

# Reflections from WhatsApp group, Local Economy and Social Change - Part 1

In this document we are gathering the reflections and observations that the group made when answering the questions from Jonathan as part of the first part of the course. The idea of the WhatsApp group is that we are sharing our observations and questions there with everyone in the course so all of us can learn from each other.

Questions:

1) Describe the place where you live! So this with a focus on what you know and what you don't know about its local economy and current social issues.

2) Formulate at least 3 questions about the place you live in and/or about local economic approaches we have discussed.

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## ZINZI

*My name is Zinzi Mgwigwi -Makwabe ,residing in Du noon location Milnerton .*

*Have lived in this community for over 19 years when I first arrived it was a very close knit community sort of a gated community if I can use that word .Everyone knew each other and street and area committees were heading this community ,well supervised they took care of each and every need of their community in terms of what the people needed (service deliveries )they were the voice of the community in other words .If you were having a visitor coming to Du noon it was expected you to go to the committee of your are tell them you have a visitor so and so staying 5 days if that's the case and when are they leaving.*

*Community meetings were called at least weekly updating community of things to be happen,jobs etc .*

*Sanco was also a hands on transparent civic organisation .*

*I still remember clearly our Councillor was not a not a person who you think twice approaching ,he used to walk around the streets of Du noon carrying a black briefcase with him ,you would ask yourself what's in there up until you ask whatever you wanted to ask .He would give you all the time needed answering your questions and he would even tell you my office is with me wherever I go.*

*In that briefcase there was a stamp (Cllr's)incase he meets someone who needs a proof of address ,job seekers forms, Du noon map etc ,indeed he had a mobile office right in his hand.*

*The reason I'm writing from that time it's because wanna paint a picture and get a sense of what used to be and what it is now.*

*Problem started when people who owned houses sold their houses, at first you would be facing problems like if a family member passes on and you didn't have a any income ,you did not even have a funeral cover for the person .So for you to be able to make funeral arrangements transporting them*

to the Eastern Cape for burial money is needed then having a house the only option was selling your RDP house 🏠.

*That was the start of a chaotic, uncontrollably, toxic disastrous situation, which Du noon is today .*

*Taxi owners began to buy houses like loaves of bread ,they would bury your loved one then family signs an affidavit giving the person ownership of their house.Do these buyers buy to live in Du noon ? Ooow no ,they bought to build flats and rent them out and go live in our neighbouring suburbs .The most popular one at the time was Parklands and Tableview .*

*That was the start of a chaotic, uncontrollably, toxic disastrous situation, which Du noon is today .*

*Today Du noon is a Sodom and Gomor of Cape town, South Africa .Drug infested, prostitution ,kids getting lost each and every day ,our young beautiful getting girls getting pregnant each and every day , remember these kids in front of me .Today some you can't even recognise its so sad .*

*It's a norm to see sewerage spilled on the streets just across there is a stand someone cooking ,braaing (barbecue) to sell .*

*Our boys are tsotsis (we call the skolis) ribbing people they used to do that at night at least these days they do it in broad daylight and if it happens next to you no choice but to look away if not risk losing your life. Unemployed of course is one of the factors I would say leads to this behaviours and drugs plays a big role in making these boys brave to do whatever they want to do .*

*If I can write a book about Du noon ,one who hasn't seen Du noon before now they would think I exaggerating but who knows would feel helpless like I do and worst part knowing i can't do anything to change this situation .*

*So said ,hope I answered the questions with my long storytelling.*

*The Cllr that I mentioned has since passed on ,another man took over up until last year a woman took over we thought change in societal issues were gonna be better especially drug issues you would hope a mother would have maternal instincts take things to heart unfortunately it's getting worse by day ,community divided . Community leaders go to meetings if there is a project coming instead of giving community members opportunities we see them working on each and every project if not their relatives working non stop .*

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*Good morning everyone hope your all warm those in Cape it's cool .*

*Finishing my Du noon story :*

*Formulate 3 Questions about the place you live in-*

*.Would it help if the government comes up with another way of managing wards and do away with Councillors ? Maybe a different approach of giving power back to the people ? 🤔*

*.If foreign nationals could all be documented so that whatever one does ,they have an address to be traced, have a working Visa if they are here working ,student visa if they here to study after finishing go back home and apply to be back for work ,do you have a sponsor should anything goes South when your here ?*

*In other words wouldn't it be controlled if that can happen ,who comes out who comes in ?My reasons are simply drug selling would be less in Du noon sold by foreign nationals who doesn't even live in Du noon but live comfortably in Parklands and other suburbs living this community to deal with being robbed every now and then by thugs who are our kids on drugs .There's even so many names they call these drugs ;Whoonga (not sure of the spelling though)Tik,Nyaope very funny names.*

*.Having said that not all foreign nationals are undocumented,and done are good hard working citizens .Nigerians can't say anything good .South Africans are indeed selling drugs not any different from those foreign nationals who sell the only difference is that they didn't fly many miles to commit crimes in other countries.However it doesn't make them any better .*

*.Is there any chance of for an example if I earn R3000 or less I don't pay the same taxes paid by Motsepe ?*

*Let's say for an example a loaf of bread is R30 taxed @R10 ,so we both pay R10 Motsepe doesn't even feel he paid anything because he is a billionaire probably doesn't even know how much the bread or milk , costs that amount to me I decide 5times to take/not that loaf of bread and my kids need it so meaning I*

*can't do without .*

*.How do other countries do in order to avoid having many political parties in one country smart enough to pretend they are fighting for you but instead its the opposite ?*

*Hopefully I answered the questions.*

## **NICK**

*Here's my attempt at the questions! 1. Describe the place where you live! So this with a focus on what you know and what you don't know about its local economy and current social issues.*

*Mowbray is a diverse community in the Southern suburbs of Cape Town. It has some parts of the University of Cape Town, as well as having other educational facilities, such as schools. The centre of Mowbray has a transport hub, with mini-Taxis, buses and trains, where thousands of people commute on a daily basis. Commerce centres around take-aways, mini superettes and hair salons. The area has a lot of students, as well as a number of migrant workers from elsewhere in Africa and from countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh. Income wise there is a large affluent community, with jobs at the University and other businesses elsewhere in Cape Town. There is also a large working class community that really struggled during the Covid pandemic, as many people lost their incomes for a long period of time. The area also has a large homeless population that also grew during and after the Covid pandemic. Some people live on the streets with small cardboard shelters, while some pieces of open land are set up as small camps for a number of people. Several people make a living by going through bins to find recyclables to sell or to find food.*

*Crime is ongoing concern in the suburb. Drug selling and drug taking is common in the central area, petty theft, muggings and car break-ins are also common. In comparison to much of Cape Town the area is quite safe, with little violent crime taking place.*

*A Community Action Network (CAN) was set up as a local response to the Covid crisis, and continues to support local community development initiatives, such as building benches for a bus stop by the maternity hospital and in planting up the railways station. One side of the suburb has an effective*

*and approachable councillor, while the other side has an invisible councillor that doesn't seem to have a good reputation.*

*I'm not really sure how effective the area is in promoting the local economy. I also suspect there is a tendency for spending to be recycled within different parts of the community, with middle class people supporting middle class businesses and working class people supporting working class businesses, while people living on the margins of society scrape by with whatever they can find.*

*2. Formulate at least 3 questions about the place you live in and/or about local economic approaches we have discussed.*

*One question would be around the communities' demographics, such as how many people are high income earners, how many have low incomes and how many are unemployed?*

*It would be interesting to know how much the local shops and takeaways keep money in the community in comparison to supermarkets and other retail chain businesses?*

*We could look at how much the student population supports the local economy?*

*What additional activities/businesses might encourage more local spending?*

## NDILEKA

*Morning everyone. Am Ndileka Matume from Green Park Informal Settlement, is in Nature Reserve protected area but its no longer protected now. my Community is a kind of rural area. where theres no school, shops, street light, we have a gravel road of which is very challenging now that its winter and rainings. we are using bucket toilet and we are using stand pipes for water. Green Park Community is a diverse community with different race and culture,.. my community has a lot of community politics and corruption of which it makes things difficult for activists to be active due to the life threatenings and so on, lots of stumbling blocks for the development to take place in the community and the lack of knowledge and education more specially to the leadership side.. the funny part is that all the councilors are aware of this issue even the mayor himself but theres no back bone when it comes to deliver the services to the people. hence the area has 35 now existing. we are only depending on Spaza shops of Somalians and small tuck shops. We don't transport we have to cross the bridge to Delft community for everything in order to get a life. The community was on the plan for development but due to the covid people invaded the land and that has made things more difficult in the community. YEAH THATS MY COMMUNITY. THANKS*

## EVA

*Hello everyone! Eva from ABF Skåne here. Thank you for sharing knowledge and experiences from your local communities! Here are some reflections and questions from my end.*

*Röstånga is a small village with approx 1000 inhabitants. The village is situated next to a national park. Tourism is a major inflow of money in the community during the four months/year. Röstånga is part of Svalöv municipality currently run by a rightwing coalition led by a racist populist party. As is the case in many not so wealthy areas in Sweden, the populist racist party is gaining voters among people who experience a decrease in/lack of services in the communities and feel that the wealth and power is elsewhere. When I use "less wealthy" to describe issues of inequality in the Swedish context I'm comparing it to other areas in Sweden and not to a global standard. A community being "not so*

*wealthy" in the Swedish context still means that we have a functioning state, a system for social security etc. The unemployment rates are very low and my guess is that many people spend their income outside the village. Me and Vanda focus on mobility as a case in this learning process. There are aspects of mobility that we know about and some we don't know. A lot of the people living in the village commute, both adults and youth from 7th grade and up who go to schools outside of the village. Owning a car is the norm around here and we have a petrol station in the village. We have a restricted public transport schedule with regional bus service. No train service.*

*Questions:*

*What services are lacking in terms of mobility and inclusion?*

*What are the pressing issues for less financially privileged community members in terms of mobility?*

*How do we invite other perspectives to our process and share the knowledge of existing services outside of our closest circle?*

## **WEZO**

*Hello everyone My name is Wezo Singqomo. I live in a township called KHAYELITSHA which means NEW HOME in English. I was born and raised here in this area.*

*Khayelitsha was established in 1983 with a population of about 300 000 residents. Now we are looking at about 2.4 million people in khayelitsha. This has happened through urbanization and industrialization.khayelitsha has tourist attraction places like Look Out Hill facility. The area is situated on the periphery of the City of Cape Town(30-35km) from the CBD next to N2 road leading to Cape Town. Khayelitsha is 1040 hectares of land and it's one of South Africa's leading fastest growing townships.*

*Khayelitsha is sitting on a GDP of over R1 trillion. It remains today as a largely immigrant community. High rate of unemployment,crime and teenage pregnancy. As I have seen and noticed economic challenges/issues in my community that most dominant in our local economy is foreign nationals, which means all that money made within our community lives our community without benefiting or giving back. This has made people of khayelitsha out of business and has left our people depressed.*

*Crime has become a source of living as the are a scarcity of jobs, not forgetting that even those foreign nationals are paying protection fee to those who control crime.*

*Khayelitsha is certainly a poor area, relative to Cape Town as a whole in terms of the quality of housing and public services for many of its residents. The most dominant sector in our economy is the public sector as I have seen our WARD is sitting on R69.8 billion from municipal as part their services.*

*Khayelitsha is economically marginal,Self-employment is constrained by crime as well as by the source of income of many households and the areas distance from commercial and suburban areas of Cape Town.*

*Questions:*

*1. How can we reform our local economy in our community?*

*2. How can the community have its own policies to monitor its own economy?*

3. Is the government aware of this? if yes, what has been implemented to overcome this situation?

## LWAZI

Good afternoon Comrades. My name is Lwazi Kolanisi and I'm from khayelitsha in an informal settlement of Town Two, it's been 28 years living in this community. The community is largely dominated by shacks and majority of its youths is unemployed and in a state of despair, as an attempt of escaping miserable conditions they make use of dangerous substances.

The community is cosmopolitan, it has foreign nationals who are in control of spaza shops. It's overpopulated and there are issues with sewage, illegal connections of electricity ( utsweba, utokola, izinyoka nyoka) and honestly I recommend this practice it's revolutionary.

Khayelitsha was designed to accommodate cheap labour, seemingly as an expression of power. In the past two years there's been a misguided phenomenon of land occupation in various parts of khayelitsha, which made the place more congested.

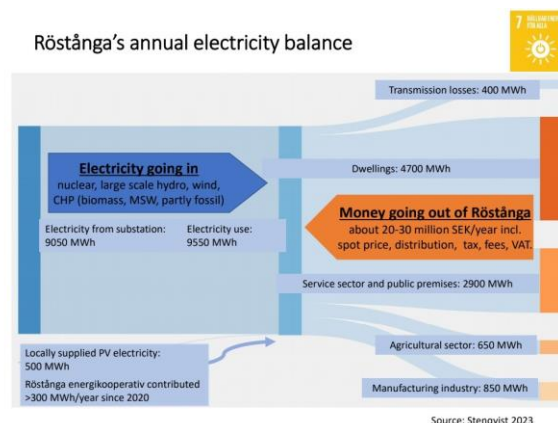
The public sewage system of khayelitsha was built in 1986, and at the time khayelitsha had thousands of people who were living there, today khayelitsha has millions of people.

Infrastructure is improving, we see fancy buildings and 5 stars hotels but those buildings are not accessible and are not community friendly. The community is characterized by elements of violence, lumpen culture and dysfunctional schools, corrupt politicians, leaderlessness, partisanship.

Formula 3 questions about my community:

- \* where does the revenue khayelitsha makes goes?
- \* who owns what and why?
- \* How are small scale farmers contributes to the economy of khayelitsha?

## CHRISTIAN



### Questions

1) Imagine if the 20-30 million SEK/year spent (in Röstångå) on external electricity supply were invested in energy efficiency improvement and local renewable energy supply. What would mean in terms of energy independence, local job creation, various environmental and social benefits...?

2) Can we build a local micro-grid to directly share electricity between villagers?

3) I have read about a number of micro-grid developments in South Africa, involving grid connected PV-plant and large batteries/power storage. These investments are often made by large companies to protect them from black outs. Are there any good examples of micro-grids in neighborhoods of dwellings?

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## NDALO

*Good morning everyone, thank you comrade Zinzi for raising the questions on foreign nationals, economy, drugs and community. These are tough and uncomfortable questions. Having said that, I think there's a great deal to unpack here to inform how we (collectively) act and react to these realities including our comrades in Sweden as they're also faced with similar challenges. What I also find interesting is that each community/individual have different perspectives and experiences on the subject. But it's fundamentally about economic opportunities.*

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## KARIN

*Good morning everyone, here comes my description of my local community, which is a district of Stockholm, the capital of Sweden.*

*My district is called Johanneshov, and is located very close to the city center, with subway connection but also very good roads to walk and bike into town. It is also very close to a natural reservation park. What differentiates it from nearby and more attractive districts is that it doesn't have a center by the subway with shops and such. There is no supermarket in the district, but a lovely local shop owned by immigrants and also some local restaurants and local businesses. It is however hard for new businesses to establish, especially food stores, restaurants and cafes, they tend to close shop shortly after opening, which probably has to do with strong competition from nearby districts and the city center. The most famous place is probably the music studio where Abba recorded some of their songs! A church and a primary school are within walking distance. Most people in the community commute to their jobs, is my guess.*

*There are mostly small apartments in the district, so not many families live here, and most people don't stay in the neighborhood for very long. There are plans for development of new apartment buildings and almost all apartments have been turned from rentals to condominiums. We see a large increase of young people in the neighborhood, mostly from outside of Stockholm, with lots of purchasing power, and gentrification makes it hard for elderly people to keep living here.*

*There has been an increase in crime and drug dealing in recent years, which has led to more police presence.*

*Questions:*

*How can we get more people interested and engaged in their local community, how to make them see the benefits of it? Especially difficult in such an individualistic society like Sweden*

*How can citizens be more involved with the establishment of new local businesses, parting from their own needs? That could make local business life more sustainable and more money would stay in the community.*

*I am also interested in knowing more about the demographics of the community and to get some stats on how much money that local businesses "earn" actually stays in the community, similar to Nicks question.*

*Have a nice day! ✨*

## **SITHEMBELE**

*Hi Name is SITHEMBELE MNGUNI. I currently live in Khayelitsha but am from the neighborhood of delft in Leiden.*

*Delft is a township on the outskirts of Cape Town, situated next to the Cape Town International airport.*

*Delft was established in 1989, as an integrated service land for Afrikaans and Xhosa speakers.*

*Delft has a 51% of Afrikaans speakers and 46% of Xhosa speakers and 3% other.*

*Majority of residents did not finish their matric and the official number of unemployment levels are at about 43%.*

*Delft south is the most economic place in delft.*

*Delft has houses to live in but no business infrastructure to support entrepreneurs.*

*Delft is underseige by gangsters who operate their criminal enterprise within the community. Violence and gang fighting is a norm in our neighborhood,there is also a saying "bullets have no address".*

*In 2007 Delft experienced a xenophobia. That changed the economy of delft. From 2010 we see an increase in the business activities and the influx of foreign actors to the market of delft. This marginalizes many small business owners in delft, now there is no spaza in delft only somalian shops.*

*Unemployment has driven many people to be creative,cause now there is a huge trend in recycling to meet end means.*

*I see more woman in business in delft than men, most of the men either at work or at home.*

*Food insecurity in delft is a major issue, some community members create soup kitchens to feed the needy.*

*So by recreating a local economic node in Leiden we are helping those who operate in informal economic to also see their businesses as formal.*

*1. Can we create operatives to combine smaller business operating in the same sector?*

*2. Can smaller business gain a market share in the market of delft?*



### 3. Can community based organizations be the solution to the organization of society?

#### MANDY

*Hi everyone, sorry to take so long but I was not sure about mine. Here it is : I live in a suburb of Cape Town called Diep River. It is a middle class area which was subject to forced removals under apartheid. I live in a block of flats which has 32 units on the Main Road. Because it is a suburb local economic activity is limited to a few take away restaurants, a few coffee shops and pubs, a few convenience stores. These stores are mostly low cost not fancy. The main businesses around my flat are car sales businesses like Suzuki, Huyandi and some used car dealerships. Most of the people who live in my area shop at shopping centers (some small some bigger) where the national retailers have shops. We are lucky because we are close to the train station and bus stop into town.*

*Honestly, I do not feel like part of the community I live in. Our block of flats is made up of a core group of people who own their flats, are on the body corporate, have lived there for many years and are quite conservative. There are also a few old age pensioners and are some families - I really like the kids a lot and they are often playing in the courtyard when I come home, a lot of the families are from Congo. During COVID myself and another woman in the block set up a WhatsApp group to support each other but it's now used to remind people of the rules and inform when the water is being cut off... things like that. There have been a few instances of Gender based violence in the block and when we initially set up the WhatsApp group we had hoped it would be a space for community building and support but all the ideas we have had (like a community food fair) get shut down by the conservative body corporate, who honestly I do not have the strength to take on anymore. Basically I live in my flat and have limited interaction with those around me.*

*In the broader community outside the block there are homeless people and waste pickers who we only really see on Thursdays when the rubbish truck comes to collect the rubbish. There is a recycling process set up so the waste pickers can easily take the recyclable. There are also sex workers who you only see on the street at night. I do not know where they live.*

*When I think of building circular economies I think that there are other parts of the city where there is more poverty that needs it more. Because of Apartheid, although the racial make-up of the area is changing a bit the class make up is still mostly middle class and mostly white and honestly I do not feel very friendly towards a lot of my neighbors.*