

Kliptown Story and Challenges

A report compiled for Khulisa Social Solutions, May 2014



Introduction

Kliptown is a particularly deprived section of the Soweto District of Johannesburg. The area suffers from high rates of crime and unemployment, poor access to services, and a low quality environment.

This report seeks to motivate further support for Kliptown, capacitating real, systemic change that will have a lasting impact on a community who are persevering in their struggle to address pervasive social issues. The proposed approach builds upon local knowledge and experience, the expertise of Khulisa Social Solutions, and relevant literature relating to youth empowerment, social transformation, and the development of community systems.

Khulisa advocates the application of an innovative combination of strategies to the Kliptown area, developing a programme that is both reactive to local needs and empowers a wide range of actors who will be required to execute a coordinated, unified response.

Kliptown

*'Kliptown has been neglected for years'*¹

Kliptown is home to approximately 50,000 people, and is one of the older districts in Soweto. The unemployment rate is around 70%, and there is a high rate of poverty in the area. High crime rates have been recorded, and children and youths are at great risk, not only as victims of crime, but also of being drawn into criminal behaviour. This is catalysed by inequality, poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, and the normalisation of violence.

In 2013, a total of 5,921 crimes were committed in the area. Although this demonstrated a decline compared to the crime rate in 2012², it is extremely high. The causes of crime are rooted in a culture of violence in which youths are disenfranchised and disempowered to take control of their future to become active, productive members of society. Alongside tough social issues, Kliptown's environment poses a serious threat to the health and wellbeing of residents. Residents live in poor-quality shacks, and waste lines the streets.

Khulisa aims to build capacity within the community to actively address pressing social issues, empowering youth and strengthening their resilience. It is hoped that the community will develop a collective response, overcoming social divisions through the process.

Understanding the area: My Square Block

My Square Block is a concept that has been adapted from the UK's successful *My Square Mile* Government scheme, through which communities are empowered to effect positive change in their own communities. Through needs evaluation, community groups are able to identify and address the specific problems of their area, creating new, innovative methods to target these challenges. This creates a response that is relevant to local needs, and led by people who have a vested interest in ensuring its success and long-term sustainability.

In April 2014, Khulisa Social Solutions conducted a transect walk³ to better understand the unique and pressing needs of the Kliptown area, providing insight into the community. The results of the walk were informative, and revealed the extent to which the local area needs support, both in the environment of the area of itself, and in developing human potential:

¹ Martin Mahlamvu, founder of Tauracr

² 6,370

³ Full report available from Khulisa Social Solutions

- Poor quality housing: The majority of residents live in low quality shacks built with corrugated iron. There is no running water in houses, and residents have to collect water from approximately 70 shared taps in the area. There is no legal electrical connection, so residents rely on illegally splicing lines from the nearby business district.
- Environmental issues: There is no litter disposal. Piles of waste line the pavements and are particularly bad on the railway track and peripheral area. There is open, raw sewage flowing on the streets, which lack a drainage system. Residents report pest issues, citing the presence of rats and cockroaches. The area does not have street lighting that causes problems for locals when walking at night: they are at acute risk of attack.
- Unemployment: 70% of local people are unemployed. There are large numbers of youths on the streets during the day, and absenteeism appears to be high. There are few jobs for working-age members of the population, who also lack skills and training.
- Drugs and alcohol addiction: Drugs and alcohol are reported to be severe problems, with a number of dealers operating in the area. This manifests itself in high levels of local violence.
- Crime: Crime rates in the area are particularly high and local people fear walking outside after dark. Assault, robbery, and sexual attacks are common.

A promising recent initiative

NYDA Youthbuild Programme

Khulisa Social Solutions implemented and managed the pilot NYDA Youthbuild Programme from the end of January 2014 to the 31st of March 2014, reaching 1130 volunteers nationwide. Within Soweto, there were 68 volunteers. The volunteers selected were required to volunteer for 8 hours a day at one of Khulisa's local partner NGOs, receiving in exchange a daily stipend and training in Life Skills and Job Readiness.

Evaluation of the programme in Kliptown found that it gave volunteers a sense of purpose, improved the local environment, developed skills and job readiness, and had a tangible impact on the attitude and self-motivation of participants. This provides strong evidence that the right initiatives in Kliptown will be well received.

Key successes of the programme

- Exceptionally high retention rate
- Volunteers were involved in a range of positive projects that were relevant to the needs of their area. Examples include: volunteering at sports activities, after-school clubs, arts workshops, cooking and cleaning at orphanages, delivering crime workshops, and engaging the local community in clean up campaigns
- Youths received the basic life skills (Khulisa's Breakthrough Programme) and Job Readiness (Khulisa's Amongst the Stars Programme) training, improving their self-worth and enhancing their likelihood of finding employment
- Overall, volunteers demonstrated commitment and enthusiasm for their roles, making a valued and positive contribution
- Youths who may otherwise be prone to crime and violence displayed cohesiveness and teamwork
- Volunteers had to be tax registered and have their own bank accounts, which developed good citizenship behaviours
- Provision through local NGOs embedded in communities meant that there was in-depth local knowledge available in creating the volunteering opportunities

Key challenges of the Youthbuild programme

- Youths felt that they did not have enough time on the programme
- There was a high requirement of administrative work
- Some volunteers had trouble with monthly payments as they were unable to pay for transport to reach their place of work

Summary of recommendations

Addressing the identified issues of the Youthbuild programme means its methodology can be adapted to a more integrative approach.

- Increase programme length
- Provide allocations for travel costs
- Pay volunteers on a weekly basis
- Provide financial management training for volunteers who may not have been paid before
- Develop linkages with stakeholders in communities to increase scope and sustainability
- Provide post-programme plans for volunteers, such as helping youths to find employment or job placements in partnership with the programme
- Engage and recruit more NGOs to broaden the scope of the programme

Drawing on the strengths and addressing the challenges of implementing the Youthbuild programme, Khulisa is well placed to manage funding which will support volunteerism in Kliptown.

Khulisa's approach: social transformation systems

Khulisa bases much of its work on the model of social transformation, where social problems are addressed systemically through an analysis of their root causes. Societies are viewed as a system with highly integrated parts, functioning together in contribution to the whole.

A systemic approach is particularly well-suited to Kliptown since it suffers from such broad and interlinked challenges. Embedding the concept of social transformation in the recommended approach is astute since it incorporates numerous partners, government departments, and role-players, building capacity.

Kliptown undeniably faces a comprehensive range of challenges. The root of the problem lies with lack of opportunities and environmental influences: where children are born into an environment where they lack access to opportunities, and live in conditions of poverty, violence and crime, they are likely to fail to achieve their right to live as healthy, productive members of society.

As such, Khulisa proposes addressing the programme through a number of interlinked programmes, all of which sit below the 'My Square Block' initiative, directly and energetically targeting the entrenched and persistent challenges Kliptown faces.⁴ It is crucial that all stakeholders and role-players work together to create a systematic, collaborative response.

Objectives

*'I told myself that I would never let growing up poor control my future'*⁵

Aim: To motivate lasting change in Kliptown through positive instruments that will improve unemployment, encourage learning and skills development, reduce crime, increase wellbeing, and dramatically upgrade the environmental quality of the area.

Khulisa plans to support the creation of a communicative forum that will catalyse an inclusive, community-led approach to Kliptown's challenges. This will create an enabling environment for Kliptown's youth to succeed.

⁴ Whilst beyond the responsibility of Khulisa, it is acknowledged that local government plays a critical role in improving the environmental quality of the area. Adequate housing, electricity and plumbing are fundamentally important.

⁵ Ricardo Geluk, Taursrac volunteer

Development focus:

- A monthly meeting whereby all NGOs and community groups are represented, where issues are discussed and a coordinated response is negotiated
- Skills and job training programmes
- The support of small businesses and enterprises which will hire local people
- A comprehensive environmental upgrade campaign
- The regular engagement of volunteers who can contribute to the shared goals of Kliptown
- The provision of educational courses, such as workshops on sexual health and gender-based violence

Broadly speaking, areas of development for Kliptown rest under the following umbrella.

Personal development	Soft skill development	Projects
Empowering youths and community members to express their issues, resolve conflicts, and develop resilience.	Build skills that will help youths and community members into employment, including job readiness training and business-specific preparation, such as bakery training. Improve knowledge and awareness of health issues and crime.	Systematically upgrade the environment through the promotion of volunteerism in the community, including planting, litter collection, clean ups, and outdoor painting.

This comprehensive approach is designed to become self sustaining, directly targeting key local issues:

- Unemployment
- Crime
- Poverty
- Teenage pregnancy
- HIV/AIDS

Kliptown's strength

Kliptown's particular strength is its people, many of whom are devoted to the goal of a safe community that can support its residents in any challenges they face.

Despite a long history of social issues, interviews with local people and the presence of passionate NGOs (see below) suggest that the general community feels deeply motivated to directly address issues.

Taursrac

Taursrac's mission is to promote the regeneration of Kliptown, building opportunities for the areas' most deprived youths. Led by Martin Mahlamvu, himself an ex-convict who suffered whilst growing up in Kliptown, the organisation supports and motivates youths to avoid crime and to develop personally, building resilience and avoiding conflict. Taursrac uses various methods including music, dance and sports to reach out to youths in the area.

Soweto Kliptown Youth (SKY)

SKY provides hope and services to some of the most neglected children living in Kliptown, offering both formal and informal programmes to support child and youth development. The centre offers skills training and education in art, music, the performing arts, and computer skills. SKY also provides accommodation for children who are orphaned or unable to live at home.

Kliptown Youth Programme (KYP)

KYP aims to fight the poverty and disadvantage faced by youths in Kliptown by offering educational support and after-school activities. Young, dynamic individuals are encouraged to contribute to the betterment of their community, whilst also developing their own skills and learning.

Possible implementation challenges

- The local government *must* take responsibility for basic environmental provisions that have been neglected. Approximately 50,000 people are living without access to sanitation, electricity, housing of a reasonable standard, and water in their homes. Even a motivated, empowered community are unable to address these basic shortcomings in their environmental quality.
- The presence of three NGOs (SKY, Kliptown Youth, and Taurstrac) will require a coordinated response so that groups work together, avoiding duplication and disputes.
- Local people have displayed problems in working together, and disagreements can prevent cooperation which leads to benefits for all
- High level of initial funding required

Next steps

- Discuss and consult all role-players and stakeholders in the development of a detailed implementation plan, including budgets.
- Secure commitment from the South Africa Police Service in crime reduction and visible policing measures
- Build on commitment from local partner NGOs, developing clear goals and commitments
- Approach stakeholders and businesses for funding
- Engage potential leaders and mentors who can share their skills and run workshops

Khulisa sees an exciting opportunity in building on the success of *My Square Mile* with a linkage to Youthbuild and a systemic approach. This will open doors for greater communication and create valuable networks for participants.