

Chapter 7

Beyond the Household: State and Civil Society Relations

7.1 Introduction

In post-apartheid South Africa, because of the transition to democracy, civil society faced a serious setback as its agenda and role became unclear. There were new challenges of poverty, unemployment and AIDS. South Africa's history of political violence in most communities also posed its own challenges. Therefore, most old organisations, particularly those who were seen as not addressing the new crises, were rendered obsolete. These were mainly political organisations, because of political violence and their new political role in local, provincial and national government. Trade unions shifted back to workplace issues but because of high unemployment, the fragmentation of the labour market and a rise in atypical forms of work in the country, they, too, are seen as not responding to the new crises, leading to a further crisis of representation in the two communities.

However, church organisations refocused and continued addressing community issues. They became a source of hope for many communities trying to deal with the new crises of unemployment and AIDS. This chapter discusses women's groups at the Methodist, Anglican and Lutheran churches in the two communities. New and embryonic forms of social movements and counter-movements (Polanyi, 2001) also emerged in post-apartheid South Africa. These organisations responded directly to community issues and engaged the local government on pertinent community issues such as service delivery. Rather than focus on "assets and capabilities of the poor", these organisations made demands for basic needs and the eradication of poverty. Examples discussed in this chapter are the

Mpumalanga Concerned Citizens Group (MCCG), the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) in Mpumalanga Township, and Home-based Community Health Workers from the Emseni-Hospice Organisation benefiting Enhlalakahle Township.

Therefore, this chapter argues, community-based organisations are central in gaining access to key resources for the poor. The move beyond the household as the only source of livelihood for the poor is reflected in this chapter. In its critique of the livelihoods approach, and of social capital specifically, this chapter provides evidence of the need to disaggregate social networks and introduce a dynamic process, which acknowledges conflict and social change.

In an attempt to move away from the consensual view of politics of the livelihoods approach, this chapter examines the role of various community organisations – formal and informal, old and new – in the two communities. Highlighted in this chapter is the role of organisations as social, economic and political resources in the community, thus shifting from households into the community and arguing for a holistic understanding of people's livelihoods. Indeed, while some risks and insecurities remain in the domain of the household, such as health and income insecurity, there are risks and insecurities that are externalised and taken into the realm of the community, such as access to services.

The chapter is, therefore, divided into two parts. The first offers a discussion and critique of post-apartheid South Africa's labour and welfare policies. The second part focuses primarily on old and new community organisations and their various attempts to respond to the crisis of poverty and HIV/AIDS. State and civil society relations are discussed, and the argument developed is that these relations are becoming tenuous as citizens engage the state for better service delivery. The result of such conflict and engagement offers new ideas of citizenship, effective governance, the possibility of accountability from elected political leaders, strengthened community ties with a shift from monetary exchanges to reciprocal

relationships, and provides space for alternative state policies.

7.2 The Post-Apartheid State: From Labour to Welfare Policies⁶¹

South Africa's social welfare system is exceptional, especially in Africa. It includes non-contributory grants. The system is indeed also a mixture of family or private transfers and market or contributory schemes.⁶² First, this research has shown that, in the absence of employment, private and family transfers based on income are rapidly disappearing. This type of social welfare transfer has mostly kept rural-urban linkages alive. As argued earlier, these linkages are performing a different role now, of hiding urban poverty and disease. In post-apartheid South Africa, given the declining private transfers, what remains are poor and overcrowded households. Second, regardless of the welfare budget in South Africa being one of the highest in the world, poverty and inequalities still exist in the country. Third, market or contributory transfers have only benefited the few who are in standard employment relationships (Theron, 2004). For the majority who are in atypical employment or in the informal economy, these transfers do not mean anything. Finally, increasing the social welfare budget has not reduced the problem of maladministration, low take-up and corruption in the government department by officials.

As was stated during an interview,

There is a lot of backlog in the social department office. The local district surgeon is also known for refusing to sign documents that would allow people who are terminally ill because of AIDS to receive government grants. Magistrates have also refused to sign consent forms for AIDS orphans. There is general non-co-operation from government departments (Interview, Reverend Zondi, 30 October 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

⁶¹ A discussion on state policies and legislation is provided in Chapter 1.

⁶² Detailed in Chapter 2.

Corruption within local social department offices has also thwarted progressive social welfare policies and service delivery. Hence South Africa's social welfare system has been described as "sluggish" (Interview, Matron Gcisa, 30 October 2003, Enhlalakahle Hospital). Even though the mayor of Umvoti Local Municipality admitted, during the interview, to a history of widespread corruption in some government departments, he was quick to point out that "all that has changed". Specifically, the mayor said:

There used to be a lot of corruption, for example, when the elderly people went there to apply for their pension funds they had to pay a R50 bribe for their application to be processed. If they did not pay R50, they would be told that their applications were missing, so the applications cannot be processed. But now all that has changed; there is a new management (Interview, Mayor Ngubane, Umvoti Local Municipality. 12 November 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

The real transformative agenda of such welfare policies was also questionable. In most households, these social grants did not provide for even the most basic needs of people, especially children. As I was told,

The R740 per month now has to feed so many people in this house. It is just not enough. The children do not have money to go to school and to buy school uniform. This is everyone's problem. There are too many mouths to feed with very little money (Interview 6, 15 August 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

Inequalities continue to be replicated along race, gender and class lines in South Africa through this sector of the economy that is largely reserved for poor black women. The story of Mam'Khize is a clear example:

For the past ten years, I have been waking up every day to sell whatever I can in town, vegetables. Is the only way I know how to make money, even if it is just peanuts. On a good day, I make R100. That is too little money to support my family – four kids and my husband. Most days I end up cooking the very vegetables I am meant to sell the next day. But these are vegetables that are almost rotten, so I cannot really sell them to people at a good price. I cook

them well and my children and impossible husband do not even realise that the cabbage was almost off (Interview 59, 12 September, 2 October, 14 and 20 November 2003 Enhlalakahle Township).

Other than the women who sell fruit and vegetables, there are also those women who make traditional dresses for women and sell them in the city. This business depends on how much money these women have to buy their raw material. Those who are successful hire people to sell for them and they sit at home making more dresses. As it was explained:

I do not have time to sit and wait for the next customer. I use that time to make more dresses. But I often come to town to just monitor what is happening in my stall and chat to other women who also keep an eye on my stall. Sometimes I do not trust this girl who works for me. The only time I am in my stall is month end, when it is busy. I do not make a lot of money. A month I sell about 20 dresses at R60 each. I then have to pay for my transport, pay the girl, buy raw materials, and survive (Interview 4, 11 and 15 August, 18 September, 29 November 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

The trend of outsourcing and subcontracting work by companies is another way through which worker benefits are cut and wages radically reduced. Through tendering processes, home-working is encouraged in the textile industry (Theron, 1996; Allen & Wolkowitz, 1987). As highlighted in Chapter 5, Thulisile Zondi's work often comes from successful tenders from companies such as Playtex. She said:

Last year I got a tender from Playtex, a women's underwear company. It was not the first tender I got from a big company. There are several others that I got from local textile factories. The tendering process is usually full of mismanagement and corruption that my success is not always guaranteed. So depending on the tendering process, I get big and small tenders. I then decide, based on the work given, how many people I will hire to help me. There are a lot of experienced women in the township and it is not a problem to find them. I have big machines and space in the house to do all the work here. I sometimes turn my living room into a mini-factory (Interview 7, 13, 20, 26, 27 and 29 August, 4 and 16

*September, 23 an 30 October, 7 an 23 November 2002,
Mpumalanga Township).*

The inability of the state to effectively enforce labour legislation and create stable and secure jobs for new entrants into the labour market, mainly the youth, poses serious challenges of transformation and redistribution as many citizens increase the already-full pool of the socially excluded.⁶³ The new labour laws of South Africa have focused on standard employment relationships or formal labour markets at the expense of informal and irregular labour markets (Kalula, 2003).

7.3 Post-Apartheid Townships

7.3.1 Introduction

Disillusionment with the failure of delivery has led to community-based organisations (CBOs) playing a major role in the livelihoods of households and communities. These formal and informal associations and networks include two or more people. Their purposes are social, economic and/or political. Examples include political organisations, faith-based organisations (FBOs), stokvels⁶⁴ and burial societies. Their perceived roles in development have varied over time. Their existence in communities has served various social, economic and political purposes. In the livelihoods literature, such diverse CBOs have been put under the single umbrella of “social capital”. They have been characterised as the “missing link” between the poor and economic prosperity.

In the context of South Africa, CBOs played a major role during the apartheid era. Many organisations played a dual role in the townships, after the banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and the formation of United Democratic Front (UDF). For example, trade unions addressed both workplace issues and

⁶³ Social exclusion is understood here to be due to the failure of labour market (Olivier, 2000:7).

⁶⁴ A stokvel is a saving scheme common in South Africa in the African community. Members of such a scheme contribute a monthly fixed fee and give it to one individual, who then reciprocates the following months to other group members. The money has often been used to buy things that would otherwise be out of reach. See also Buijs and Atherfold (1995).

community issues. Hence, the term social movement unionism was coined to describe these unions (Von Holdt, 2002).

7.3.2 Membership of community organisations⁶⁵

Table 7.1: Associational Life in Mpumalanga and Enhlalakahle Townships

Community organisation	Percentage	Number	Mpumalanga	Enhlalakahle
Stokvel	13.6	10	3	7
Burial society	19.1	14	8	6
Church	100	73	42	31
Political organisation	95.8	70	37	33
Youth group	28.7	21	15	6
NGO	43.8	32	17	15
Women's group	46.5	34	19	15
Trade union	10.9	8	6	2
Other	16.4	12	7	5

Source: Field Research 2003/2004

In both communities, membership of community organisations was very high (see Table 7.1), particularly those where monetary contribution was not necessary. In both townships, organisations such as burial societies and stokvels, membership was very low. This was not surprising, given that most households did not have an income. As discussed later in this chapter, these organisations were based on reciprocity and not monetary contributions. Hence, many people said they were not members of formal burial societies but had formed informal and voluntary burial societies with their neighbours. Such informal networks have existed for a number of years, and many have relied exclusively on them and family for support.

⁶⁵ This information was gathered from all household interviews (29 life histories and 44 semi-structured interviews) in both communities.

It was not surprising that most people were no longer members of trade unions, because most interviewed people were unemployed or working in the informal sector. The church remained the most common form of organisation in both communities; even though people said that they were not formal members but that they went to church at least twice a month. Women's groups were also popular and were often linked to church organisations. A few people said they were members of a political organisation but that they did not participate in the structure and did not have membership cards. They were also quick to point out that they knew which party they would vote for in the next elections.

Membership of non-governmental organisations was very high (43 per cent). These included organisations such as the Treatment Action Campaign, Concerned Citizen Groups, and HIV/AIDS volunteer organisations.⁶⁶ This was not surprising because of the nature of the crisis faced by the two communities. Therefore, the majority of people joined the Treatment Action Campaign and the various HIV/AIDS volunteer organisations because the disease affected them and/or they were unemployed. Most people also took part in the Concerned Citizen Groups' activities because they were affected by water and electricity cut-offs. As such, more than one membership was very common as each organisation tended to provide a different service to its members. People also preferred to join more than one organisation to maximise their benefits. As mentioned during interviews,

I belong to a number of community organisations. I am a member of the church choir and women's group. I also belong to a family burial society. I benefit a lot from my church; they often come to my house to pray for my family and me. Other people also benefit from my involvement in the woman's group in church. I visit the elderly and the sick. Take care of them (Interview 48, 7 November 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

However, there are differences in the levels of associational life in the two townships. Mpumalanga Township relative to Enhlalakahle Township has increased levels of associational life. There are more community organizations in Mpumalanga Township than there are in Enhlalakahle Township in which most

⁶⁶ Discussed later in the chapter.

people are members of. There are possible reasons for this divergence between the two townships. First, Mpumalanga Township, unlike Enhlalakahle Township, has a history of being a vibrant public and political community with a history of local branches of national political organizations, resident associations, trade unions, student organizations, and church organizations (Bonnin, 2000). While this history was undermined by political violence, which also affected Enhlalakahle Township, the township is leveraging on its history to respond to its current crisis. In Mpumalanga Township, many branches of old community organizations were re-established in the township almost immediately after the political violence and new ones were also formed. Enhlalakahle Township, is still struggling to even re-establish branches of old organizations. Second, the current political and economic context makes the emergence of alternative community organizations possible. Given that the township is in an ANC led ward, in an ANC led municipality, spaces and opportunities for organizing are created. In Enhlalakahle Township, an ANC led ward but in an IFP stronghold, chances of effective mobilisation are said to be limited. The relatively large population size of Mpumalanga Township in a 'politically friendly' environment contributes to the growing community engagement through community organizations. Finally, the proximity of Mpumalanga Township to other townships facing similar crisis of unemployment and lack of service delivery, also promotes the creation of community organizations.

7.3.3 The end of monetary contributions

High unemployment and declining individual and household income have affected the sustainability of stokvels and burial societies as economic exchanges to reduce costs of household members. These initiatives have declined in membership, with many finding it impossible to make monetary contributions because of unemployment.

It was becoming too expensive to keep my burial society. I did not have the R75 monthly contribution. I thought to myself, with R75 I can buy food for my family (Interview 16, 7 September 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

I knew I needed the burial society but, I could not afford it any more. One needs to prepare for the eventuality of death, particularly nowadays when so many people are dying and when things are so expensive (Interview 18, 24 August 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

Instead what has happened is in-kind help, such as cooking and baking and lending the bereaved family dishes and pots during funerals. However, because of the long distance to the local cemetery and the high cost of buses, monetary contributions are still highly appreciated. There are some families that can still afford to contribute in monetary terms. Therefore, such burial societies are less formal and contributions vary depending on how much and what people can contribute.

Even though I no longer belong to a burial society, I know my family will have a decent burial. Not only will my family members, those who are working, cover the costs of the funeral but my neighbours will also assist where they can. My neighbours and me have decided to form Umasisizane (helping each other). This is the same as a burial society but it is very flexible. We only meet when there is a crisis like a funeral and contribute whatever we have. Sometimes I do not have money but have time to cook and help with funeral arrangements. We help each other in those ways (Interview 53, 19 September 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

Even though they are informal, people often know which households can afford and which ones cannot or which ones have a good record in helping other households when there is a funeral. So households that are known for helping others often get more support from the community when they are in need than households which are usually not helpful. Who helps and who does not often result in little conflicts in the community or between neighbours. There have also been private burial societies, such as bank burial societies from Standard Bank and First National Bank. However, these have not benefited many who lost their jobs and therefore could not meet their monthly debit orders.

7.3.4 *The crisis of representation*

7.3.4.1 Failing to grapple with change

The challenges posed by South Africa's economic, social and political transition have been very particular on trade unions and political organisations. The unfortunate failure by both types of organisation to grapple with these challenges in the post-apartheid era has led to a crisis of representation for the people, particularly the poor who relied on both organisations during the apartheid years.

For trade unions, the challenge has been the growing unemployment rate and the burgeoning informal sector. Their inability to protect the most vulnerable workers in casual and temporary work has been a weakness in traditional forms of organising used by trade unions. The progressive labour legislation does not reach the unemployed, casual and temporary workers, and informal sector workers.

For political organisations, the violent political transition, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, has made people less trusting of these organisations although they continue to rely on individual politicians for welfare information. Cost-recovery and cost-cutting policies of the ANC-led government have also dashed all expectations of democracy -such as employment and service delivery- for the poor majority, deepening the crisis of representation in post-apartheid South Africa.

7.3.4.2 The new crises facing political organisations

As discussed in Chapter 4, both communities had direct experiences of political violence. This reality and their unmet expectations of democracy have led to them not completely trusting their political organisations. A general feeling of disappointment and anger was directed at political organisations. Hence, in Enhlalakahle Township, people were generally angry with the local government, the IFP, and not the ANC. However, they were still less trusting of their own political party. This was also the case with IFP members in ANC-led local

government areas such as in Mpumalanga Township.⁶⁷ When people were asked what they thought of political organisations they said:

I am an ANC member. I carry my card in my wallet everywhere I go but that does not mean I trust them. These people are just politicians; they only think of themselves, their families and then we come last (Interview 27, 10 November 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

It is precisely because of political organisations that we had a civil war in this province. When they were supposed to protect us, they killed us. I honestly do not know why these politicians cannot work together (Interview 61, 9 September, 2 October, 4 and 15 November 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

It was political violence; now it is unemployment and electricity card system. The people that we voted for are not fulfilling their promises. We are still poor and they are to blame for it (Interview 1. 12, 13 and 15 August 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

While at provincial level tensions are still rife, at township level a more co-operative relationship exists between the two major political parties, the ANC and the IFP. The political violence that marred the township in the 1980s and 1990s has disappeared and political affiliation is no longer used as a primary identity. The local branches of the two parties have tried to work together with community members. As one representative of a political party commented:

The two parties are working together for the good of the community. We lost many of our members because of political violence and the community was falling apart. We realised that working together was the only solution to have a peaceful township. Besides, at national level, our leaders are doing the same thing (Interview 27, 10 November 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

Local community leaders belonging to different political parties have become agents of local government and a source of information, mainly regarding welfare. Those who needed to access welfare grants went to their trusted political leader

⁶⁷ Indeed in the elections of 1999 and 2004 there was a decline (from 89 per cent to 77 per cent) in voter registration. South Africa's voter turnout also declined from 85 per cent in 1994, to 64 per cent in 1999, to 58 per cent in 2004 (Talbot, 2004).

for information, either at their local council office or their private homes. New democratic structures were set up with the intention and expectation of fostering co-operation between political parties and the community. The assumption was that councillors and political representatives would be closer to the community and communicate directly with the community.

However, the political peace in the townships has been a shallow one for some. IFP households in ANC-dominated areas mostly felt this. An IFP leader commented:

In the township, there is the ANC and the IFP, and there is a lot of power struggle between the organisations and within the ANC. Some of the people do not feel free to go via that counsellor because they are not in good terms with the counsellor. I have tried to bring the people together in the townships taking all counsellors to address the local communities. The people from the townships, because are hungry, they will do and say anything to their so-called political leaders (Interview, Mayor Ngubane, Umvoti Local Municipality, 12 November 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

Another IFP member in Enhlalakahle Township said:

To be honest my neighbour does not know that when I vote, I vote for IFP. I was only really accepted in this community because they think I am ANC. This is an ANC stronghold and you either lie about your political affiliation and have peace and keep your house or else...(Interview 59, 12 September, 2 October, 14 and 20 November 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

In Mpumalanga Township, in 2001 the local government efforts of rebuilding houses destroyed during political violence sparked IFP and ANC tensions. While some were happy and benefited from the process, others did not. For example, one woman whose house was burned and husband killed because they were IFP members expressed an optimistic view:

My family has been homeless for the last ten years. My children lost their father and home. I voted in 1994 because the ANC promised to rebuild my house. This did not happen. I voted again in 1999 and I patiently waited. My house is now being rebuilt and I am happy, because I will not be a burden to anyone any more (Interview 40, 26 November 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

However, other IFP members complained of being victims in this process because ANC houses were given preference and thus rebuilt first. They said that only a few IFP houses were rebuilt. Job contracts were also an issue. Local councillors were accused of nepotism and corruption. In Enhlalakahle Township, two Greytown ANC councillors were charged in May 2000 for attempting to murder the Greytown Mayor, Councillor Ngubane, in 1999 (*Greytown Gazette*, May 2000).

In addition, the challenges facing the local government led by political parties have been colossal. This stems from their contradictory roles as both agents of cost recovery and agents of service delivery. Hence relationships with the local people have not always been smooth or unchallenged. In fact, many municipalities and their urban centres are unwieldy, straddle urban and rural areas, townships and suburbs. Some overlap provincial boundaries and are expected to deal with the demands of urban expansion and rural development without commensurate growth in administrative and financial resources. Many Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) are “shopping lists” of potential projects, but lack budgets, neglect maintenance and lead to conflict with priorities of national departments.

Tensions within political parties have also compromised their representation in communities. They have also made the political organisations less credible in the eyes of the communities they are meant to serve. This was particularly the case in Enhlalakahle Township where this tension reached an extreme when one of the political leaders was killed in the community by members of the same party. As I was told,

There is a problem that the ANC councillor, not all the people, only one councillor, is too politically minded, that he will engage politics even where it is not. The man was not brought-up well because he could not finish his education. He had a long case here where he tried to kill his colleague, a former mayor of this town, who is also from the township. But I think one has to live with that. You understand sometimes you become very rational but sometimes he can say nasty things to you, but you have to be calm when that person is around (Interview, Mayor Ngubane, Umvoti Local Municipality, 12 November 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

7.3.4.3 The end of social movement unionism and the crisis of social institutionalism

...the transition to political democracy has brought dramatic changes. Most stunning is the transmutation of a powerful, militant, and self-assured union movement into one that, in recent years, has grown increasingly marginalised and defensive, and has lost much of its sense of purpose (Buhlungu, 2001:67).

According to Buhlungu (2001), the crisis faced by trade unions in post-apartheid South Africa has been influenced by several factors. First, trade unions were now exposed to a totally different environment. The new political environment ruled out the possibility of militancy but promised dialogue, negotiation and compromise. This took away the organisational vibrancy and the sense of political direction that trade unions had during the apartheid era. The new democratic institutions, such as the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), offered trade unions an opportunity to participate. Second, the collectiveness of trade unions was eroded and individualism emerged as people moved into business or government. Third, the economic context of “full” employment was undermined by retrenchments as South Africa adopted a macro-economic policy that emphasised international competition, industrial restructuring and labour market flexibility. Finally, as Barchiesi (1999) predicted, a *crisis of social institutionalisation* has emerged as a result of retrenchments, growth of atypical work and unemployment, all of which undermined the strength of trade unions. Membership of trade unions started to dwindle, as did their power to engage with and influence government policies.

As a result, former trade union members became bitter. Retrenched and unemployed workers were overwhelmingly resentful of trade unions, saying how they “sold us to employers”. Others mentioned how trade unions “lost their power and commitment to their members”. As one retrenched woman, a former trade union member of ten years, angrily remarked:

I was only useful to the trade union when I was employed and could pay my subscriptions. However, once I was unemployed because of factory closure, the union did not want anything to do with me. I paid my subscription fee every month for ten years; the trade union did not help me get my retrenchment package. Five years later, I still do not have the retrenchment package (Interview 7, 13, 20, 26, 27 and 29 August, 4 and 16 September, 23 and 30 October, 7 and 23 November 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

The nature of trade unions has always been to recruit permanent workers who will be able to pay their subscription fees. It was also easier to organise these workers since they were registered and were in one place. The commitment of trade unions to workers was mostly limited to the workplaces. From 1983 onwards, workplace issues were extended to include community issues. Many trade union officials played a significant role in the political mobilisation of communities, mainly since political organisations such as the ANC were banned. This kind of “social movement unionism” became important in linking workplace struggles about higher wages and discrimination to broader community struggles for democracy (Von Holdt, 2002).

The only option left for those without their retrenchment packages was independent and often corrupt lawyers. A typical example is that of retrenched workers from Hebox Textile, a clothing and textile factory in Hammarsdale. Hebox Textile closed its factory doors in 1990 and retrenched all of its workers; its owners claimed bankruptcy. At the time of its closure, trade unions and management promised to pay retrenchment packages to all workers, but this never happened. Workers claim that Hebox Textile opened another factory in the area using a different name.

Numerous individual attempts made to recover the money were unsuccessful. An independent lawyer wanting to help approached a group of about 200 retrenched workers. The matter was to be taken to court and each individual contributed R200 to cover expenses. Several months later, the lawyer had disappeared with the money. This was also the case with the second and the third lawyer. In 2002, the group employed the services of a fourth lawyer, who is taking the case to the Council for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA).

The story of Hebox Textile reflects the important yet inadequate nature of trade unions as social and economic networks, and therefore the necessity of other social and political networks. Its rules of entry are limited to those with permanent employment and its benefits do not extend beyond the workplace. The exclusion of citizens such as retrenched workers increases their vulnerability in society, especially for those without any other reliable social and economic networks or alliances.⁶⁸

This was true for those who were not from Mpumalanga Township and did not have family networks to draw on for free housing and alternative work. As one of the women from Eastern Cape said about their predicament in Mpumalanga Township:

We came here to work and now that we are no longer employed, we have to go home. Some of us decided to come with our children and not leave them with our parents. I do not have a house of my own; my family is very far and getting a job nowadays is difficult since it depends on whom you know. I don't know a lot of people here. I only met them at work and that was it. I regret coming to Mpumalanga (Interview 37, 25 November 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

⁶⁸ Belgium has a long history of unionisation of the unemployed. In fact, 85 per cent of the unemployed are members of a trade union. Even though it has been proven to be an organisational challenge, unemployed workers comprise 20 per cent of the unions' membership (Faniel, 2002).

As “outsiders”, they are often shunned by locals because they are not from the area, do not speak the language, and are often seen as taking jobs and houses from the locals. They are unable to apply for low-cost government housing because they are not from the province. They are more vulnerable and their ability of securing a livelihood is often challenged by where they come from.

I addressed the educated to respect the kind of factories, they must be user-friendly so that the government can join them and try to promote them in town. We had a quota system in place where we said 40 per cent will be coming from town, then 60 per cent will be coming from surrounding areas. But now they are of the opinion that, no, that was not good. These factories are here in town and should be only solely from the township, and not even township people and there was a hell of problem where ward councillor led a march against the factories. It is difficult to get new factories to come this side. Even if they do, they are scared here, although this municipality is the IFP level municipality (Interview, Mayor Ngubane, Umvoti Local Municipality. 12 November 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

The vacuum left by trade unions in the two communities is quite evident. Those who belonged to trade unions became vulnerable and they fell victim to devious lawyers. This has caused much resentment towards trade unions; for those who are joining the labour market for the first time, there is often a learned lack of trust.

7.3.5 Faith-based organisations

7.3.5.1 Responding to new crises

It is from church organisations that community members continue to find emotional and spiritual support. The new challenges facing the community have led the church to renegotiate its role in the community. The new role that many church organisations – such as the Methodist Church, Anglican Church and Roman Catholic – have adopted has been that of “healing, community building and teaching” around the issues of HIV and AIDS. While conventional churches have opted not to talk about the disease, churches in these two communities

decided to “break the silence” and educate their congregation. Even though their role has been seen as minimal, it continues to give hope.

7.3.5.2 The Manyano Women’s Christian Movement

The major community support given by church organisations has been through internal women’s organisations in the churches. One such is the *Manyano* (a Xhosa word meaning working together) women’s group at the Methodist Church⁶⁹ and the Anglican Mother’s Union.⁷⁰ *Manyano* has been described as an indigenous movement form of African women’s Christianity. It is a “hidden” site of knowledge and holds the possibilities of social transformation (Haddad, 2001; see also Wilson & Ramphele, 1989). Such women’s church organisations include older women of the church who do house visits to care and pray for the sick and who visit homes where there is a funeral to offer comfort and support to the bereaved family.

I joined this group when I was young. In fact, my mother-in-law recruited me into this church. I was an Anglican member and when I got married, I became a Methodist member. I then later joined Umanyano. It was a great experience. I was going to do womanly and motherly things for the church and my community (Interview 6, 15 August 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

As a Manyano woman, I always wear my red and white uniform with devotion. I serve my God and community with pride. I am extremely proud of being a Manyano woman (Interview 9, 28 July, 17 August, 22 September, 15 November 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

I am an Anglican member and belong to a churchwomen’s group. I joined it when I was 23 and today I am 62, thirty-nine solid years of hard work and dedication. I have contributed so much to my church; I only wish that young women, like yourself, would heed

⁶⁹ According to Gaitskell (1997:253), organised women’s groups flourished between both black and white South Africans in the early decades of the twentieth century, but they emerged earlier and grew more rapidly among black women. In 1940, there were 45 000 black Methodist church women supporters in South Africa, ten times as large as the movement supported by their white co-religionists.

⁷⁰ The Anglican Mother’s Union in South Africa had about 34 000 members in 1970, triple the size of the Mother’s Union in either west or central Africa (Gaitskell, 1997:253).

God's call of serving your community (Interview 36, 22 November 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

As Gaitskell (1997:266) asserts, churchwomen's organisations served an important role, especially for African women. First, for African women, Christianity provided a new primacy to motherhood and it posed new challenges to Christian mothers. Second, the vocal emphasis of revivalist Christianity (weeping, confession and repentance) became important for African women. Christianity welcomed women, who were marginalised in their traditional religious practices. Third, churchwomen's organisations became a platform for those women who were educated (especially minister's wives) but still forbidden to preach in mixed church gatherings. These assertions, particularly the first and second ones, emerged as central in this research. For example, asked why she joined Manyano more than twenty years ago, Mrs Zulu explained:

When I joined the women's group, I felt blessed. God gave me answer to my problems. Even though I never had children of my own, I was given the status of being a mother. I became a mother in my church and community. I took care of the sick, the elderly. I prayed for them. I showed them the light. I was in a group with other mothers. It was a great feeling. It is good to know that you can be a mother and do all those things that mothers do (Interview 9, 28 July, 17 August, 22 September, 15 November 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

Manyano also played a significant political role during the apartheid era in South Africa. The movement was often described as "the shield to ward off white man's arrows" (Gaitskell, 1997:267). This was not surprising given the documented role played by women generally in the struggle against apartheid.

7.3.5.3 The Ministers Fraternity

Ministers also organised themselves and tried to work together in both communities. Joint community prayer meetings were organised. As one priest elaborated:

A few years ago, we have formed the Minister Fraternity and brought together ministers of all churches. We wanted to work together for the good of this community. As ministers, we had common problems and common vision. We lived through the era of political violence where priests were also seen as targets depending on which political organisation they were thought to come from. Now there are new problems such as of unemployment, AIDS, alcohol and drug abuse, and domestic violence (Interview, Reverend Zondi, 30 October 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

The Ministers Fraternity in Enhlalakahle Township has been working together with consultants from the University of Cape Town on two programmes – the Democracy for Education Desk and the Economic Development Desk. It is linked other ministers' organisations at district, provincial and national level, such as the Christian Council of Churches of South Africa.

It is through the Ministers Fraternity that numerous community workshops have been organised, where the community members are educated and empowered when it comes to its role and involvement with its local council. Economic development workshops have also been organised to encourage people to develop themselves (Interview, Nhlanhla Shombe, ANC Branch Chairperson, 5 November 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

The challenges faced by priests have been enormous. They have in most cases taken over the role of social workers or social welfare officials.

There are so many occasions when people come to us and say 'mfundisi [priest], can you please give us bread'. We help in every way we can. We help grandparents fill their grant application forms. We accompany them to welfare offices. We visit them at their homes and act as mediators when there are family conflicts. We make sure that grandparents receive their money and money on behalf of their AIDS orphans (Interview, Reverend Zondi, 30 October 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

Indeed, my interviews with priests were often interrupted and cut short because of urgent application forms that needed to be sent to welfare offices that day, or by children sent to call ministers urgently to houses where there was a crisis. In all

situations, it was amazing how ministers were willing to drop everything and attend to the needs of the community (Field Note Diary, October 2004).

However, church organisations have been criticised for not taking into consideration the economic status of its members when it comes to church contributions. One old woman who had not been contributing to the church in the last two years expressed her fears of dying:

I have not been paying my dues precisely because I do not have money. I am a pensioner and have my children and grandchildren to feed. I am a sickly old woman and my day is near. When I finally close my eyes, I will not be buried in church like all Christians should, but my funeral service will be held here at home. We all want a proper Christian burial (Interview 13, 18 August 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

Apart from these churches, other church organisations have emerged in the township in the last ten years. The Universal Church is one example of these newly formed churches⁷¹ in the township, and has been growing in membership in the whole country. It attracts, and is popular, among the youth. Its sermons are viewed by its members as less traditional and often “relate the Bible to reality as experienced by the people”.

The proliferation of faith-based organisations has been more profound in Enhlalakahle Township. In this relatively small township, there are more than twenty faith-based organisations.

There are almost 27 churches in the community. Some do not even have proper structures. They operate in their yards, in halls and schools. Some are legitimate growing churches that have the interest of the community at heart, but some just want to make money out of poor people (Interview 96, 2 and 4 October 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

⁷¹ Also defined as a Pentecostal African Initiated Church (AIC) or Bazalwane-type church (Anderson, 1992; De Gruchy & Germond, 2004).

There are a lot of splinter churches here in Enhlalakahle. They all claim to be working for the good of the people. I know that these churches are just family organisations. They are opened by individuals who are disgruntled with their ministers. They think they are popular and that the congregations will follow them when they leave. The truth is, congregations never leave with them, and only family members do. Hence these splinter churches become just family based. Anyone can open a church here; it is their democratic right. But I think there should be a body that monitors and regulates the activities of churches. Some are just money-making schemes operating as churches in the community (Interview 88, 18 and 19 November 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

Hence, in Enhlalakahle Township, there has also been a general competition between churches and ministers over membership. As it was explained,

There are a few churches that are working together and others are just standing aloof on the side. This is because they are taking the difference between Pentecostal and “Save” churches way too far. When we called in a meeting for all ministers in the township, I was shocked when from the 27 church organisations, only 12 turned up (Interview, Reverend Zondi, 30 October 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

Reverend Zondi, went on to argue that,

Ministers tend to use the pulpit to recruit members by criticising other churches. They have no respect for the doctrines of congregations. We are all leaders as brothers in Christ but if we swear at each other what will the congregation say or do (Interview, Reverend Zondi, 30 October 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

The other growing religion in the township has been the Muslim religion. While it is a widespread religion in the country’s Indian community, it remains uncommon in the black community. The benefits for the poor who become members range from free funeral costs to schooling for children. However, the general community often shuns the minority of those who take this religion as a way of life. As a result, community members and households where the Muslim religion

is practised are often isolated from other community members and activities.

7.3.6 New community-based organisations and the new crises

7.3.6.1 The emergence of new CBOs

Many social theorists have predicted the emergence of new social movements, though their potential for social change has often been exaggerated. The rise of social movements in post-apartheid South Africa against a legitimate government was rather unexpected (Desai, 2002). Their emergence has been necessitated not by an illegitimate government but by “illegitimate” government policies. These have given rise to new crises such as unemployment, lack of service delivery and ineffective HIV/AIDS treatment policy.

As a response to the crises of service delivery, communities have rallied together to challenge local and national governments and their “anti-poor” policies. Mpumalanga Township is no exception. Efforts by new local government structures such as the Durban Metro to force people to pay for services was met with intense resistance by local communities led by their party-specific community leaders.

A recent survey of the social movements in South Africa revealed that social movements:

- emerged because of the high and growing level of poverty and inequality in the country, inherited from apartheid but intensified since democracy;
- are “not spontaneous grassroots uprisings” but rather they depend on a variety of factors such as networks and resources;
- are shaped by the post-apartheid context which embraces political and human rights;
- either work with or against the state –hence the contradictory relationship between them and the state; and
- hold the possibility of consolidating South Africa’s democracy (Ballard *et al.*, 2004).

Consequently, South Africa's social movements are understood in this context, a context that seeks to understand not just who is or is not involved in the organisations but also the tactics employed, the kinds of mobilisation involved, the issues, ideas and policies contested, and where these organisations are politically and geographically located (MacAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001; see also Foweraker, 1995 and 2001).

7.3.6.2 The emergence of Concerned Citizens Groups

The emergence of new ideas of citizenship in South Africa can be captured through the emergence of various community groups, making demands around service delivery and political accountability. These "rights-based demands" tend to be levelled at local government.⁷² The response of the local government has often been very repressive, anti-dialogue in nature, and policemen are often sent to disperse community marches.

While these new community organisations are making significant contributions to the consolidation of democracy at the local level and encouraging good governance, their motives have been questioned by many. They have often been accused of electioneering and petty party politicking. Hence, the political affiliation of the "concerned citizens" has also been the subject of much debate. The Mpumalanga Concerned Citizens Group and Concerned Citizens of Enhlalakahle are discussed below.

7.3.6.3 Mpumalanga Concerned Citizens Group

Tapping into already existing networks and institutions, a new alliance was formed in 2000, the Mpumalanga Concerned Citizens Group (MCCG). It is one of the eighteen affiliates of the Concerned Citizens Forum in Durban (see Box 7.1).

⁷² In the 2001 municipal elections, just 48 per cent of South Africa's 18,4 million registered voters cast ballots. Voter turnout in one predominantly working-class Indian suburb of Durban was less than 25 per cent. Candidates supported by the Concerned Citizens Group (CCG), an organisation that has fought the Durban council's lack of service delivery and privatisation policies, won one seat on the council and performed well in other wards. A similar Soweto organisation, the Anti-Privatisation Forum led by Trevor Ngwane, failed to win a council seat (Dixon, 2001).

Its main concern was the installation of water meters in the township and thus a different system of water payment. The argument was that the people of Mpumalanga were poor and could not afford high water rates. The MCCG proposed that each household pay R10 a month, as was the case over the years. The “Ten Rand Campaign” soon spread to other townships and a march was organised against the municipality. The local government rejected their suggestions, and there were community marches and the disconnection of water pipes and meters (*The Mercury*, 11 April, 2001). The police were called in and a number of people were injured and arrested. As one community leader recalls:

It was not long ago, just a few months ago. We took matters into our own hands. The community was tired of being taken for granted. We wanted what was rightfully ours and what we were promised during elections: free water for everyone. How can the ANC blame us for demanding our basic right (Interview 40, 26 November 2002, Mpumalanga Township)?

During the eThekweni Municipality meeting in April 2001, Councillor Lesoma informed the meeting of possible unrest in Mpumalanga Township, and the Mayor advised of threats to disrupt services and civic activities should the installation of water pipes continue in the area. He reported that he had submitted a statement to the Commissioner of Police, and would be meeting with him soon to discuss the situation. During the discussion, it was mentioned that relevant officials had been prepared for possible problems, but on principle water services would continue. It was also mentioned that the media had been informed of Council’s intentions in the area. Thereafter, it was confirmed that, notwithstanding the threats to disrupt services and civic activities in Mpumalanga, water-related services would continue in the area.

Box 7.1: The Concerned Citizens Forum

The CCF was launched in 2001. It is not a membership-based organisation and has no formal structure. Its focus was on the eThekweni metropolitan municipality. It was started in Chatsworth, an Indian township, by the Concerned Citizens Group in Durban. The CCG was formed in 1999 with the aim of campaigning for the ANC during the 1999 elections. The election campaign soon changed to broader human rights issues, such as electricity and water cut-offs and evictions. Consequently, the CCF rapidly expanded to African townships such as Mpumalanga, Umlazi, and KwaMashu, and co-opted the already established Citizens Groups or Residents Associations. Additionally, existing CBOs, some academics and various student organisations were included. Some of its activities included organising the Durban Social Forum (DSF) march against the ANC in 2001 during the World Conference Against Racism, and in 2001 it was part of those movements that protested outside the World Summit on Sustainable Development. However, since December 2002, the organisation has been inactive and has almost disappeared. This was mainly attributed to the “change in tactics by the local government who [like the CCF] have retreated ... from direct confrontation and mass generalised evictions and disconnections in areas where the CCF emerged” (Dwyer, 2004:12).

Source: Desai (2003) and Dwyer (2004)

The committee was updated on the latest situation in Mpumalanga Township and advised of the illegal protest march in the area. Mr. Malaza mentioned that work had been disrupted due to the protest march and that the contractors were unable to work at the site. It was resolved that the installation of water pipes and the connection of households to the water supply be continued in the area and that the law take its course with regard to those trying to disrupt work. The Mayor was granted authority to interact with the most senior officer of the SAPS and the SANDF with a view to addressing the situation at Mpumalanga and to enable additional forces to be deployed in the area (eThekweni Council Meeting: Minutes, April 2001).

In March 2002, it was agreed during a council meeting that a Task Team comprising the Mayor, the Chairperson of Infrastructure, Transport and Culture and Recreation Committee, the Masakhane Working Group, officials from the Consolidated Billing Department and officials from the Water Department undertake an education and fact-finding exercise in Mpumalanga with a view to addressing the water problems.

The MCCG was led by prominent political party leaders within the IFP who argued that they were moving away from “basic politics” to more “serious issues” that affected the community. The community tended to agree with such statements. Both IFP and ANC followers and members supported such common community issues. These initiatives coincided with issues of accountability of the ANC as the municipal ruling party to the voters. In the words of an elderly woman in the community:

I remain an ANC member and will not keep quiet when I think it is not being accountable to its members, those who voted for it. I support initiatives that aim at making my situation better, no matter which political leader is involved. It is the issues that I support, not the political party, the IFP (Interview 8, 7 September 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

While the MCCG was able to raise awareness in the community and give the community space to challenge government initiatives that they thought were not beneficial to them, it also linked their struggle to other community struggles in the country. Such initiatives were thus not new; they were also taking place in Cape Town and Soweto. However, once the crisis was over this seemingly hopeful initiative was seriously undermined and failed to concretise its efforts. As a crisis solution, the MCCG became short-term and lacked sustainability, in particular when its key leaders left to work for government.

7.3.6.4 The Concerned Citizens of Enhlalakahle

While the ANC was still celebrating its victory in the national elections of 1994, power struggles were budding in its local branches in areas such as Enhlalakahle Township. The post-1994 election era saw a serious rift within the ANC branch in the township. Individuals unofficially left the organisation to establish an opposing organisation. The Concerned Citizens Group of Enhlalakahle emerged within the structures of the ANC, started by those who were unhappy with the IFP-led local council’s lack of service delivery in the township. The ANC was accused of dragging its feet in demanding accountability from the local council.

A member of the group, who did not want to be named because of his position in the ANC, said:

We wanted to effectively represent the community. The ANC was taking its own time and did not really articulate the desperate needs of the people. The community was yearning for people who were not afraid of the ANC and IFP. We took the community's grievances to the IFP. People wanted jobs, better and cheap service delivery (Interview 94, 30 October 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

However, this statement was refuted by the ANC branch chairperson:

These were a group of ANC members who broke away and opposed the ANC because of imminent leadership and power struggles within the organisation. They claimed to be representing the community. They took advantage of desperate people who thought that no development was taking place in the township. They poisoned these desperate people and promised them jobs. Only three-months' contracts were negotiated with the municipality and only a few people benefited (Interview, Nhlanhla Shombe, ANC Branch Chairperson, 5 November 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

The Mayor's response regarding the three-month contract was:

We are giving casual jobs within the municipality, three-months' contract. People say it's a problem. I do talk to our people here and to the companies for whatever that do need special attention so that they are catered for (Interview, Mayor Ngubane, Umvoti Local Municipality, 12 November 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

Public meetings were organised by the Concerned Citizens of Enhlalakahle, and many people attended these meetings. Service delivery and unemployment were high on the agenda at all meetings.

The meter readings are faulty. No one came to do these meter readings but people were getting bills every month. In most cases, the amount will be exactly the same for three months. It was impossible to pay R507.60 for months, without the amount increasing or decreasing in some months. We questioned this, and nothing has been done. People want the card system, not me (Interview 96, 2 and 4 October 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

Some accused the organisation of hijacking ANC issues and making them their own. The fact was that people were often confused about the difference between the organisation and the ANC as the leaders of the organisation were also active ANC leaders. One of the demands “hijacked” by the group was the installation of the electricity card system because “it was not managed well”.

It was surprising that an IFP-led council was not hasty to introduce card systems, but was encouraged to do so by the ANC and opposing organisations. The system had been installed in ANC-led councils, and community organisations in many townships were opposing it because the poor could not afford it.

Therefore, while great strides were made by such groups, their success was limited. Their lifespans were short because of problems in their leadership. They often lacked a political vision and will, resources and effective leadership. They were accused of being just a ploy of one person. In Mpumalanga Township, once Mr. Malabar was co-opted into government structures, the organisation disintegrated. In Enhlalakahle Township, members of the organisation were labelled as disgruntled and power-hungry ANC officials; hence “official structures were used to discipline these elements and thorns within the organisations” (Interview 96, 2 and 4 October 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

7.3.7 Engaging the state: the Treatment Action Campaign

Another organisation formed in post-apartheid South Africa in response to the crisis of HIV and AIDS was the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC). Formed on 10 December 1998 (International Human Rights Day), its aims were to train, teach and campaign on issues related to the treatment of HIV and AIDS. The organisation has offices in four provinces – Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape. Even though it does not have an official membership list, the chairperson of the organisation, Zackie Achmat, declared in 2004 that the TAC had a total membership of more than 9 000 (Friedman & Mottair, 2004). Given that the majority of the membership are people living with the disease and the stigma attached to the disease, it is no wonder that the membership figures are

often unreliable or fluctuate. The membership of the organisation is made up of supporters, activist and volunteers throughout South Africa. Specifically, “the demographics of TAC are 80% unemployed, 70% women ... 70% in the 14-24 age group and 90 % African” (Achmat, 2004, cited in Friedman & Mottair, 2004).

Its main objectives are to ensure access to affordable and quality treatment for people with HIV/AIDS, to prevent and eliminate new HIV infections, and to improve the affordability and quality of health-care access for all. However, the organisation has also taken up broader issues that are inevitably linked to good health. Their message is that “nutrition is a basic right, but so is access to life-saving medicines” (TAC, 2003). A local TAC co-ordinator pointed out:

You really cannot talk about HIV/AIDS without linking it to good health, healthy food, clean running water, and efficient clinics that provide the necessary HIV/AIDS drugs. All these are basic necessities that can go a long way in reducing the number of people dying of AIDS (Interview 38, 14 November 2002, Mpumalanga Township).

The organisation has, like many other social-movement organisations, found itself in opposition to and conflict with local and national government, in particular around issues of access to medication and debates about the causal relationship between HIV and AIDS. Confrontation and conflict between communities and national government, and between provincial governments and national government, have been around issues of access to basic medication for those who are infected. At an ANC congress in Stellenbosch in 2002, it named about twenty organisations that it considered to be anti-ANC; the TAC was the first organisation on the list, followed by the Landless Peoples Organisation and then the Electricity Crisis Committee led by Trevor Ngwane.

The TAC is not in opposition with the government or the ANC. You see, we have a new democracy and we were never told how to implement our rights. The TAC should not be seen as anti-ANC or anti-government, but it should be seen in terms of how it is assisting in terms of service delivery. Our own policies and constitutions

allow us to do that. And also when you talk about HIV/AIDS, everybody has seen what this disease can do. We have good policies and constitutions, but how do we implement and monitor the implementation of these policies (Interview, Sbu Khanyile, TAC District Co-ordinator, 22 June 2004, Pietermaritzburg).

The TAC's aims and objectives have been expressed through numerous public protests, presentations to Parliament and specific campaigns. These initiatives include the Civil Disobedience Campaign, which was limited and withdrawn after a few days. Other campaigns were a mother-to-child-transmission campaign, campaign against patent abuse and profiteering, campaign against pharmaceutical companies, and a campaign against the United States' Medicines and Related Substances Control Act of 1997 (an Act that threatened to impose economic sanctions on South Africa, should the government reduce prices of essential medicine). The success and failure of these campaigns have varied.

As the TAC, we compliment our government for the things that they are doing. But civil society requires that we play an active role in terms of monitoring and assisting the government. The role of the civil society in our democracy is no longer existent, we just pretend as if everything is normal. The TAC assisted the government in the case against the pharmaceutical companies. TAC assisted the government so that Pfizer could donate Pificonozone; in fact, that proposal was done by the TAC and it was passed to the government. The TAC assisted the government to write a global fund proposal, but that is not an issue because the TAC will always assist the government in any way. We must assist and monitor. When we see that things are not going according to plan then we will raise a concern (Interview, Sbu Khanyile, TAC District Co-ordinator, 22 June 2004, Pietermaritzburg).

Unlike many initiatives that have emerged post-1994, the TAC has played a major role in poor communities dealing with the epidemic. The stigma attached to HIV/AIDS and its link to death has led many individuals and households to shy away from the organisation. However, party politics in townships have presented another challenge to the TAC:

Mpumalanga, is one of the townships where we have a large number of support groups, and we also have a TAC branch there. We have a programme that has been running in the clinics of Mpumalanga but most of those programmes are for people living with HIV/AIDS. I think that the challenges that are facing Mpumalanga are common challenges faced by any other township. We were told that no ANC member should belong to the TAC (Interview, Sbu Khanyile, TAC District Co-ordinator, 22 June 2004, Pietermaritzburg).

Those who are active in the organisation mostly tend to be young men and women. The TAC has, nevertheless, sustained its efforts and its influence in provincial policies, and has been remarkable in a number of provinces; KwaZulu-Natal, for instance, leads as one of the first provinces rolling out antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to pregnant women.

In a context where poverty is still individualised, family and kinship networks become central. Even though this community experiences poverty at different levels, it is not shared by the community but by individuals in a household. People are ashamed to talk and expose their poverty to their neighbours often arguing, “they are just as poor as I am,” “what good will it do,” and “it is my problem alone”. Poverty as opposed to exploitation in workplaces does not often become a common and binding medium for solidarity since it is confined to the realm of the household, which is a more private sphere of our society.⁷³ People have indirectly found solidarity against poverty through common issues such as water and electricity cut-offs. These issues tend to be politicised first before they are taken up.

The Treatment Action Campaign shares characteristics with many emerging social movements in South Africa. It is challenging the current status quo, representing vulnerable communities and making demands for service delivery.

⁷³ Similar arguments were made in a survey conducted in 1974 among Africans in the townships of KwaMashu and Umlazi in KwaZulu-Natal. Respondents were asked how they thought they could improve their situation, the aim being to gauge their problems in collective or individualistic terms. Forty-nine percent of respondents saw improvement in terms of collective action (Webster & Kuzwayo, 1978).

However, the TAC is also different from its counter-parts (Habib, 2003; Friedman & Mottair, 2004). The TAC's form of engagement with the states sets it apart from the rest (Friedman & Mottair, 2004). The organisation has used the democratic and constitutional framework of the country to engage the state. Its rights-based approach, citing the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, led to its landmark case against the state. Indeed, its victory ensured that all HIV-positive pregnant women receive ARV drugs to prevent mother-to-child transmission. This put further pressure on the government, and it later agreed to roll out treatments to all HIV/AIDS sufferers.

7.3.8 Home-based care: volunteerism in the community⁷⁴

The burden of care has shifted to non-profit community organisations employing the services of community caregivers as volunteers from the local community. In South Africa the number of volunteers in NGOs or the non-private sector as a whole is relatively very high. In fact, in 1999 the non-profit sector was the largest employer with the most number of volunteers (see Table 7.3).

Table 7.2: Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees in the non-profit sector

Employee Type	Number of Employees	Percentage of Total
Volunteers (FTE)	316 991	49
Full-time employees	305 011	47
Part-time employees (FTE)	23 314	4
Total number of employees	645 316	100

Source: Swilling and Russell (2003)

Given the limited resources of these organisations, as well as government policies on HIV/AIDS medication, their role has simply been that of social support. As such, community caregiving by its nature tends to be work often borne by women

⁷⁴ Home-based care is care occurring at a patient's residence "to supplement or replace hospital care. This includes medication management, palliative care, and social support". The South African government has embarked on this method of care as a tool of "effective service delivery", employing community health workers who are nurses linked to the Department of Health and community development workers linked to the Department of Local Government. They earn R880 per month.

(Budlender, 1998:19). This kind of work – that is, of social reproduction – is often under-estimated and under-rated, but the impact of HIV/AIDS has intensified the need for such organisations who are willing to care for infected and affected people and households. In addition, the reliance on women as caregivers “reinforces the existing gender division of labor and the disadvantaged position of women in livelihood generation and formal employment” (Tester, cited in Lucas and Harber, 1997:31). There is an underlying assumption that community-based care is cheaper as costs are not measured or compensated (Budlender, 1998:19).

Volunteers have been recruited across gender and age lines. Because of high unemployment rates, many join these organisations with the hope of being trained and later reimbursed for their efforts and hard work (Interview, Matron Gcisa, Enhlalakahle Hospital, 30 October 2003, Enhlalakahle Township). However, there are those like Mrs Gwala who understand the concept of volunteerism but nevertheless cite it as a limitation and the biggest challenge when doing their work (see Box 7.2). This community organisation is classified as a single-service home-based care model, one of three forms of home-based care models. It recruits volunteers, trains them and links them to patients and families in neighbouring communities. It is organised by a service component, Hospice (Uys, 2003).⁷⁵

A South African study revealed that community caregivers such as Mrs Gwala and many others visit patients with various health conditions and states of well-being (see Table 7.4). The majority of patients seen by caregivers were very ill and weak. The concern was the 19 percent who were bedridden and thus unable to take care of themselves.

⁷⁵ The other two are the integrated home-based care model, which links all service providers with patients and families (see also Loudon, 1999). The informal home-based care model has its emphasis on families with the support of their own social networks but with no training. This phenomenon is the most long-standing form of caregiving, offered mainly by older women, as explored in Chapter 4 and in various sections of this chapter.

Table 7.3: Condition of patients seen by community caregivers

Patient Condition	% of total
Patient is without major symptoms	16
Patient has been very ill but is now better	28
Patient is acutely ill with an infection	9
Patient is very weak but can still get out of bed	29
Patient is bedridden	19

Source: Uys (2002)

It is in such cases that the work done by community caregivers becomes so central. Indeed, most of Mrs Gwala's bedridden patients needed to be bathed and given medication and food. However, while Mrs Gwala and other caregivers are willing to do all these as part of their duties, the problem is that they have to rely on their own resources, as most patients do not have income, food or medication. There is an expectation by patients that community caregivers will provide food and medication. This is an expectation that continues to exist even though patients are told from the onset that community caregivers are volunteers and do not have resources. This expectation often creates conflict between volunteers and patients.

Box 7.2: Interviewing Mrs Gwala⁷⁶

I used to work at a hospital and there I was a staff nurse. Then I had to undergo an operation because I was very sick. I was unemployed for about nine years. One day when I was sitting at home I received a call from Matron Gcisa, from the hospital where I used to work. She told me that a home-based care centre was going to be opened and if I wanted to join them I should. So I attended a course that they conducted and I really loved it. With my experience, I was asked to share my knowledge with other people. As a person who has learned more about health, I teach people about basic health. I teach them how they should take care of sick people, that they must have compassion and be able to keep other people's secrets.

So far there is some progress because when I sit down with people, talk and explain to them what does home-based care mean, how you take care of yourself, and how you carry yourself, they understand. When you ask them about what they have learned and if it has changed their lives in any way, they tell me that when they go home all the things they were taught made sense and they could see the difference. It had a big and good impact on a lot of people and they changed the way they took care of themselves and others. We do home visits for those that are sick.

The main challenges are the infants whose parents die of HIV/AIDS-related diseases, live with their grandparents and are not well looked after. Some of the parents receive the child-grant payment and still leave the children with their grandparents. The other challenge that we also come across is those people who are ill and get locked up in their homes when others go to work. If we find a person staying alone at home we often advise other family members or relatives to find someone who can look after the sick person. If the sick person is seriously neglected, we often consult with the social workers. The most difficult part of my job is when we do house visits. We visit each and every house in a certain area. The other day we visited this house and we found someone there that was attacked by a severe stroke and was staying alone and was trying to help himself. I took him to a clinic. Today I will go and check if he is still at the clinic or if he has been transferred to hospital. If this place had proper facilities we would have taken this person in, to come and stay here so that he can have someone who can look after him and receive good caring.

It is a lot of work but what excites me is that there are a lot of people in the townships who attend the home-based care training, so whenever I need someone I'll just call them. We do have some government community health workers, about two of them in our area. We work together with them. They also visit sick people at their homes and offer them advice on how to take care of themselves. If they have a lot of cases they refer some of those cases to us. I visit five houses a

⁷⁶ Interview, Mrs Gwala, 19 November 2003, Enhlalakahle Township.

day or more if I start early. Sometimes I do follow-ups and there I don't waste time unlike if it is my first to visit.

My workload is increasing because previously I didn't see any reasons for me to do house visits but now all that has changed. There are more people who need my help. There are some areas that I wish to visit but I cannot because of time. There is more need for our services in the communities. There are many people that are sick and grandparents who are looking after their grandchildren. The fortunate grandparents are those that have children that are educated and are working. At least they have someone who will look after them.

In some areas I would find that everyone is happy because the neighbours understand each other. In some areas, unfortunately, it is not like that and everyone has to fend for him or herself. Those that are not well looked after receive our help and they get very excited about that.

Most of the community members know me by now and do not think that I am nosey. They do welcome and accept me into their homes. However, being a volunteer sometimes, I think, confuses people because some, when they tell you their problems, they expect you, when you come around next time, to bring them something. In some families you would find that the parents are not working and they have eight children. I would not know how to help them because you will find that none of the children qualify for a grant. I do not have any food; the only thing that I have is the home-based care kit. When a person dwells on the issue of food, I do not know what to tell them. We discussed these issues with the social workers and they told us that the department that deals with issues of food is not allowed to give anyone food parcels. She told us that the department only assists those grandparents who have already applied for a grant and their applications are still being processed. But for someone who has not applied for a grant you would not know how to assist him or her.

Not getting paid affects us in a big way because we have a lot of dedicated people here, but because some of them cannot afford to do all house visits their duties will be neglected or sometimes delayed. Besides the fact that we do not have money, I have never come across any major challenges, except maybe when there is a person who is very ill and there is nothing you can do. It is beyond your powers. You have to take that person to a clinic or some other government office. Those that we have helped really appreciate our work. Although some people assume that we are being paid because they do not understand how we can afford to leave our homes and come here to work for free.

The telling story of Mrs Gwala reveals the mounting challenges of those working as volunteer home-based workers in communities ravaged by poverty, unemployment and AIDS. Their work is central in the survival of households and communities, yet they are not compensated and have little or no resources to fully

carry out their community duties. While Mrs Gwala has a background in health, most volunteers are young men and women who are new entrants in the labour market or who were briefly employed as casual workers in the local retail shops of Greytown. As explained by Jabulani Mkhize,

I used to work for the OK Stores and I was on contract. When my contract ended I did not have a job, so since I had a passion and love for working with the community I decided to join this organisation. I came to this hospital, spoke to the matron, and told her my plans and wishes. She gave me an opportunity to work here. I then did a course in home-based care, which means I take care of people who are sick and at home (Interview, Jabulani Mkhize, 19 November 2003, Enhlalakahle Township).

Voluntarism in the community seems to be a driving force towards social solidarity based on reciprocity and a form of alternative livelihood activity. Women such as Matron Gcisa and Mrs Gwala play a leading role in their formation and success. Finally, as Marcus (2001:6) contends, “care in the community becomes care by the community, a self-help activity that needs to be sustained without, or in the South African case, for example, with only limited state support”. While people like Mrs Gwala are few and far between, the idea of volunteerism, which has always been there through the church, is gaining momentum in other organisations in most communities.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter identifies the various forms of community initiatives in the form of organisations and social networks that have been formed or reconfigured to respond to crises of poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS. Some old and formal organisations such as the church have stood the test of time and secured their place in post-apartheid society. However, trade unions have not made significant strides to move beyond the borders of the workplace into communities. This was both surprising and expected. It was surprising because during apartheid South African trade unions played a decisive role in linking workplace struggles and community struggles. In the post-apartheid era, trade unions did not continue

where they left off, and instead focused exclusively on workplace issues. Trade unions were a mere reflection of that lag experienced in South Africa's civil society with the attainment of democracy.

More significantly, because of the crisis in formal old organisations and the slow and ephemeral nature of social movements, another layer of organisation has emerged in the communities. Informal social networks, largely based on reciprocity, volunteerism and non-monetary contributions, have formed as communities struggle with unemployment, poverty and AIDS. Therefore, membership in stokvels and burial societies that require monetary contributions have significantly declined, and instead non-monetary informal networks have emerged in the community.

Post-apartheid South Africa has seen the emergence of social movements in most communities. These are exemplified by the rise of the Treatment Action Campaign and Concerned Citizens Groups, as discussed in this chapter. The democratic government's response to these social movements has been startling. The movements and their leaders have often been labelled as "ultra-left" and viewed as opposing a legitimate government. Most have seen this as a regression to the old apartheid era. As Vally (2003:20) explains, "in addition to the apartheid-era laws such as the Regulation of Gatherings Act, a smorgasbord of Bills, which give the security and intelligence agencies additional powers are in offering. These include the Interception and Monitoring Bill, the Intelligence Services Bill, the Electronic Communications Security (Pty) Ltd Bill, the National Strategic Intelligence Amendment Bill and the Anti-Terrorism Bill".

As assets, community-based organisations have been argued to have the potential of lifting people out of their misery. However, this chapter states that not all CBOs are assets or capitals for the poor, as proposed in the livelihood approach's capital and assets framework. Indeed, the historical context and current position of some organisations, such as political organisations, make them less of capitals but more of "anti-social capitals". The rules of entry and membership rights exclude

others from benefiting and using these organisations as assets. Hence, trade unions have become almost irrelevant since they have stuck to their traditional base of organising permanent workers and not the majority who are working in the informal economy or the unemployed masses.

Conflict and power dynamics between and within faith-based organisations and political organisations make it difficult to view them as total assets and capitals that equally benefit the poor. Therefore, while there are evident social benefits for joining some organisations such as the Treatment Action Campaign, the church, Concerned Citizens Groups and informal burial networks, there are contradictory benefits that come with some organisations like political organisations.

However, the success of these different community-based organisations depends on a number of factors associated with the organisation itself – its members, the community, and the role of the local and national government. Community support for these initiatives and willingness to participate contributes to the effectiveness of these organisations. For example, this study reveals the success of various women's church groups such as *Manyano* and volunteer organisations such as the Treatment Action Campaign. However, the government's response, repressive laws, and the stigmatisation of HIV and AIDS have thwarted the growth of community organisations.