AREA BASED MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

CASE STUDY:
CITIZEN ACTIVATION AND EMPOWERMENT

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November 2007
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1 Introduction

Citizen Activation and Empowerment is one of the five themes that were suggested as meriting in-depth exploration in documenting ABM experience. The INK and Cato Manor ABMs were identified as areas in which community activation and empowerment were to be investigated.

2 Inanda, KwaMashu and Ntuzuma ABM

2.1 Introduction

Discussions at the INK ABM were with Ms Nomusa Nyawo, Ms Zee Nqala and Ms Nuthan Maharaj. These discussions helped were helpful in helping us understand the various activities in which the INK staff are involved with a view to community activation and empowerment. According to these discussions, Citizen Activation started in 2004. It was a product of commissioned research which sought to establish the ways in which the INK ABM could get involved in development. Through Citizen Activation, more then 500 NGOs and CBOs, dealing with a wide range of issues, became actively involved with the INK ABM. Most of these organisations required capacity and skills development initially.

In 2004, the INK Stakeholders’ Forum was established. The Forum consists of the INK ABM staff and representatives from the NGOs and CBOs. The Forum meets monthly. Through such meetings, various issues have been addressed such as the resources requirements and skills training for NGOs and CBOs. Representatives of the community organisations have been trained in governance, local economic development and financial management. Through the engagement s with NGOs and CBOs, the Events and Culture Programme was established. Cultural Eventing includes the Drum Story Festival, which is a public drumming event for pupils in the INK schools. There is also a Cultural Renaissance project the aim of which aim is to revive cultural heritage. This is done through creative writing workshops which include poetry, essays, short stories, and songs. There is a Museum Project which seeks to revive INK heritage by identifying icons of the area, interviewing them, and collating the oral histories as a cultural heritage of the area. Towards this end, speech and presentation contests are held in schools where students’ knowledge of the area’s history and icons is tested.

There is also the Learning Journeys which provides opportunities for communities to visit and learn the skills in which they are interested. Learning Journeys also provides an opportunity for community members to
showcase their talents and skills. The Donor Mapping Project helps to identify and to link community organisations with donors who are interested in the products and skills they have to offer. An Asset Mapping Project is still being planned. This project should assist community organisations to have a better understanding of the location of resources in their area.

Among some of the identified impacts of the various community activation strategies are the improvement of the living environment, improvement of governance in organisations, infrastructure development and income generation.

This case study covers the “stakeholder” interviews with special focus on community representatives and community leaders. The report is based on interviews with community representatives and leaders around their perceptions of the ABM so far, using a series of open-ended questions. The questions sought to establish the community activation activities of the INK ABM.

The interviews were held at the INK offices in KwaMashu. The INK officials were helpful from the beginning. They not only had fore knowledge of the impending study, but they also had understanding of their facilitative role in the process. They showed no resistance and very ably invited ten people to be present at the interviews as requested. Furthermore, they provided a comfortable venue for the interviews to take place and dedicated an assistant to usher people in, per turn. Unfortunately, because of lack of accommodation, respondents had to wait their turn outside. Interviews in INK took place on Thursday, 11 July 2007.

Below is an integrated report of all points of view given by respondents in answer to the leading questions posed to them.

2.2 Context

The main ABM offices are located in E Section of KwaMashu Township in what the locals refer to as, “the old township offices”. In a way the offices are suitably located, near the township entrance, and therefore accessible to everyone, by all manner of transport, private and public. The office is also in a safe and secure place –next to the police station, and therefore safe to visit. However, to a first time visitor, the premises have that air of being makeshift and overcrowded, and look dilapidated and unwieldy. On the day of the interviews, there was electricity black out in the offices (maybe even the area), causing officials to temporarily abandon their offices and move to the City offices to use facilities there. This did not affect the interviewing process as such, but researchers could not meet with officials to get the additional background information on INK as a project, and on the staffing matters and roles that staff members play. This was however more than made up for by the presence of local Councillors and Ward Committee Members in the mix of interviewees.
We were therefore able to learn that INK comprises a total of 18 wards representing 18% of eThekwini Municipality’s population or 500,000 people in total. These people are served by management and administrative staff that are characterized as ‘very good, responsive to people and their problems, friendly, approachable and engaging’.

Historically, INK (comprising Inanda, Ntuzuma, and KwaMashu) represents the worst case of apartheid neglect and the worst case of political struggle and unrest. Before the inception of INK, the three areas were reportedly characterized by general deterioration, unavailability of social facilities, abnormally high rates of unemployment and crime, and “no development to speak of...except for over-crowded "squatter informal settlements".

This is apparently the reason these areas attracted the attention of the state president who then declared them priority areas for development. One respondent even stated that as an example of development and service delivery, the INK initiative was regarded as “number 1” (the best) nationally.

In all, eight individuals representing various formations of the INK community—community representatives and community leaders—turned up for the interviews. There were four women and four men. They ranged in age between 39 and 70 years. The women tended to be older and were involved mainly in self-help groups and co-operatives while the men, relatively younger, were involved mainly in community structures such as ward committees and council. Women tended to talk more about business and economic opportunities and availability of further Government support for their organizations, while men tended to explore if benefits, gained through the existence of ABM, were ‘cascading down’ to the ordinary population of INK.

2.3 The Role of the INK ABM

In answer to whether the respondents were aware of the ABM office, its functions and objectives, the following responses came up often in individual answers:

- ABM brings together the publics from the three areas to share resources and cooperate in development
- The ABM brings training and skills development for business management (in leadership, financial management, structuring business plans, company profiles etc.).
- They bring information about economic opportunities and help us access funding
- They lead development and progress in the area.

In addition, other respondents explained that the objectives of the INK ABM were to fast-track development by coordinating the service of various government departments to expedite service delivery and development.
It was further explained that the INK ABM also dealt mainly with three types of clients who originated organically from the community: those seeking economic opportunities; those seeking employment, and those seeking to access the welfare services of Government. To meet these needs the INK ABM had through time created various management structures.

- “Job shop” is an initiative that acts on behalf of the unemployed by acting as liaison with the labour department and private entrepreneurs to source positions etc.
- The INK Business Chamber looks out for business/economic and/or employment opportunities and subcontracts on behalf of the unemployed and SMMEs, among service providers;
- Intergovernmental Communications is a tool used to liaise with other departments to access pertinent government services

All respondents mentioned the Stakeholders Forum as the primary means of interacting with the office. Stakeholders meetings take place every first Monday of the month, and it was mentioned that it is not unusual to have 400-500 people attending per month. The Stakeholders’ Forum meetings are open to the public and so people come and go as they please.

It was explained that meetings take place on the basis of structured programmes or agendas and that these might include information sessions by invited guests dealing with pertinent issues, addresses by government departments’ representatives advertising opportunities and planned development in their areas, feedback sessions on ongoing debates and discussions about planned development initiatives and information pertaining to business opportunities available in the area. It was also mentioned that sometimes feedback and testimonies are given by people who have had the opportunity to attend specific training. The Forum is also the place where members air their views and concerns

### 2.4 Situational Analysis

Many respondents felt that the crime levels were gradually decreasing but it was not due to police work. While the respondents acknowledged the presence of CPFs Community Policing Forums, many felt the police were not visible enough. Many decried the lack of visible policing in the area, and a glaring lack of resources such as police vehicles. Among other criticisms were the observation that police are still not well-trained to interface with the public. They are unhelpful and often rude on the phones. It was noted that they are particularly evasive and reluctant to attend a crime scene when they are being called out. They often raise excuses that there are no vehicles available.

It was notable that women respondents were much more sceptical about the role the police were supposedly playing in the community to deal with crime in comparison to combating crime. There was a feeling that the police were
not much responsive to crime against women and children and one member mentioned a recent protest march that was organized against the rape of young children and that ended at the police station.

In a nutshell, the police were described as unapproachable, not responsive and not visible.

But another view was that a great deal is being done by police working in concert with the community, to contain crime in the area. These instances were mentioned as evidence:

- “Ventilation Three”: an initiative directed at increasing the number of police employed in the area.
- CPFs encouraged and revived to bridge the gap between police and the community, and foster co-operation
- Various campaigns such as Gun Free South Africa, youth desk and other initiatives which fostered good relations between the police and the community and opened the way for police to run other campaign in schools etc.

One respondent believed there were signs of increased surveillance evidenced by long poles being erected which he believed were surveillance cameras, in some areas.

There were two conflicting views on the issue of citizen activation and participation. One said INK tries hard to activate and empower communities but the public is apathetic. Another view said INK is rather too focused on business issues to the neglect of basic needs of the rest of the INK community.

A more middle-of-the-road view was that there were positive developments that have since sprouted because the communities are beginning to gel internally and extending networks beyond their immediate boundaries. They pointed out as evidence that because of the existence of the INK ABM and their work, there were groupings and associations emerging in the community, and they said that meant growth and stability for the future and in the immediate term it meant more people were finding commercial niches for themselves.

Those who were critical of the public felt that by not participating actively, the public was making it impossible to weed out the dead-wood leadership and consequently, ineffective community representatives remained in their positions long after their “use-by” dates. The result was that the community remained continually unorganized and apathetic.

Those critical of ABM’s focus on big development projects felt that there was no balance between the pull of “big money” and that of basic community needs, namely the struggle to get out of poverty. An argument was made that these big developments are “administratively good” but the gains that they make do not accrue to the local community Instead they are siphoned out of the locality back to big businesses who do not even reside in the area.
Another issue that came up often when discussing community activation was the role of councillors and ward committees. It was felt that on their own, councillors were unable to represent and activate neighbourhoods fully. “They are ill equipped, have no offices, have no registers of their own population and do not keep in their possession, simple administrative forms and documents that citizens may need on a daily basis”

Most importantly it was felt that councillors do not really know the residents in their own wards; do not know much about prevailing circumstances in peoples homes and in the neighbourhood.

Ultimately, it was claimed that councillors tended to “put politics in development” and in the process derail community focus and community goodwill. It was claimed that they do not attend stakeholder fora, if they do, they do not report back to their constituencies on the major issues raised. It was claimed that by this they create a gap in information and knowledge reaching back to communities.

All in all, it was generally agreed that “INK is open to all citizens, equally”.

Many respondents spoke enthusiastically about “fairs and exhibitions” that the ABM arranges in the community. They felt that these provided good exposure for their products and encouraged networking with other SMMEs and with big business for future cooperation. With respect to public attendance, respondents noted that summer events are better attended than winter events.

It was felt that the culture and eventing unit of the INK ABM took into account all sectors of the community with the youth and the physically disabled receiving mention as an example of such inclusiveness. Respondents also felt that the net was cast wide enough to capture the modes of cultural activities and entertainment that people enjoy to practice and/or to watch. Respondents were especially proud that they no longer have to go all the way to the City to enjoy culture, and of the fact that the culture they are exposed to is their own, as a people. They felt that this “raises self-esteem” in the community. A related point made was also that these events were not only well-planned but that they were also meaningful because of the awards components to them.

On a different note, it was said that the events were beginning to show a marked “recycling of participants” a suggestion that perhaps there was no marked increase of new players or new products being exhibited in these fairs.

A question posed to respondents was: are you aware of the ABM interventions. This question did not work very well coming shortly after a broad question posed before. Respondents tended rather to zero in on how matters they had discussed above could be improved upon. This was the subject of the next question, namely: (based on interventions) explore how the ABM office could better meet community needs.
The community wants to see more police on the streets at all times. They wanted to see an increase in the number of police vehicles and increased patrols. While they were supportive of such police initiatives as awareness raising in schools and campaigns against drugs (weak as they are) and other crimes, the overwhelming feeling was that while there was commitment to crime prevention, there was not enough commitment to fighting crime and being helpful to the citizenry in the police.

Elaborating on the mentioned note that the focus in the INK ABM was mainly on business, and gradually on business on a large scale, respondents harped back and forth on the idea of taking the community along on the path of development. Specifically, respondents wanted a focus-shift to the ever mushrooming informal settlements and ‘population explosion’, to health matters, saying “there is a lot of sickness in the communities” and to welfare “because not everybody can be in a co-op”.

They also expressed a need to extend skills and other training to the unemployed especially youth, for gainful employment in the open market.

On another level, they wanted ward committees to be empowered to take the lead in community organization. They felt that ward committees are even closer to the communities than councillors can ever be. This view was coupled with a felt need to draw more people to participate in INK so that they can be exposed to possibilities for ‘self-development’.

Respondents zeroed in on accommodation when pondering the issue of culture. They all suggested that there were many structures lying bare within communities some being schools that had closed down and others being shops that were abandoned or burned down at the height of political unrest in the area. They felt that these could be renovated to provide workshops, exhibition and retail space for SMMEs within the communities.

Those informants who had an interest in environmental preservation, felt that some of the land lying vacant could be used to start gardening projects that would supply soup kitchens that could be started to feed the more indigent in the community.

Individuals were asked what should be the long term outcome of the ABM? Respondents prefaced their answers by mentioning that INK was only just coming to its own, as a great deal of time had been spent “talking about” community needs an setting up structures. However they saw it lasting well in to the future because there was still “more work to be done”.

Among some of the dreams respondents harbouried were:

World level exposure

Those involved mainly in co-ops felt that they had not even scratched the surface of what could be done to gain exposure of their products to the world. They felt that aggressive steps should be taken to improve structures in the
communities so that INK can attract major investments and money spending tourists into these communities. They also wanted more opportunities to market their products abroad. They wanted INK to start business training for the youth so that they could enhance their creativity and learn to produce and market their handiwork on a large scale “like the Taiwanese and Chinese”.

❖ Social facilities

While the respondents acknowledged that such developments like Dube Village and KwaMashu Trading Centre had saved residents the cost of transport, brought services closer, brought up the value of their properties and increased local employment, recreational facilities were lagging behind. They wanted to see a mushrooming of world class sports fields, swimming pools and theatres and other amenities to keep their children safe and entertained and maybe even learn skills they could make a living by in the future.

❖ Infrastructure

While many were pleased with the state of roads and bus shelters and taxi ranks, they felt that more still needed to be done. They had a particular concern about reoccurring informal settlements and absence of toilet facilities there. They also complained about frequent black outs in the area.

❖ Return to Ubuntu

Respondents felt that with the INK ABM in their corner, they stood a chance to return the communities to Ubuntu, where residents would relearn not only to cooperate but also to empathise with each other and therefore be helpful to each other. They stated that they were anxious to see improved “community living” free of disease, and crime and poverty.

❖ Praise for the INK ABM

Put together the sentiments expressed by the respondents were that: the INK ABM had taught the communities the value of cooperation, and of setting priorities and working towards a common goal, “a better life for all”. INK had fostered understanding of the living environment INK had brought in “big developments” that increased local employment opportunities. INK had earned the goodwill of the public as evidenced by the improved paying of rates.

❖ Hurdles still to be crossed

Competition: Respondents felt that sometimes there were tensions among the three communities over development. For instance it was felt there Ntuzuma residents resent that they do not have their own big developments because there is no more land on which to build. Inanda also has limited room because the land is privately owned and owners, for various reasons, are not willing to let go of their land.
Structures lying bare in the townships: While some respondents were eyeing these structures as possible business centres, explanations were made that these were under complex ownership that would take time to unravel.

3 The Cato Manor ABM

3.1 Introduction

While the interaction with the INK ABM was smooth and cordial, interaction with the Cato Manor ABM was, initially, difficult. The Cato Manor ABM staff who were supposed to facilitate the interaction with community members and organisations indicated that they were not aware of the project and that they did not know what the objectives of the project were. They demanded to see the Terms of Reference of the project. In order to iron out such difficulties, a meeting was held between the Project Team and the Cato Manor ABM staff together with Mr Collin Pillay, who is the project manager for the study. At that meeting, the objectives of the study and the role of the Cato Manor ABM were discussed. At the end of the meeting, Cato Manor ABM staff that were to assist Project Team members had been identified.

A week after that meeting, our staff members could not set up a meeting with the identified person at the ABM. The report was that the member did not know what the Terms of Reference were. After another meeting to discuss the objectives of the project, we received names of community members to interview. Because of the areas of operations of the people we interviewed, the discussion tended to centre on the activation of business and economic empowerment.

The Cato Manor ABM assumed responsibility of Cato Manor after the Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA), which had started the community activation and empowerment process. The ABM continued in the steps of the CMDA. It has continued to work with the Stakeholders Forum, which started during the time of the CMDA. The Cato Manor ABM stakeholders can be divided into two; i.e. those who have long-term project engagement with the ABM and the community structures in the area. One of the main challenges for the ABM is that Cato Manor, unlike other areas within ETHekwini Municipality, tends to have a much more fluid population with membership constantly changing. Such changes have an impact on organisational structures and the ABM engagement with such organisations.

Among some of the ABM’s major interventions are the following; they conduct research which is used to inform the decision-making processes regarding options for intervention and for development. Some of the research that has been conducted includes Social Development (number and capacity of HIV/AIDS service providers and Sports clubs); Institutional Development (Skills audit of institutions); and Economic Development (Development needs of SMMEs, Co-operatives, Business Hives, and Home Businesses). Among
some of the Community Activation events are the Community Safety Initiative, Arbour Week, Orphans’ Christmas Party, Woza Durban Summer Picnic, Corporate Breakfast meeting, Beautification Campaign, Whole Schools Initiative and various Sports Events. The events are meant to build the community spirit among the people of Cato Manor. While such community activation works for most areas of Cato Manor, there are areas whose members tend not to participate in general community activities, unless the issues involved affect them directly.

To enhance the skill levels and to create employment opportunities in the area, there are numerous projects that have been established which focus on social development, institutional development and economic development. Because there is a team dealing with projects, these will not be mentioned and/or discussed here.

The primary objective of the Cato Manor study was to understand the process of Community Activation and Empowerment in Area Based Management. This case study outlines participants’ views on the functions and objectives of the ABM office, their various engagements with the ABM office, what they perceive to be the ABM’s intervention in fighting crime in the area, and details of any other empowerment activities aimed at fighting injustice in the community. In conclusion, the paper reflects on what participants cited as challenges facing the work of ABM. Together with the challenges are the strengths and opportunities of the ABM projects in Cato Manor.

Study participants consisted of both partners/stakeholders and beneficiaries of services (see attached list). While the study aimed at interviewing four (4) partners, only two (2) were available for interviews, and all five (5) beneficiaries who were identified made themselves available. Structured interviews were conducted using questionnaires (see attached copy of a questionnaire). Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. All interviews, except one with a partner, were conducted at the beneficiaries’ location of operation. This approach provided a holistic view on what each business was trying to achieve and the opportunity facilitated the researcher’s understanding of the context, for example, how businesses in a hive operate.

3.2 The Role of the Cato Manor ABM

All beneficiaries were fully conversant with the Community Activation activities of the ABM office in Cato Manor, and only one of the partners interviewed indicated that he was not fully aware of what the ABM office was trying to achieve. Based on the kinds of engagements the interviewees had with the ABM office, they stated that the primary focus was to develop the community in various ways by linking beneficiaries with key stakeholders who can deliver services to the community.

It was apparent to all that one of the aims of the ABM is to bring development to the community and ensure a conducive and stable economic climate. To
support this view, respondents reflected on the types of business development trainings that have been offered to small businesses, for example, marketing, access to funding, financial management, leadership training, etc. According to seven (7) of those interviewed, the ABM office coordinates trainings to help expand their opportunities and choices in life, such as creating employment opportunities for SMMEs.

According to one respondent, ABM’s intervention in Cato Manor is informed by research. Research findings are used to determine strategies on how people could be helped, so that in turn, they are able to help themselves. While the goal is to empower the community, political dynamics were cited as a major hindrance in creating unnecessary backlogs related to service delivery on the part of the ABM office.

Basically, the majority of those interviewed were overwhelmingly in agreement that the ABM’s Community Activation functions comprise the following:

- **Facilitator**
  
  In this role, the ABM office links community members to available resources, including business opportunities. A database of service providers has been established, and the ABM office facilitates the process of exposing SMMEs to new business opportunities. As facilitator, the AMB office also provides information that leads to access to funding for SMMEs. For example, a Tri-Nation Conference in 2006 for SMMEs was held at ICC, and the cost came to R1200 per delegate. While it was reported that other ABM’s paid 50% of the total cost to support small businesses, Cato Manor ABM paid 100% to encourage SMMEs to attend that important conference.

  In this role, the ABM office also supports community development through cooperative development and mentorship of small businesses through development and support.

- **Coordinator**
  
  In this capacity, ABM offices coordinate services by outsourcing ongoing trainings that aim to empower community members. In achieving this purpose, respondents mentioned key stakeholders working jointly with the ABM to bring development into the community, such as Makho Communications, Natal Portland Cement, Indumiso, etc. Makho Communications has helped SMMEs who were not registered with information on business plan writing and further assisted with the process of new companies’ registration.

- **Overseer**
  
  According to the study participants, the function of ABM is to implement policies that aim to regulate and monitor the process of development. For example, ABM ensures that policies are adhered to in the hives such as regulating duplication of businesses to avoid unhealthy competition.
Reflecting on the above objectives and functions, the role and place of the ABM office in Cato Manor seems fairly clear in the minds of the interviewees. However, it has not been smooth-sailing for the ABM (see ‘challenges’ below).

**Whole School Development Initiative**

The Cato Manor Whole Schools development initiative is a partnership between public, private and civil society organisations which was initiated by the Greater Durban Community Foundation (GDCF). This initiative brings together the eThekwini Municipality, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, Durban’s business community, NGOs and the Cato Manor community to develop and improve education in all 14 Cato Manor schools. The Whole School’s initiative was adopted by the ABM owing to its holistic approach to school and community development.

The Whole Schools initiative is envisaged as a 5 year program the aim of which is to develop all 14 schools into well managed centres of excellence, producing generations of school leavers with improved results and life skills. The lead implementing agent of the initiative is the Institute for Partnerships between Business and Education (IPEB). IPEB implements the initiative in collaboration with the following NGOs; Business Against Crime, Centre for the Advancement of Science & Maths Education, Environment and Language Education Trust, Institute for Partnerships between Business and Education, Operation Upgrade, Project Build, Training and Education for Early Education, Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa, Cato Manor ABM, and the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

A base-line survey which was conducted in November 2006 in all 14 schools (5 high schools, 8 primary schools and 1 special school) revealed that, among some of the major issues to be addressed are the following;

- **Discipline Safety & Security**
  - High schools have problems with substance abuse, weapons, theft, violence and vandalism
  - Primary schools report fewer problems
  - Sexual abuse rarely reported
  - 124 pregnancies reported by 7 schools

- **Food Security**
  - Only half of the primary schools are on the DoE Nutrition scheme
  - Only 6 of the 14 schools have their own nutrition schemes

- **Sports**
  - Wide range of sports codes on offer, however access to facilities and sporting equipment an issue

- **Culture**
  - Limited options and very few children participate
• **Health**
  - Limited grasp of children’s health issues
  - Even more limited grasp of teacher health issues
  - HIV/AIDS dealt with by 3rd parties

• **Governance**
  - 2 schools have serious School Governing Body (SGB) problems
  - SGBs were elected in 2006
  - School policies need to be reviewed
  - Management are looking for more involvement from parents

**Progress to Date**
The Whole Schools Programme is expected to run for five years. Commencement was at the beginning of 2007. At the time of this investigation, the programme was still at the ‘early stage of planning’. According to a representative of the Programme, some of the work was interrupted by the teachers’ strike which took place earlier this year.

3.3 Situational Analysis Regarding Economic Empowerment
3.3.1 Sidlakahle Catering

Sidlakahle operates within the Wiggins Hive. They have had interactions with the ABM office since 2004, soon after the hive was taken over from the Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA). Sidlakahle continues to have strategic engagements with the ABM office through participation in their ongoing trainings. Despite Sidlakahle's owner being a food service manager, she continues to prioritise ABM meetings and workshops because they empower her with skills and knowledge. The last training that she attended was on productivity, and she graduated at a ceremony for Women in Business held at ICC in July 2007.

Further engagements with the ABM office are facilitated by her role as a member of the Wiggins Hive Committee. One of the Committee's key responsibilities is to collect monthly rentals from the tenants at Wiggins Hive. The Committee grants a working site to prospective business owners on condition that they run their businesses on a full-time basis. Members must be in a position to afford a monthly payment of R100. The Committee, under the authority of the ABM office, discourages duplication of businesses to avoid unnecessary competition.

3.3.2 Phindubuye Cooperative

The cooperative has had interactions with the ABM office since 2006 after their registration in September 2005. It was reported that the cooperative started with approximately thirty-two (32) members, but is now left with five (5) members. They attended their first 3-week training at Swinton College where they had gone as individuals interested in business opportunities. During the training, they were encouraged to form a cooperative. They developed a business plan with the assistance of facilitators from Swinton College, which was thereafter forwarded to Ithala Bank to secure funding. While already in operation, ABM took over after they had been invited to a workshop organised for all SMMEs in the area to share information and compile a database of services available within the community. At that meeting held in 2006, all cooperatives were invited to register in a government database. The cooperative was later selected to cater for four (4) community events at various periods.
3.3.3 Khulasizwe Organic Farming Cooperative

THz cooperative has had interactions with ABM since 2004, when they still practiced subsistence farming. ABM previously provided tools/equipment and seeds for individuals involved in subsistence farming. The farmers were later encouraged to form a cooperative in 2006, and they were assisted with the registration process. They are currently receiving relevant trainings coordinated by the ABM. The group started with one hundred and ninety (190) members, and they are only left with ninety (90) members at present. During the study, members of the cooperative were participating in a one-month leadership and management training course.

The ABM office has funded the hydroponics tunnels for growing mushrooms and also installed chicken runs to support their business.

3.3.4 Siyancenga Cooperative

The cooperative has had engagements with the ABM office since 2005. Prior to that, they did their individual sewing at the Container Park in Cato Manor. The ABM office encouraged them to work as a collective by establishing a cooperative. They received necessary training and gained skills and information on business plan writing, business management, and marketing. They started as a group of eleven (11) women, but are now left with four (4) members.
According to the respondents, the quality of training that they have received has equipped them with relevant skills and knowledge to run an effective business.

3.3.5 Natal Portland Cement (NPC)

As one of the key partners, the NPC has had engagements with the ABM office since 2004. However, it was reported that it is not an ongoing relationship. The NPC provides decentralised trainings for SMMEs in Cato Manor when a need arises. Training content includes cement uses and applications, block-making, and advice on purchasing construction material. It is commonly assumed that most of those in construction know everything about the use of cement, but according to NPC, these trainings reveal that people need additional information. Such trainings include quality control since this is an important aspect of a business. SMMEs are encouraged in various ways to produce quality products. Measures used to ensure quality include taking their products for quality checks before sales are made.

Approximately two years ago, NPC began to assist SMMEs with the equipment for block-making. Such equipment is lent to members for a short-term until their businesses are financially viable to afford the purchase of their own tools.

3.3.6 Construction and Laundry Business cc
This business operates within the Bellair Market Hive. The business owner has had interactions with the ABM office since 2004 when they took over from CMDA. He continues to attend ongoing trainings provided by the ABM. For example, he attended training in 2006 facilitated by NPC on block-making and another training in 2007 on marketing skills facilitated by Makho Communications.

3.3.7 Bhekimpilo

Bhekimpilo is a health organisation that provides HIV and AIDS education. The organisation participates in monthly stakeholders’ meetings and they have had such engagements with the ABM office since 2004.

Most of the respondents didn’t know anything about ABM’s involvement in issues of crime and other interventions aimed at fighting other forms of injustices in the community. In cases where responses were provided, the information was scanty and insufficient. Four respondents reported that most community activities are outsourced to external service providers, and this has a negative impact because community members lose interest in getting involved. For example, external experts facilitated a workshop for children in 2007 aimed at raising awareness against abuse.

Activities aimed at community empowerment included the Christmas Party organised for orphans in the community in December 2006. To further protect the rights and safety of children, ABM facilitated the building of a pedestrian bridge, which was completed and later launched in 2006. This helped to curb the number of drowning children, which was high during heavy rainfalls. Every month, there are soccer and netball tournaments to empower the youth.

Briefly, reflecting on the responses given, it was evident that businesses operating within the hives have a 24-hour security and they have not been severely affected by crime. However, the situation is different for businesses operating outside the hives, which have no security systems in place. It was reported that ABM takes full responsibility for the 24-hour security within the hives. The installation of a security system for SMMEs outside the hives would require that they dig deep into their pockets. Phindubuye Cooperative, one of the cooperatives operating outside the hives, has experienced a break-in due to lack of security.

Two of those interviewed mentioned a 2-day training on crime which was held on 30 – 31 July 2007. It was also reported that there is a committee, working jointly with the Community Policing Forum (CPF) to fight crime in the wider community.

Respondents further reported that ABM occasionally invites all businesses in Cato Manor for information sharing sessions. At such gatherings, relevant speakers address SMMEs on different topics of interest, for example, SARS outlined the registration process.
It also emerged that the community of Cato Manor once invited members of the ABM to find out their role in community development. This was due to anger at grass roots level after the ABM took full responsibility for the community park in Cato Crest, which was initially in the hands of the community during CMDA’s tenure. According to one respondent, members now pay to access the community park, and the ABM benefits.

4 Assessing ABM Successes and Failures

Having explored the relationship between ABM and the community, it is recommended that service providers be discouraged from developing expectations that the ABM office is there to create job opportunities. It should be clarified to all that ABM’s primary role is to establish a favourable climate for business development. The impression that jobs will come from the ABM creates a dependency syndrome. As one respondent lamented:
“The ABM office offers job opportunities in the catering business in a very inconsistent manner. We occasionally get catering opportunities from them and when it happens, it happens once in a blue moon. This usually means getting one opportunity in three months. However, we have bills to be paid and that includes bank loan repayments of R800 a month, and some months we grapple to make timeous monthly rental payment of R350. It is worth mentioning that on several occasions we fail to meet our financial obligations. We are also entrusted with small orders consisting of a small quantity of people, for example, catering for 20 or 30 people. This fails to make a substantial impact on our financial situation.”

The claims outlined above are directed at the ABM office and they clearly indicate a serious misconception on the part of the beneficiary concerned. It is the responsibility of every business to understand its mandate in creating a viable business, effectively positioned for success, by employing effective marketing strategies.

The ABM office also needs to foster cross-pollination, whereby established businesses mentor emerging ones by holding joint sessions of information sharing (e.g. how they started, challenges encountered on the way, success stories, etc), thus helping emerging entrepreneurs to learn. For example, observations reveal that Sidlakahle has become an established business in the catering field and other emerging caterers look up to this model. Such resources need to be fully utilised during the information-sharing sessions.

Issues of sustainable development are interwoven with self-reliance and self-sufficiency, and adaptability to a changing business context. While the ABM office continues to outsource services to external experts, it is imperative that they also rely on using businesses from within the community. Due to high competition in the local business context, Sidlakahle has re-positioned itself as an emergency supplier. They have learned to be flexible by purposefully accommodating emergencies and finding means to respond to the needs of their clients. Other emerging caterers are unable to work in such an unpredictable climate due to shortage of resources. However, innovation in business is what sets Sidlakahle apart from other emerging caterers. The challenge, however, is to also support emerging businesses for sustainability in a competitive climate.

The ABM needs to seriously engage with the question: What is the purpose of ongoing trainings? How useful and sustainable is the knowledge gained from such trainings? According to four (4) beneficiaries, members of the community have attended trainings on block-making since 2004, but nobody in the community has succeeded in this business on block-making due to land shortages.

While the ABM is aware of such gaps in service provision, it has not prioritised land acquisition for the benefit of the community. A partner from NPC who has been instrumental in facilitating trainings on block-making also alluded to the issue of land scarcity as a stumbling block to block-making businesses. In
this particular context of land scarcity, such training is ineffective as it can never be tried and tested.

5 Recommendations for a realignment of interventions

According to the observation of two respondents, some members of the community have become pessimistic about the role and function of the ABM. It was suggested that information should be distributed widely to keep people abreast of developments taking place in the community. The ABM office could utilise media such as newspapers and community radios to fulfil this purpose.

It also emerged that the ABM staff has to make an effort in developing teamwork and fostering a team spirit. According to one respondent, different ABM programmes work in isolation, whereas, a collective effort should be promoted in coordinating and presenting all programmes to the community. In community structures, ABM should be concerned about issues of representation, ensuring that marginalized groups are equitably represented: women, youth, disabled, etc. It was further suggested that in community/ABM partnerships, ABM should decentralise power. They should not always be seen as the only powerful voice in decision-making. This means, in working with the community, the ABM office should adopt a bottom-up approach versus a top-down one.

The ABM office has a challenge to create dialogue with community members. It is imperative to go to the community, find out what their priorities are and help them find their own solutions. Currently, this is happening in a limited manner. As reported by members in the construction business:

“We approached the ABM office and requested that in dealing with those in construction, they have to recognise our various expertise. Therefore, we would like to be divided into different interest groups, for example, plumbing, roofing, bricklaying, etc. Each group has already established a committee to oversee all functions of its committee members, particularly in ensuring that the group gets training tailored for their needs. However, the ABM has failed to follow-up as a way of supporting this vision. Instead, members of the community involved in construction have only received training in block-making, something that most of them do not need”

This is a common challenge in community development processes because when individuals demonstrate their capabilities, pre-identified indicators are not flexible enough to accommodate unexpected changes. In this particular instance, one respondent further reported that he would like the ABM office to invite the SETA involved in construction to address them in one of the information-sharing sessions.
Similarly, three respondents also mentioned that while expertise are available within the community, the ABM office continuously outsource construction-related jobs to outsiders.

A bottom-up approach maintains that the success of the community is largely based on being allowed to own the process, therefore, the process of development becomes as critical as the outcomes (end results). This can only happen when people’s views are listened to, and there is a joint problem solving between the community and the development agent, in this case, ABM. Top-down approaches unintentionally hinder progress since people tend to resist imposed solutions and methods.

Capacity development is about building on existing skills and knowledge, that is, enhancing people’s existing abilities. One respondent warned that the ABM office needs to build on existing structures to avoid confusion and duplication of services. To ensure that democracy thrives, the ABM should not approach issues of development in Cato Manor as if nothing has been happening prior to the establishment of ABMs. It was also reported that Cato Manor has four wards (Ward, 24, 29, 30 and 31), but there has never been a situation where Local Councillors were represented at meetings initiated by the ABM staff. The Council has its own frequent meetings, while ABM pushes a separate agenda. This, according to the study participants, is due to competing interests with both local Councillors and the ABM office having different motives in doing what they do. However, both groups have to mobilise the community to ensure that people benefit from services provided and move beyond political party lines.

Furthermore, two respondents also argued that the work of the ABM office fails to build on existing skills. They continuously introduce new business skills which SMMEs are not interested in pursuing. An example is that people in construction have outlined their existing skills with the hope of enhancing them e.g., bricklaying, roofing, painting, etc, but they receive training on block-making, overlooking their existing skills which could provide for their specific needs. As one responded stated:

“As someone who has years of experience in the construction business, all I need is to improve skills I already have in bricklaying. I have communicated this to the ABM office on several occasions, but my training needs have been overlooked. Rather we have been given training in block-making, something I do not exactly require.”

Siyancenga cooperative provides a classic example of the negative repercussions of failure to build on existing skills and knowledge. This cooperative currently operates as a factory manufacturing soccer balls and shoes. Owners of the business, who happen to be two white females who act as middlemen, collect finished products to sell in markets accessible to them. The women’s cooperative, responsible for producing the products, are paid R17 for each soccer ball sold (it is worth mentioning that it takes a whole day to produce one soccer ball). These women would like to own tools of production for ball-making. As earlier mentioned, the women involved in
Siyancenga cooperative had previously worked individually in sewing prior to their involvement with the ABM office. The ABM office encouraged them to establish a cooperative to foster collective support and increasing their chances for business opportunities. However, it has become evident that the cooperatives’ work has not benefited the individuals as it has become difficult to make the kind of profit that was envisaged.

In the past, the ABM office has offered different training opportunities to Siyancenga, including marketing, but their business does not directly benefit from such trainings because they do not own the material used to make the soccer balls. As mentioned earlier, their primary task is to manufacture the soccer balls, and they are not responsible for marketing and selling, although they have received training in this regard. Siyancenga cooperative reported on an exhibition for small businesses at ICC, which they also attended. They stated that prospective clients at the ICC exhibition realised that Siyancenga business interests are still in white hands. The role of the middlemen creates dependency and promotes oppression. While the women complain that they are not making much profit in this business, they are happy that the white women are responsible for the monthly rentals of R2000, which they know they would not otherwise afford.

A key learning from the case study of Siyancenga cooperative is that individuals who performed better doing what they knew best, that is, sewing, were now disadvantaged with the new skill they have learned. It would seem therefore, that the new business venture, which disregarded their original skills has, in effect, undermined their prospects of growth and development.

There is a need for members of the community to document their experiences for purposes of reflection and learning. Most members do not even have records to draw factual information from as a basis for their arguments. Therefore, in many cases, dates of events are mere estimates. This objective could be achieved by encouraging SMMEs to keep an up-to-date information system related to the business. Wherever possible, they should also keep journals to document their personal experiences, which they could reflect upon, and draw learning from to inform future action.

It was reported that the eThekwini Municipality manages the database of service providers in the catering business, which used to be managed locally by the ABM office, and this new development marginalizes emerging entrepreneurs. The former system worked best because it protected the interests of emerging entrepreneurs. Only caterers living in the area could get business opportunities, but that has changed. The eThekwini Municipality is able to bring to Cato Manor caterers from as far afield as Pinetown and vice versa. In this new context, only established caterers are able to stand the fierce competitive climate.

The ABM needs to trust new caterers’ abilities by giving them similar opportunities afforded to established businesses. For example, emerging caterers are not given big businesses in terms of quantity. It was reported that they are commonly asked to cater for a maximum of 30 people. In situations where they are requested to cater for approximately 200 individuals, it is
mainly for children’s events where they are required to offer light meals such as hot dogs. Consequently, the emerging business owners are not able to break even. As a result, they have failed to honour their loan repayments to respective banks.

Emerging entrepreneurs do not feel supported in the way established businesses do. For example, Phindubuye Cooperative indicated a desire to have training in marketing, and they have been on the waiting list since 2006. Again, they have already liaised with the local councillor to secure available property for their business, hoping that the ABM office could further negotiate on their behalf.

It was observed during the study that while SMMEs operating within the hives are over-saturated with information, those outside the hives are lacking. Their names remain on lists to access future training. For example, it was reported that Phindubuye cooperative has been promised trainings on numerous occasions, but since their interaction with the ABM office in 2006, they haven’t been to any training.

Businesses within the hives are also protected by a 24-hour security system, which is not available to those operating outside the hives. Moreover, SMMEs within the hives pay as little as R100 a month for rentals, whereas those outside the hives could pay up to R2000 a month.

It was also noted that the needs of those operating within hives are prioritised, for example, job opportunities are easily accessible to them, whereas those outside the hives struggle to market their businesses. This is partly due to limited training, since most of them have never received any training in marketing skills. Again, Phindubuye cooperative has informed the ABM office of a need to get a secure venue for their business in a viable area. The business currently operates on church premises in a room behind the building. It makes it difficult for passers-by to choose a meal from Phindubuye, because they cannot even see the restaurant from the street. In September 2006, the ABM office promised to follow-up but it was reported that nothing has happened since.

It is clear from the findings of the study that businesses operating within hives receive overwhelming support and encouragement from the ABM office, while those outside the hives are left to fend for themselves. This creates problems related to unfair discrimination and unequal sharing of resources, calling into question whether the ABM office has considered issues of equity for sustainable development.

At the time of the interviews, the interviewees were not aware of any cooperative that was working successfully as a collective for the common good. The ABM office needs to be aware that it will be a challenge to find models of cooperatives in poverty-stricken communities that can thrive in a capitalist society. The capitalist system promotes accumulation of wealth for individual gain, and poor people are advised to form cooperatives, which in the end require a lot of management and leadership skills that most of them do not possess. Lack of skills in conflict resolution also remains a challenge.
within cooperatives. The study respondents from the three cooperatives that participated in the study mentioned that some problems are related to the internal workings of such cooperatives whereby certain members expect to reap benefits with minimal input. Moreover, certain individuals within cooperatives have realised that in terms of human capital, they are more advanced than their peers, then question the logic in receiving similar benefits as the rest of the group. As a result, those with knowledge and skills want to be paid more in monetary value because they see themselves as deserving. This is largely due to the fact that the quantity of members in most cooperatives is quite huge. How does one expect ninety (90) members in a cooperative to realistically benefit from the fruits of their labour? If the capitalist system is about self-enrichment and pursuing self-interests, development practitioners should not be fooled to assume that poor people would continue doing what does not work without questioning. All the respondents, except one, strongly argue against the existence of cooperatives, firmly believing that they have failed to function effectively in Cato Manor.

According to the study participants, some cooperatives fail and collapse due to lack of proper mentoring and coaching. It was reported that there is no proper monitoring after the registration process. Moreover, people wait too long for the registration process to be concluded. During the waiting period, members of the cooperative become disillusioned and uncertain about the future. When conflicts emerge, most cooperatives fail to manage and to resolve conflict effectively, and inevitably some cooperatives eventually collapse. The study illustrates that the cooperatives that participated in the study began operating with a large membership, which they later lost due to similar challenges. The ABM office also needs to come to the party and assist in conflict management whenever conflicts arise within cooperatives.

In a nutshell, cooperatives are a wonderful model for promoting collective achievements and collective profits, but development practitioners should not overlook the context in which cooperatives operate. At the end of the day, cooperatives are made up of individuals who have dreams of a better future. Therefore, the hope is that they could some day break even and move away from a survivalist kind of activity. A possible solution would be to divide members of a cooperative into smaller groups, and encourage them to specialise in specific fields.
## 6 Annexure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation/Company</th>
<th>Key competencies</th>
<th>Business location</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Relationship with ABM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Nkosi</td>
<td>Natal Portland Cement</td>
<td>- Training in manufacturing concrete products e.g. bricks and blocks&lt;br&gt; - Technical advice provided for SMMEs in construction e.g. uses and application of cement, purchasing of building tools/equipment, etc</td>
<td>Bellair</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>±32</td>
<td>Partner since 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siya Maphumulo</td>
<td>Bhekimpilo</td>
<td>- HIV and AIDS education</td>
<td>Business Park, Booth Rd</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>±35</td>
<td>Partner since 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomalanga Mkhize</td>
<td>Sidlakahle Catering</td>
<td>- Catering</td>
<td>Wiggins Hive, Cato Manor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Beneficiary since 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonhlanhla Msomi</td>
<td>Phindubuye Cooperative</td>
<td>- Catering</td>
<td>Roman Catholic Church, Chesterville</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Beneficiary since 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelisiwe Xulu</td>
<td>Phindubuye Cooperative</td>
<td>- Catering</td>
<td>Roman Catholic Church, Chesterville</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Beneficiary since 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thamsanqa Khanyile</td>
<td>Khulasizwe Organic Farming</td>
<td>- Organic farming</td>
<td>Cato Manor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Beneficiary since 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonisiwe Zondi</td>
<td>Siyancenga Cooperative</td>
<td>- Manufacture soccer balls and shoes</td>
<td>Entrepreneur Support Centre (ESC), Booth Rd</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>±42</td>
<td>Beneficiary since 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodenough Bayeni</td>
<td>Construction/Laundry</td>
<td>- Bellair Market Hive</td>
<td>Bellair Rd, Cato Manor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>±52</td>
<td>Beneficiary since 2004</td>
</tr>
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