

FOCUS

UPM Newsletter — July 2016



Government

Failures

Undermine human rights and dignity

Editorial

In this edition of our newsletter we report on the decaying state of governance in our Makana Municipality in Grahamstown.

We are currently in a period of global regression in which rights are being disrespected by governments. In most of the global South, right wing pro-capitalists are using nationalism to oppose basic human rights.

This is true of South Africa which still has rights written into law but these laws are often ignored. One famous case is that of Mrs Grootboom. She won a case against the state forcing the state to take positive action in the case of the poor and homeless, but she still died in her shack. This shows the limitations of human rights discourse and reminds us that it remains necessary to organize and mobilize outside of liberal institutions.

We also have the right to strike, freedom of assembly and the right to life yet striking miners were massacred at Marikana. It is clear that it takes political work to enforce rights.

There are many Grootbooms in our Makana Municipality. Old women who look after their families and due to high rates of unemployment or taking care of their

grandchildren because the parents have died of the destructive global pandemic diseases of HIV/AIDS.

Many women die in agony waiting for these RDP house. They think before they die they can leave their family under shelter. This wish has withered in our communities due to corruption and neo liberal policies of the ruling party. The dignity of our people is still something that we must struggle for after 22 years of independence.

We live in broken townships characterised by all ills of our society where women are threatened daily with rape, shacks with no running water, roads that are breaking down, clinics that are understaffed and have no medicine, an education system that is dysfunctional. The life of a black person is still cheap and that of a black woman counts for nothing.

This newsletter exposes the failure of Makana Municipality to meeting the needs of its residents. It's a municipality that is placed under administration, section 139 1(b) of our constitution due to corruption. Vavi's words echo true that we are led by political hyenas who are in feeding frenzies on the rights and dignity of a black woman. The stories in this newsletter

constitute a microcosm of the national crisis, municipalities that are in a state of decay. Our politicians are blinded, the venom of greed seem to have forgotten that there is more to life than luxury, power and status.

Indeed, following Fanon and Biko, we believe that those poisoned are indeed responding to the scourge of the colonial mindset in the manner of a madman. We believe it is our responsibility as sovereign individuals to engage in a therapeutic revolt against the corrupting venom that is engulfing our country and is quickly turning it into rather large extension of Fort England and other mental institutions in our country.

Unemployed Peoples Movement / Grahamstown.



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Waiting for a House That Never Comes



In 2013 we experienced housing development in our municipality and city. This, was welcomed with a lot of enthusiasm and excitement by residents as our people desperately need shelter.

In the midst of such enthusiasm and excitement we realized that our municipal housing board was manipulating the list. To try and stop this, we made a request that the list be made public on request and be available in places like libraries, for people to screen their names.

This request was met with hostility by the municipality and the housing board. For a week we occupied the area where they were building these RDP houses and

requested an urgent meeting with the relevant stakeholders.

Mr. Kosalin Naicker from the Department of Human Settlement (the government department responsible for housing) visited our movement and people expressed their anger and frustration and demanded that the housing list cannot be treated as a secret and demanded transparency and accountability. Mr Kosalin Naicker promised to send a delegation to deal with the issue. This promise was never honoured.

Subsequently our organization convened another public meeting (when???) where the mayor agreed that there was a scam in the new housing development and also promised to act swiftly. This promise was never honoured. Since then we have received many complaints from the residents, regarding the housing allocation in ext 10, in particular women. We were moved by number of cases and we did interviews and research and the following are our findings.

Nomfundo Bikitsha

"I'm living in Wood Street, in a shack at the back with my daughter who matriculated in 2015. I was diagnosed with TB and when its raining my roof leaks and my mud house gets wet and its cold and the floor gets wet. I have sleepless nights and am very stressed realising that I will not get my RDP house. My health is deteriorating knowing that I am stuck in this shack. Not to own a house is a nightmare"

Nontinam Sylvia Sitani

"I went to the offices of Human Settlement in Port Elizabeth and I got a letter that my name has been approved for the RDP house. I am still renting a house and I pay R500 every month. I have two kids both unemployed even though they have passed their Grade 12. I vote for the ANC, they get money, nice cars and nice houses and I get nothing. They don't talk to me nice when I go to their offices, they ask me where did I get the letter and swear at me. Maybe if another political party win elections, we will get our houses. One day God will hear our prayers, one day, for now I am praying. My prayer and my wish is to own a house and my kids to find work, I will die peacefully if God can answer only this prayer. I pray every night"

Mhimhi Joyce Joja

"I am renting a shack and every time there is a rain my

shack falls. I have 2 kids. I sent my niece to Human Settlement in Port Elizabeth to find out if my name is on the list. Here is the letter, I have been approved. UPM advised me to do so. When I go to Housing Board offices, they tell me to stop going there or go back to Port Elizabeth. I will not give up, I need a house not for me but for my kids. When its raining we can't stay together as a family, we must look for a place to sleep, ask our neighbours. What kind of a parent I am, that I can't look after my own kids, I can't provide shelter for my kids. How would you feel? When it's raining I don't sleep, I get hurt and I cry to God."

Tatana Zuziwe

My mother died and her husband who is not my father evicted me from home. I am now homeless and helpless. I'm unemployed, I can't look after myself. Its hard to be a woman, unemployed and also homeless. You must find a man who must look after you, even if he abuses you, you must tolerate this because he gives you a shelter. If it was my house, as women we don't abuse and beat men. I am happy that I don't have a girl child, because they get raped. If you are unemployed and homeless don't bring a girl child in this world. Its not easy to be a woman. If I was a man they could have given me my house long ago "

Dunjwa Nandipha Letticia

Dunjwa Letticia has not

received her house, her experience is that the housing board is not helpful and neither is her councillor.

Beauty Booii

"I was asked to purchase a whiskey and pay some money before I could get a house and when I refused I was subjected to emotional abuse by the official in the housing board in our City. If I was a man he was not going to abuse me, there were two men that I was with and both got their houses. Maybe I must pull down my pants to get this house. That's what they do. I'm going to fight for my house."

Fezeka Nzondo

Fezeka Nzondo is an old woman renting a shack in Fingo village, kwa Ndancama, living with her grand-daughter. Her situation is bad and she has given up on ever owning a house. She couldn't talk to us, she cried and ask us to help her get her house.

Zandile Lamani

Zandile Lamani rents a shack on E Street, he is mentally ill and his sister is looking after him. She has been looking after him and they solely depend on the disability grant. They rent R350 for the shack. He couldn't talk to us.

... The list is endless



Women's Autonomy is the basis for Freedom and Dignity

It's a worry that the majority of people who are denied housing are struggling and unemployed women.

We run a community support office, amongst the many cases we deal with, we are confronted with sexual and physical abuse. It is so devastating to realize that even on housing women rights are violated.

We have been campaigning for women's rights and firmly believe that women should be prioritized.

One of the most significant problems facing women who have experienced domestic and intimate partner violence is a dependency on the very

person who abuses them.

Women often have nowhere to go, and have children to look after, to house, and to feed. Perhaps one of the most immediate ways in which we can address this dependency, which serves to keep women in abusive relationships and situations, is to assign RDP houses to women who experience domestic and intimate partner violence.

Ensuring that these women have an alternative option, and are provided with the freedom to actually choose whether to stay in the situation in which they find themselves or leave.

Women need their own homes

where men will not have a final decision and say. Autonomy is the basis for freedom and dignity.

It is an indictment on our municipality that women continue to be compromised at the altar of corruption and patronage.

Makana Municipality has received a letter from the MEC of Local Government, demanding answers for this saga. They have set up an investigation team.

But we are aware that you can't take your case to criminals, you must take criminals to courts.

Women Speak Out About the Crises of Housing

The housing crisis in Grahamstown has become a serious issue.

People coming to UPM offices complain about corruption.

They say people on the list do not receive houses in Extension 10 as these houses are given to ward councilors.

According to section 26 on the South African constitution everyone has a right to adequate housing. But housing is still a crisis and many people still live in informal settlements such as Ethembeni at Joza, Ext 7 where residents are suffering because of poverty which in most cases is caused by unemployment.

The people at Ethembeni don't have toilets. They make use of outdoor pits which they dig themselves. They share

6 street taps. They were told by the municipality that they should move because their area is a wetland and not suitable for building houses because there is too much water on their land. Some of the community members refused to leave the area.

Some moved to Extension 10, where there are RDP houses. In Extension 10 close to 2400 RDP houses were built in 2009.

The community complains that the houses have been allocated to people who are not on the housing list. They complain of corruption in the housing department.

Even though the housing policy says that RDP houses should be given to people whose joint household income is less than R3 500



per month, most people living in these houses earn far more than this – many are employees of Makana Municipality, soldiers, nurses, teachers, employees of government institutions. Some councillors put their family members in these houses. Some people even own more than one house at Extension 10.

The community in Vukani and Extension 9 complain about the quality and size of the houses. They say that the government is not listening to their demands.

They don't come back and check whether the houses are still in good condition and when the community comes forward to state these problems they do not listen.

RDP HOUSING RULES: Know your Rights!!!

People Applying for an RDP House Should:

1. Be a **South African citizen**
2. Over **21 years** of age
3. Must have a total household **income of less than R3 500** per month
4. Must be married or live with a partner or be single and **have dependents** (children you are responsible for)
5. Must **never have owned a house or a property** anywhere in South Africa
6. Applicants will **only ever get one housing subsidy** (except for consolidation subsidy) so they must use it wisely
7. The **names of both partners are then added** onto a database. If they separate from their partner whose name appears in the database, they will not be granted another subsidy with a new partner
8. **Applications can be done at all local housing departments** and they will be added on the housing waiting list. Applicants will be notified when their house is ready.
9. RDP houses are **not for sale, they are free.**
10. Anyone who wants to extend or renovate their RDP house before eight years of ownership must get permission to do so from their local municipality

Housing problems in Ethembeni

I interviewed a woman from Ethembeni. She lives in a 2 roomed house (Mkhukhu) with her 2 kids and husband. They have been staying at Ethembeni for 3 years now. She had applied for a house in 2009, she is unemployed and her husband is the bread winner.

When I arrived at her house she was sitting outside her house in the sun. She told me that the majority of people in Grahamstown are unemployed and there is only thing you can do and that is to sit around and follow the sun until it sets.

She told me that the problem is with the way houses are allocated and with the quality of the houses. In a year or two years you find that the house collapse.

She said there are many old people on the waiting list for years who are still waiting for houses. Yet there are teenagers who are born frees who are living in those houses. She said that as women we are harassed or used as sex objects.

Women have to sell themselves in order to get houses or to get on the housing list.

She said that as a woman when you are living in informal houses (imikhukhu) kubanzima kakhulu you have to walk long distances to get water. There are no street lights and you risk being raped on the way or when you are coming back from fetching water

She said if government is not going to give us houses they should at least give us electricity and roads because there is a high rate of crime and we are not safe in our own areas, especially as women.

Housing problems in Joza

I spoke to a woman who lives at Joza location in an RDP house. She was busy preparing supper for her family and she offered me a seat while she was busy chopping her vegetables.

She told me that the problem is with the people who are in these government institutions.

“When they get there they forget about us and focus on themselves. When they get bribed with money they get confused and trapped, and as the community we never hear from them”.

She said *“People who are corrupt are violating our right as citizens of South Africa. We are always called in hall and they explain the budget but it never goes according to what they say. I have been there in the housing department but you never receive any information. I am growing old and I have not received my house even today”.*



She said that the housing crisis contributes to women being sexually, emotionally and physically abused because their partners get stressed and at times take out their stresses on women.

The fact that the area does not have street lights, water and proper roads means that women can't walk in the streets at night because they fear for their lives and they fear being.

She said *"Water is a big issue because we use street taps that are far from our houses and you have no choice but to walk and get the water. I have to cook, children have to wash in the morning and I have to take responsibility to get the water, because my husband goes to work during the day and he expects me to prepare supper for him when he comes back from work"*.

The Problem of Housing for Women Who Want to Leave Abuse

A third woman I interviewed told me she had lived in a shack and that that she was abused by her ex husband for three years. He was working as a gardener and when they told him he no longer had a job because

the couple was moving from Grahamstown, the abuse got worse.

He would come home drunk everyday and night and he would call her names, tell her how useless she was because she was not working and couldn't help him through his time of need. He would have sex with her by force, and at times he would beat her up until she passed out, in front of their child

When she finally decided to leave him she didn't have anywhere to go and was moved to a safe house through social welfare. But they could only keep her here for a few weeks until she could make a plan on what she would do next. She could find no accommodation for her and her child and so she was forced to move back to her husband and beg him to take her back. Government policy on housing fails women who are then forced to remain trapped in abusive relationships.

The Need to End Corruption

The fourth woman I spoke to is still waiting to get a house although she registered at Extension 9 in 2006. She lives in a house she is renting from her husband's cousin while they are waiting to get their own house. Her husband is a construction worker and sometimes they have to struggle to pay rent because he does not have money. They

are staying with two kids and their granddaughter. She fears one day they might end up on the streets and not having a place to stay. The house they are currently living in is a 1 roomed house.

She said there is corruption in the department. "There are ward councillors who have more than one house at Extension 10, some of them rent these houses to school teachers. I have proof and I even know the name of the councilors. We visited the teacher and she confirmed that she was given the house by a councillor and she is paying rent.

She said *"If I sell myself to them or if I had money to bribe them I would now be living in my house"*.

There only thing that could solve this, she said. "The community must choose their own candidates, someone who will do the work and listen to their demands. They must take out all the corrupt people in the municipality and allow the municipality to be run by the community, but it will need the mobilization of the community be as one and talk the same language which is being (umhlali waseRHini)".

We must end the silence

Most often when we look at the housing issue we don't look at how it affects women.

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Government housing policy states that they give houses to women who are divorced but they have to follow the procedure and wait just like everyone else. There is also no special case made for women in abusive relationships. Then there is the corruption where the RDP houses do not go to those who they were supposed to be built for – that is those with a household income of less than R 3 500 a month.

Added to this women are suffering in silence. Women are not safe in their own areas and live with the fear of rape because they have to walk long distances. Women get abused by boyfriends/husbands because of not being employed and not being able to provide for the family.

Conclusion

Most often when we look at the housing issue we don't look at how it affects women. Government housing policy states that they give houses to women who are divorced but they have to follow the procedure and wait just like everyone else. There is also no

special case made for women in abusive relationships. Then there is the corruption where the RDP houses do not go to those who they were supposed to be built for – that is those with a household income of less than R 3 500 a month. Added to this women are suffering in silence. Women are not safe in their own areas and live with the fear of rape because they have to walk long distances. Women get abused by boyfriends/husbands because of not being employed and not being able to provide for the family.



I interviewed Anothando Songongo on the services in Joza clinic and this is what she had to say:

I have been coming to the Joza clinic for as long as I can remember before it was even renovated to this new design and look.

I usually come here with my child to get his monthly injections from since he was 1 month old. I would say the treatment and the services in Joza clinic is very poor. You will wake up in the early hours of the morning because you want to be the first person to arrive at the clinic but when you get there it is already full and you get to wait. The nurses start working from 10am.

There are problems of overcrowding and shortage in medicine. The nurses behave like they have been forced to become nurses. Joza clinic is full of nurses who are not interested and who don't take their job seriously and professionally. They start working at 10 and at 11 they tell you that they have to go for tea but they didn't do any work for that hour.

They give you panado for any sickness. This confuses me. I don't know whether it is a matter of a shortage of medication. The toilets are not clean, and there is no toilet paper. This department is supposed to be clean because it deals with health and teaches us to be healthy. Only one doctor is available and you have to make an appointment 3 days before seeing the doctor. Even then ibangathi bagqithisa usana kunina, because they know you have not paid for their services. They put complaint boxes in the clinics but that doesn't help.

Town Clinic

I interviewed Siphesihle Thinta about the town clinic and this is what she said:

I started going to Joza clinic and then because I am working in town I had to change clinics and go to the town clinic. The Joza clinic service was very poor and we have been complaining about it for years the nurses there just don't care about

the community. You will find old people waiting for hours for their treatment. They have high blood pressure and some of them didn't even eat before they went to the clinic.

The town clinic treatment is much better. The services of the nurses is better than at the Joza clinic. They know how to treat human beings and they look like people who chose the profession. They have a queue for kids and new born babies, and a separate line for old people. My only concern is the medication. I think there seems to be a shortage of medication and it is something that government should look into, because most of people don't have money to go to the doctor or to buy medication. The clinic is the only option they have.

I have complained about the issue in the complaint box in the clinics but it is not effective at all. I don't think the volunteers who work there are trained properly. I once took my baby to the clinic for injection but the nurse almost overdosed my baby. If I didn't check my baby's card before I went to the clinic maybe she would have been paralysed. I don't think volunteers should be injecting people because they are still being trained. It should be done by professional nurses.



Interview with Head Nurse

After the interviews with the community I spoke to one of the head nurses to get their side as professional nurses. This is what she said:

I think that the work that we do is very difficult and the community doesn't understand what we have to go through on a daily bases as nurses. The treatment we get as nurses is very rude. Patients come with a negative attitude but want to be respected. Because we are nurses we have to pretend that we are happy and not react in those negative comments.

We are trying by all means to provide the best services to the community but the community always come with a negative attitude. The problem is the fact that it is the only clinic for the community, and we have long queues. I would advise that people use the complaint box and also come to the head nurses when there is a problem.

We read the complains and try to bring positive change. It is not that we don't care about the community. We are trying by all means to provide better services and if the community feels that they are not satisfied they should also raise those issues with the government so that they could employ other nurses in the clinics. We also have volunteers who assist us on a day to day basis. They are trained in the clinics and they assist in writing dates for the patients and they also help with the distribution of medication.

When it comes to medication we are still struggling with the shortage of medicine from the health department. Sometimes we get late deliveries and sometimes patients don't understand when we tell them that there is no medication or we have a shortage of medication. They say that we are taking their medication for our own benefit which is not true. Sometimes there only thing that we have and that we are able to give a patient is Panado. The Department of Health should try and solve the problem of shortage of medication and late deliveries.

On sanitation there is still a lot that needs to be done in terms of making sure that our clinics are clean and have things like toilet paper and water. But the water crises affects every one that lives in the community and it is a matter that needs to be brought up with the municipality.

What actions can we take?

The community is complaining about the services in the local clinics especially those that are in the location, which are over-crowded and have long queues. A big location such as this that is should have more than one clinic. To go to the town clinic you have to be a resident in town or be working in town and you need to provide proof that you stay in town or work in town. The health department needs to inspect the clinics and see where there clinics need assistance. Lack of medication needs to be addressed. It is about time that the government and the health department took serious action because it was clear from the head nurse that the problem is not with them but with the Department of Health.



Nomfusi khethani
(1952 – 07- 15)
10117 Vukani location

Mna ndandindoddelwa ngu mntana womnakwethu, umntana ndinaye ndihlala naye oyi ntombazana, kodwa unemisebenzi (jobs) yakhe azenzela yona ukuzenzela ingeniso. Uthe lo womnakwethu uzakundinceda ndibhatale into zam ezinje ngomasincwabane ne policy ndayeka nam kuba ndizoncedakala.

Undirholele imali yam ixesha elide kuthe kunyaka ophelileyo andabinampilo, wamana unkungezi apha kum, intombi yam iye yayeka isingxongxo bezenzela sona wajongana nam. Kuthe kulonyaka ndabona ngonontlalontle befika apha endlini bazo qonda ukuba ndihlala nabani. Ndibacacisele ukuba ndihlala nentombi yam, babuzile ukuba iphi intombi yam ndichazile ukuba isedolophini iyokulungisa into yemali yam kwa SASSA, kuba kukho andiyifumani yonke kukho izinto ezitsala imali yam, zange ndangena nto inonditsalela imali mna. Intombi yam iyolungisa lonto. Intombi yam yabuya isithi kwa SASSA kuthwa kutsalwa imali ye policy kamasinncwabane kuphela nemali ayiboleke kumatshonisa, enye ayaziwa ukuba itsalwa yintoni nha. uNomfusi uthi yena akazange yena ayoboleka imali kumatshonisa kuyacaca ukuba lo ebemdodlela uzenzele emalini yakhe. U Mama nomfusi uqhube ngelithi uyahlililela uhlobo

ebebe kade bendodla ngalo kuqala ngoba bekungekho maqhinga okulahleka kwemali ezi Bankini. Wongeze wathi “lendawo batshintshelwa kuyo yeyona ibasokolisayo ngoba babethembisile ukuba ukusungulwa kuka SASSA ngozokuyekwa ukubolekiswa ngemali nokuba sitshoniswe ematyaleni, mabasibuyisele kundalashe” Onontlalontle bagqibe kwelokuba bamsuse uMama uNomfusi kwintombi yakhe nakusapho lwakhe ngelithi bazomfunela indawo kwiindawo ezigcina abantu abadala (Old age home). Nobendi kwa Tshepi



U Nobendi yena wase Farma yakwa Tshep (61-year-old) uthi yena ebelele esiBedlele khangе akwazi uyokuthatha imali yakhe ye nkam-nkam kuba ebelindisiwe esiBhedlele ngoGqirha, uthi uphume ekupheleni kuka February wayakuthatha inka-nkam yakhe yokuphela kuka February enento ethi uyakufumana inyanga ezimbini kuba ebelele esibhedlele akakwazi uyirhola eyenyanga ephelileyo, kanti ayihambi njalo, suka wafumana imali yenyanga enye. Uye waya kwa SASSA esebenzisa imali

yakhe yokugqibela ukukhwela usuka eFarma, wabondlalela ecimba uyakuyifumana yonke mali yakhe. umcimbi wakhe apho afike khona bamkhupha khuphela omnye komnye bethi makalinde okanye aphinde abuye konakele oomatshini.

Siye sayo dlana indlebe nelinye ixhoba lotyelwa imali yendodla, usisi uVuyiswa (26 years) ohlala evukani uthi, imali yomntana wakhe akayifumani yonke kwi card lomntana wakhe kwa SASSA, uthi “ kwi card lakwa SASSA ndifumana i R23, enye andiyazi ba iyaphina kuba andithengi nombane nazo zonke izinto ezitsalwayo andizithengi nge card, ngakumbi umbane ngoba apho ndihlala khona ndiwuthenga kufuphi umbane” Uthi uye waya kuyoqonda kwa SASSA wayoku chaza inxaki yakhe nale maliyomntana, bathe makaze neslip salondawo ebeyikhupha kuyo imali, wazanaso ngosuku olulandelayo, bayebamthumela kwicala lamakhadi apho achaze khona inxak iyakhe nokuba ukhe wazama ukutshintsha ipin yakhe kuba ecinga ukuba uyakuyifumana yonke mal iyakhe.





On the 7 of April we spoke to Nomsa from Hlalani. She went to SASSA offices where she was treated badly. She wanted to renew her daughter's social grant as she heard people saying that if she doesn't renew she will be not paid. The lady in cubicle 1, was sitting down and eating and told her to wait. Nomsa sat there for approximately 30 minutes. She then complained to the lady who immediately yelled on top of her voice and threw Nomsa's daughter's certificate on her. Nomsa told us in a jittery voice "I never felt so insulted and belittled in my entire life in front of my daughter". Her voice went down along with her head as she tried to tell us how it felt like. I prompted her by asking what happened next. "I explained my problem to her and she treated me like I am a nobody". Nomsa was then referred to a second consultant who helped her. We asked Nomsa if she made a complaint or tried to speak

to senior staff. She said she doesn't like going to that place as the ladies there are rude.

We also learn that many people who are receiving social grants find that large amounts are deducted from their grants. By the time to go to collect they find they are receiving far less than they should.

According to the Black Sash's, Ms Ratula Beukman, Social Assistance, as enshrined in Section 27 of the Constitution, provides a vital income for millions of South African households trapped in a poverty and inequality, and unable to provide for their own needs and those of their dependants. Approximately 15 million people are benefitting from social grants and they have become the target of commercially motivated and unscrupulous credit by financial service providers, who use confidential personal information, entrusted to our government, and who deduct monies from people's grants and pensions.

As early as 2011, the Black Sash and partners began to uncover violations of norms and standards at Sassa pay points, and found increasing evidence of irregular, unauthorised and undocumented third party debit deductions from Sassa beneficiaries' bank accounts. In 2012, largely as a result of the service level agreement between Sassa and CPS/Net 1, debit deductions of social grants increased drastically. Furthermore, CPS's recourse system remains

ineffective, adding additional burden and cost to social grant beneficiaries, Beukman alleges.

Linda and I went to SASSA to find out more about these illegal deductions. We met a gentleman who refused to give us his name. He gave us a number to call and said they would answer these allegations. On the 23th of march we called the 0800 600 160 number. I Buntu Brian Plaatjie spoke with a lady who goes by the name of Wendy. When I asked her about the money problems and allegations, she ridiculed the allegations and asserted that they are fraudulent.

We then went back to SASSA building to further investigate the connection between net 1 and SASSA. We asked one staff member who was available if he knows of any link between NET 1 and SASSA. He said no. However he alluded that SASSA only deals with payouts, and has no knowledge of deductions that they are not in association with any parastatal for payouts.

There is something that can be done to address this and the Black Sash is one organisations that has devoted much time to this problem. Beneficiaries with unauthorised deductions on their Sassa cards can call 0800 60 01 60 to have them reversed. <http://www.blacksash.org.za>



Our schools are in crisis, but here is some good news.

The poor performance, misconduct, vandalism and lack of teachers has been the main talking point about Grahamstown local schools. The misconduct by mainly the staff has been put under great scrutiny by the media and it has been the talk of the town. In this article we tell a story about how inspite of the terrible obstacles we face, people's commitment and good leaders can bring about change. We focus on the changes in Nombulelo High in Grahamstown.

Positive turning point
For Nombulelo high school things have started to look up in terms of administration, the conduct of both teachers, learners and the general outlook of the school. All this

is thanks to the introduction of Principal Hanes who has put her foot down in commanding change in ways in operating the school.

During a general meeting that was held at the school last month a parent she stood up and congratulated the Principal in a job well done . Last there was just total chaos among staff and learners and the and facilities being vandalised.

I, the writer attended this school as a child. Nombulelo High was the most popular and respected schools in all Grahamstown local schools. Over the years I observed how the school slowly deteriorated. But now it is rapidly gaining ground in becoming the acclaimed formidable school that it once was.

When congratulated , the Principal did not take the compliments alone but shared them with the rest of the staff saying that she could not have done it on her own. She said that she was grateful for commitment and and respect she has received from the majority of the staff without which none of her efforts would have worked.

I interviewed Miss Hanes to understand the transformation in the school

Interview with Miss Hanes

Q: What is your recipe in the evident transformation of the school?

A: I don't necessarily have a recipe but i have clarity of what I need to do: the children's education should come first. When you dealing with children

you should understand that much as they might be in school, some are not willing to put in the work and some might not abide by rules. So it is imperative as a practitioner to be in a positive state of mind and commit yourself to change and everything else will follow suite. but my most potent ideal is being hands on and been visible, it's funny because some teachers call me "dramatic".

Q: What challenges have you encountered during your period as the new Principal?

A: I have received mixed reaction but I have got to admit there are more positives than negatives. I mean dealing with teachers that have been used to a certain way of doing things, now come a new Principal with different ideas. Some have

reacted very well and willing to play ball but some would be opposition. But as a leader you should know that if you are liked by everyone you lead then you are not doing your job. As for learners I have got to admit they have reacted good in terms of acceptance and complying with my out of the box methods, and again there are some who would try to be difficult as normal children would do but I do deal with them accordingly.

Q: On that note of dealing with people, when a teacher or learner behaves unjust how do you deal with them?

A: When I experience a problem with an acting staff I call them in my office of course and talk them, no drastic measures have been taken

so far because no case has necessitated those actions. With learners we normally contact their parents I do not promote corporal punishment in my school.

Q: How is your relationship with the SGB?

A: Our SGB has been depleted due to the exit of six members because their children are not with Nombulelo anymore, so we are busy trying to assemble a new team which are going to be having candidates and interview them. But before the members left the relationship was very healthy and the head of the SGB, Likhaya is very dedicated and easy to work with. And there is total transparency when dealing with funds.

How is the funding model, do



you get help outside or are the funds provided by the education department enough to cover everything needed for the function of the school? Being a section 14 school we get enough funds from the department but there is always a need for money to fund things that are not been allocated funding. For or instance the electric cabling of the school are ancient and faulty, the ceiling ,roof and walls of the school need a total redo. Learners I used to teach from Victoria Girl school told me that when they passed by at the back of the school on the N2 route and they always thought that the schools was an abandoned building. This shows that there is a need for transforming the buildings into a proper school. But we have been getting assistance from past pupils not only with money but with their time and help with many things we have not funds for like drama, dance and extra teaching lessons How is your relationship with the district which is currently experiencing turmoil? We have our worries with the things currently been happening with district but the local department head has been very helpful to us and is easily contactable because he used to work here in Nombulelo, so that's a plus for us, he is familiar with the problem faced by the school. As for the Provincial department, I am concerned with their decisions especially on the central procurement on stationary. Now the school

is getting second hand tools to work even the scientific calculators for Math's and science learners are not on point with their studies.

Q:What are your closing words Miss Hanes?

A: That is a very strange question because no journalist has ever ask me that but I can say that. It is important to be optimistic about the future. things will change over time. , some have seen my methods as being odd and unnecessary but to me they are a pilot project. They might work that's what I say but only time will tell the story. The support that has been shown by the community of "Emaxhegwazini" has been heartwarming to say the least. There was an incident were some learners bunked because the gate was open and I took my car went after them. The people on the street , were pointing the learners out of me and shouting to them why are they out of school. That for me was really something good to know that you have the community backing you. And with time and the commitment of all the stake holders we will serve as competition to Victoria girls high and Graeme College.

What parents say about this After attending the meeting at Nombulelo you could see the parents demeanor. They sang a song of being happy. i spoke to Nomathemba Tata from Phumlani location not far from the school about what she thought about the appointment

of the Principal and she said:

"iyho mntana wam i`m so happy kanjani,ngoku andisayazi nokuba kufuneka kuqeshwe abelungu na before izinto zizolunga"

So I asked her, mama what do you have to say about the children not going out during break time?.

"baphume bayephi? kuba bazayotshaya intsanga ngapha babuye behleka izinto abangazaziyo apha" nyani ke mama kuba bakufumana ukutyangoku ezikolweni."and jonga batya nenyama njeba thina sisitya imiqqa apha elokishini so andiyiboni into ezobe ibaphumisa"

It is clear that the parents are very happy with the evident change being brought by the governing body of the school and we can only hope that it is going to bring positive results in the end of the year.



The state of roads in the Location of Grahamstown is in a serious state of breakdown. Taxi drivers recently went on strike to demand that the roads be repaired. Drivers talk about increase maintenance costs on their vehicles. Residents talk about accidents that take place due to bad roads.

The Municipality has no Plan We interviewed Makana Municipality Roads and Infrastructure Manager. he said that he has just started as the manager so he acknowledged the terrible state of our roads. He assured us that local roads falls under the competency of Makana Municipality. According to him, there are no plans than to try and fix the pothole by putting more tar or whatever that is available. He

said “there is no capital budget to repair our roads; all the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) is dedicated to address the water crisis. There is no equipment to work and try to properly fix the roads”. Makana Municipality is under administration, Section 139 1(b) due to it being dysfunctional. Makana Municipality bank account was attached by creditors and also the car of the mayor was also attached in 2013.

That there is no money to fix the roads is not surprising as the municipality continue to be under administration.

The state of roads is a glaring example of a corrupt municipality, that it is so bankrupt, the money has gone into a black hole, that it can't even fix the roads. So corrupt that it had to

be placed under administration.

Bad Roads, Increases Vehicle costs and Taxi Fares

On the 10 June 2016 there was a protest by the taxi associations, Uncedo Taxi Association and Boarder Taxi Alliance protesting about the state of our roads.

One taxi driver, we interviewed, said Makana Municipality is not servicing the roads. It is full of potholes, it damages the car in particular the tyres that are so expensive. He said one tyre is between R500 and R600. He said it is for this reason that they decide to increase the taxi fare from R8 to R10. He complained bitterly about the potholes which is the focus.

We spoke to one of the com-

munity members who has a car and she had the following to say:

"The problem with the roads affects me bad because my car gets damaged and i have to take my cars for servicing. The roads are bad and we struggle a lot when we get heavy rains because the streets are flooded with water and potholes that damage the car tyres. I thought because the taxi drivers had a strike we would be talking a different story because they use roads everyday and they carry passengers. We are talking about people's lives which is put at risk because of poor infrastructure. As drivers we we are still struggling.

These problems point to a se-

rious government failure.

The lack of priority and budgeting

If the issue of roads and infrastructure has been the priority of the residents of Makana Municipality, how come it's not in the strategic document

Corruption

There is a damning forensic report (Reference????) that exposes corrupt practises of our municipality.

No Commitment in the IDP

UPM has been part of the IDP meetings where the local government officials prioritise and document the needs of the community. In these meetings we sharply raised the issue of roads and infrastructure, beau-

tification of our townships, cleaning the township. Over and above we have raised the issue of building active citizens and municipality that listens to its citizens

We looked at the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of our municipality and there was no commitment, none of these issues are planned for.



Our Location is a Dumping Site Our Lives in the Location are Cheap

By Nokuphiwa Mkhohliswa and Wandipha Teki



We became very keen to do the story on dumping in our township because we see daily that our township is dirty. There are about 10 600 population residing in Ext 6 and Ext 7, which are next to each other. There are about 22 dumping sites in this area. Our focus was both Ext 6 and 7. According to daily dispatch of 10 March 2016, Grahamstown has the highest percentage in the Eastern Cape of people living with tuberculosis. Children under five the most vulnerable to what is regarded as the province's

deadliest disease. Last year, Grahamstown had 491 per 100 000 people infected with TB. The national average was 360 per 100 000 people.

We believe that the failure of the municipality to manage the dumping of rubbish in our township could be an important factor in the sickness experienced by children.

It is this realisation that compelled us to do this story.

The Municipality has no plans. We spoke to a representative of the Makana Municipality Cleansing Department about the problem of dumping. She

is the Acting Superintendent - Mrs Christjaan.

She agreed that there is a problem of dumping in our city, specifically in the township.

"We have put up boards in certain areas for garden refuse, and we do collection once a month. In areas where there is no board, we are not obliged to collect"

Asked if there are any plans to address this crisis of dumping as it leads to health hazards for the community in particular children, she responded by saying she was not aware of any practical plans.

We were devastated when we were told by the acting superintendent, Mrs Chrisjaan, the municipality has no plan to solve this problem. For us this response was not acceptable.

In a recent IDP meeting we raised this matter and the response of the councillors was that they are looking at forming a recycling cooperative. We are monitoring the response and see if the recycling was not an empty promise.

The councillor threatened us when we complained. We have discovered that the kids use the dumping sites as a recreational space and in many instances you will find dead dogs, dead donkeys and abandoned babies. What you will not find are recreational spaces.

One community member, Nosista said "This worries

us. We are concerned about the safety of the kids as they spend their time playing in dumping sites. We have raised the issue of mobile clinics in municipal meetings and the uncollected dumping. We have been promised but empty promises as you know. This is concern for us. The smell of these dead animals is unbearable and yet our kids play there, with all sorts of health hazards things. Our councillor don't care. One morning he threatened one member of the community who was complaining about these dumping sites"

Tata ka Aya, also complained that this dumping site is closer to his house, when the neighbours burn it it affects his family as they are forced to inhale the smoke. He said it is as if they live in dumping sites not in the location.

Cleaning our struggle is about our dignity

It's not surprising that there is nothing being done by the municipality as it is poor and black kids who are exposed to the dangers of health hazard. The white and middle class section of Grahamstown is always clean.

Archille Mbebe is right to associate black people with dumping sites under the new dispensation. Our lives are cheap enough that the municipality is not alarmed by the health hazards of the sewerage and dumping sites.

The UPM is committed to continue its campaign on making our township clean. This issue is not about rubbish, it is about dignity of our people which is being violated by our new rulers.



Neglect of our Graveyards is a disrespect of the Izinyanya



The spirits of the African ancestors are known as **izinyanya** and they play a very important role in the lives of their living descendants. In Africa, the worship of **izinyanya** is very popular and it is not only amaXhosa who consult their ancestors.

A walk through our graveyards show, total neglect and abandonment. The graveyard is a place for criminal activity and drug taking.

The failure of our government to look after our graveyard

is not simply a municipal services issue. This is a story about the degeneration of values and disrespect for our traditions and community today.

The UPM regards the care of our graveyard as an issue important both to the physical and spiritual health of our community.

We visited the Vukani graveyard and observed the following conditions

Crime

Crime seems to be first thing

that comes in mind as the people who reside in that area always bring it up when they talk. This is a place for mugging, unemployment and alcoholism among other things.

No Fencing

Siphelo Dyongman who is a bona-fide resident of Vukani and affected area, ran with this story on our local news paper, he had these interviews:

"We are really struggling to control our children from playing there," said resident Lindiswa Ngcambu.

"It was better when the graveyards were fenced." Nyameka Maki, who lives across the road from the cemetery, says her children are endangered because they play hide-and-seek inside the graves.

Dumping Site

"People use the graveyards as dumping sites," said Maki. "Sometimes they burn old tyres on those open graves. It is really bad, the graveyards are not well looked after and it affects us." <http://www.grocotts.co.za/content/grave-robber-shock>

Sewerage run-offs

The state of the old grave yards is appalling, apart from half dug graves and those one that are eroded by heavy rains we have sewer running directly to the graves, pass the grave yards then joins the Matyana River.

Destruction of Crosses

Most of these symbolic sites have deteriorated into dumping sites. The fact that the graveyards are not properly fenced and maintained gives impetus to rife activities that occurs in the affected areas, it has become public knowledge that the graveyards are the haven of crime. The metal crosses have been pulled off of the graves making it difficult for next of kin to identify their deceased. We urge people to avoid those areas especially at night and prohibit their kids to walk away from the unfenced old cemeteries.

Failure of government is disrespect for the people. The community is deeply upset by the neglect of the Vukani graveyard. They say that we neglect our graveyards at the communities' peril. Ordinary people live in total awe as a result of the negligence of the Vukani graveyard..The municipality doesn't seem to take

cognizance of the importance of maintaining the graveyards especially the old grave sites that are not in use as indigenous people have deep seated ethos about the dead. I have spoken to a council member about this issue, he was not fazed. He told me how the municipality has made attempts to fence the grave yards and that the fence gets stolen by close by dwellers.

There seems to be little or no arrangement from the government's side to fence and secure the Vukani graveyards and kwa Thatha graveyard. We therefore advise pedestrians not to walk in those areas, especially at night, to keep their kids away from those areas and start neighbourhood watch to secure the affected communities.

The issue of graveyards is linked to the general disrespect of government for the people. This is what our struggle in UPM is all about.



Terror in the Graveyard

"We walked past a dead body" I remember clearly the incident that happened when I was still a young boy, in Fikizola primary school near the old Vukani graveyard. My friend Sinethemba Mbane and I sat outside UPM offices just recently, reminiscing about how he walked past a dead body, as we had often walked together after school. One day we parted ways as we normally do before Vukani cemeteries because we stayed in opposite areas.

The following day at school two policemen came in class wearing state uniform to fetch

Sinethemba for questioning. Rumor had it that Sinethemba had found a dead body in the bushes at the cemeteries on his way home.

Apparently the body had been lying at the cemeteries allegedly raped. I was frightened by the thought of it and I was curious for him to come back so he can narrate the story to us, of which he eventually did. He agreed that he was too young to have seen such gory scene and those images took time to sink in his mind.

"Since that incident I have

since dreaded the path that cuts through the graveyard and I was baffled by its terror" He said

Sinethemba went on to relate stories of the number of bodies he new about that were pulled out of the bushes in recent times. We seem to agree that the most tragic and terrifying story was that of a lady who was found by dogs, apparently her boyfriend killed her in their house nearby, her facial skin ripped off.

Mr Khuse

Just December last year (2015), among other terrible stories that are told by the people of that area, we buried a father's friend who was attacked coming from my area cutting through the graveyard. Mr Khuse was apparently mugged, beaten up and was found the following day his body lying in state. These are

stories among other stories that are terrifying the people who live around the graveyard areas.

I visited Mrs. Khuse who was still in her traditional grieving black outfit, she greeted me with much warmth and I was not at ease on bringing up this subject matter as I wasn't sure about how reluctant was she on talking about her husband's demise. I asked her if the perpetrators have been brought to justice or is there any justice done on her part.

She said that nothing has been done to rectify her husband's brutal attack. She said that, that open space is dead land to her, she avoids by all means walking to that area, and she says that terror seems to be on the rise in their area, tragic things has been the order of the day recently. We set in her lounge and she offered me a cup of tea and then she delved on other issues making news in her area.