH OF RESIDENCY**

Most of the homeless (86%) lived on the pavements for a period of 2-4 years and 14% for less than 2 years.

### **TYPES OF AMENITIES**

No toilets, no taps, no refuse bins. There are no playgrounds, recreational or educational facilities.

The nearest health clinic used by the respondents was the Beatrice Street clinic.

### **AFFORDABILITY FOR ACCOMMODATION SHOULD ONE BE AVAILABLE**

Ranged from nil to R100.00. Fifty seven percent could afford R50.00, 14% could afford R100.00, 14% could afford R20.00 and 14% could not afford any rental.

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### **AREA : WARWICK AVENUE**

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Total number of people surveyed : 32

Estimated population: 662

(400 females, 150 males, including 112 children)

### **DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

#### **AGE**

Seventy four percent of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 60 years, 21% were between 21-30 years, 3% between 61-70.

#### **GENDER**

Twenty two were females and ten males. Forty six percent were single, 21% married, 18% widowed and 12% divorced.

### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Seventy eight percent had attended primary and secondary schools. Twenty one percent had no formal schooling at all. Thirty one percent had attended grades 1-2, 31% grades 3-7 (standard 3-5), 9% attended grades 8-10 (standard (6-8) and 6% attended grades 11-12 (standard 9-10).

#### **REASONS FOR LIVING IN THE SETTLEMENT/PAVEMENT**

Violence was given as the main reason (59%) followed by approximately 21% who gave economic hardships as the reason for coming to the city to earn a living - the need to support themselves and their families.

Fifteen percent had no place to stay and took shelter on the pavement. One person did not sleep in the settlement.

#### **TYPE OF ARTICLES/COMMODITIES SOLD**

Eighty seven percent sold fruits and vegetables, 9% sold refreshments (juice, cool drinks) and 3% dishes and other utensils.

#### **INCOME**

Income varied from R10.00-R150.00 per day. All were self-employed and all had families to support.

#### **NUMBER AFFECTED BY CRIME**

Five were victims of crime.

#### **THE RESPONDENTS CAME FROM THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

Bergiville, Ciskei, Transkei, Bothas Hill, Umzinto, Nongoma, Newcastle, Dududu, Ladysmith, Flakstaf, Mawoti, Maphumulo, Melmoth, Stanger, Marianhill, Eshowe and Mozambique,.

#### **LENGTH OF RESIDENCY**

Most of the homeless (46%) lived on the pavement for a period of 2-4 years, 9% for 22 years, 9% for a period of 8-11 years, 18% for 5-7 years and 15% for less than 2 years.

#### **THE OWNERSHIP OF THE SETTLEMENT**

The Durban South Central Local Council owned the land. The settlement was approximately 22 years old.

#### **TYPES OF AMENITIES**

Three toilets, 2 taps, sufficient refuse bins. There are no playgrounds, recreational or educational facilities.

The nearest health clinics used by the respondents were in Alice Street and St. Aiden's Hospital.

**AFFORDABILITY FOR ACCOMMODATION SHOULD ONE BE AVAILABLE**

Twenty eight percent said they could afford R10.00; 22% - R20.00; 22% - R50.00; 6% - R30.00; 6% - R100.00; 3% - R40.00 and 3% - R200.00.

**CONCLUSION**

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All concerned persons, organisations and institutions need to get involved in working towards a better and just Durban. The homeless are human beings with human needs, they are not nonentities. They are affected by crime and in fact are most vulnerable to criminals.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The findings of this study once again affirms the plight of the homeless. The right to protection and accommodation is a fundamental human right internationally. One should

remember that generally people whose income are below R800.00 per month constitute about 48% of the total households and are considered living below the poverty line. The income of Durban's homeless is generally below R100.00, but a community that is self-employed and consequently an economically active group.

While the central government's vision of accommodation for all by the year 2000 is now not possible (Lewis 1997), the south and north central local authorities in particular must look at imaginative ways to urgently provide accommodation to Durban's homeless community.

### **IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:**

1. Recognition be given to prioritising the need to provide adequate, suitable, affordable, acceptable accommodation. The meagre monthly earnings will result in the homeless paying very minimal rental. Adequate accommodation will also help mothers to keep stronger links with their families and participate in the development of their children, the leaders of tomorrow.
2. Emphasis should be on fast tracking solutions instead of getting bogged down in extensive and costly studies.
3. Immediate steps be taken by a special task force to establish contact with the homeless community to ensure minimum standards of hygiene, temporary shelters and adequate facilities.
4. Immediate steps be taken to provide education to the children of the homeless community.
5. Organisations need to network and pool together resources. Planning, implementation, management and monitoring must be done on a large scale to address the needs of the homeless. There is a need for education and the need to build their self-esteem and confidence.
6. Organisations, both governmental and non-governmental (including non-community based NGO's) need to address the problem of access to land and equitable land allocation.
7. The City needs to relinquish "premium" land in the interest of urgent shelters. Land reform measures must get top priority. Cheap accommodation in the form

of flats or hostels or, in the interim, even street shelters, can be provided in the Durban central area. There is much vacant land that has not been developed.

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## **Annexure A**

### **DURBAN & WASHINGTON D.C.**

The following brief comparison between two cities (Durban and Washington D.C.) is essential to gain a glimpse of the Durban's Homeless within an international perspective.

The most elegant city of the USA, Washington D.C. has perhaps the country's worst slums and a sizeable homeless population. Seven years ago, between 1%-3% of the 650 000 total population of the inner city was homeless, about 50%-70% of these were said to

have psychiatric problems. Unemployment, inadequate social benefits and the lack of affordable housing were the other primary causes of homeless.

Washington D.C. also experienced loss of rental accommodation through conversion, demolition and abandonment. While rent control existed, landlords had more protection and rents were increased at “market” levels displacing many tenants. The situation has worsened seven years later.

Durban also has a growing homeless community within its city. In sharp contrast to Washington D.C. :-

- Durban’s homeless are almost all from outside the inner city. In fact, most of the homeless are from rural areas and from the former homelands.
- Most of Durban’s homeless have an income as a direct result of being self-employed.
- They do not get social benefits.
- While Washington D.C. has shelters howbeit with its negative socio-psychological ramifications, there are no shelters for Durban’s homeless.