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Title: The Keepers of kwaMbonambi: Apiculture as a catalyst in the negation of the spatial legacy of apartheid planning.

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KwaMbonambi meaning "place where chiefs gather" is a rural town 30 km north of Richards Bay in Kwa-Zulu Natal. In contrast to its name, it seems that KwaMbonambi is a segregated place. Engulfed by plantations, lie three distinct residential communities: the Informal Settlement, the Old Town and the Suburb.

The easily accessible 'Old Town' contains the infrastructure such as the police station, the post office and the liquor store. The Informal Settlement sector however which contains both industry and rows of cement block RDP houses are quarantined to the west of the area, with only one way in and one way out; an imposed spatial measure to keep 'the others' in. The railway and buffer-zones are the spatial barriers that lie between these communities which results in the perceived isolation. Residential segregation may be one of the strongest features of the Apartheid Legacy that has remained largely unchanged still today. Both the 'Old Town and Township have experienced sprawl from out their edges but never seem to encompass the spatial barriers set out by apartheid planning. This divided past calls for healing of divisions to promote unity.

A project in KwaMbonambi has to attempt to integrate the Township Community into the Old Town from which they are currently spatially excluded. The siting of the project aims to create a place of intersection that promotes local intergroup interaction as well as the introduction of tourists. This place of exchange forms the new town center, a key piece to the main street of the Old Town. This reclamation of space will enable the township residents access to services such as the post office where social grants are to be fetched. To represent the Township Community in the main street of the Old Town Sector I propose an Apicultural Center. Holding fast to its trademark feature of endless eucalyptus trees, bees are a natural byproduct of the site.

People from the KwaMbonambi informal settlement have started capitalizing on these natural resources by starting to keep their own bees. Currently there are fifty-one families with at least five hives each that have the potential to produce four tons of honey a year. The international honey shortage provides opportunities for these rural beekeepers to act as a collective to manage their resources and offer a means of economic independence. Adding to the validity of this project is the problem of frequent fires that occur in the major Sappi plantations due to 'wild-hive-robbing' by the youth. The new facility will house production, commerce and health facilities as well as an education hub where people from within and out the community will learn about the bees.

This project requires the participation of the whole town over a range of different scales: from the management of a single hive to the eventual hosting of tourists that will benefit the whole town economically and act as a catalyst for both further development and investment.