



# Chapter 1

## A walk through Warwick





The Traditional Medicine Market

# Chapter 1: A walk through Warwick<sup>3</sup>

A walk through Warwick is an experience unlikely to be encountered anywhere else in the world, not only for its kaleidoscope of colour and overwhelming sights and sounds, but also for the way that the great diversity of street traders have been accommodated.

Its attraction for street traders is the fact that thousands of commuters arrive and depart from here each day, making use of a main railway station, five bus terminals and nineteen taxi ranks. Roads, walkways and pedestrian bridges crisscross the area, which is only ten minutes from the city centre.

Walking through the myriad of stalls and markets and over bridges and byways is the only way to fully appreciate the market in all its facets. This chapter attempts, however, to provide a ‘virtual’ tour of Warwick.



<sup>3</sup>The term ‘Warwick’ incorporates three distinct areas – the Warwick Triangle which is the old residential area; Grey Street and the cluster of streets branching off from it where there is more formal business and the main street trade and transport hub which through the Project’s life became known as ‘Warwick Junction’. The Junction is the area that this book deals with.



## TRANSPORT AND TRADING IN WARWICK

These facts and figures indicate the scale of activity in the area:

- 460 000 people walk through it every day.
- 300 buses and 1 550 mini bus taxis depart from here each day.
- 166 000 public transport passengers use Warwick.
- 38 000 vehicles drive through it each day.
- Between 5000 and 8000 people trade informally here, earning between R1000<sup>4</sup> and R8000 a month.

<sup>4</sup>To calculate approximate U.S. dollar values, rand amounts should be divided by 10. R10 to U.S. 1 dollar was the average for the first three months of 2009.





A note on street names: Since 2007 there has been a process of renaming Durban streets. This map reflects both the old and new names.



1  
The Project Centre



2  
Fresh Produce



3  
The Bovine Head Market



4  
Mixed trading strip



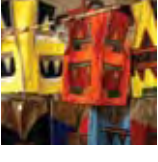
5  
The Early Morning Market



6  
The Music Bridge



7  
The Traditional Medicine Market



8  
The Brook Street Market



food



barbering



sewing



clothing



fresh produce



clay



cows' heads



mealies



music



chickens



shoe repairs



traditional medicine



beads



taxis and buses







The Warwick Junction Project Centre

## 1. The Project Centre

A good place to start is the Project Centre, right in the heart of Warwick. Built in 1920, this converted warehouse is where Project teams meet to discuss, plan and consult with each other and with traders and trader organisations. It is central to the Project's area-based approach, which brings local government officials from a variety of departments to the traders rather than the other way around. (There is more about area-based management in Chapter 2).

In stark contrast to the quiet of the Centre is the noise and bustle of the streets outside, lined with a mix of formal and informal shops and stalls. Hardware items, chips (crisps), shoes, umbrellas, brooms, cigarettes and a host of other items are for sale along these pavements<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> This is the paved path at the side of the road, in other contexts known as a sidewalk.



Traders in front of formal shops





## 2. Fresh produce

Down from the formal shops, towards Warwick Avenue<sup>6</sup>, are trucks piled high with fresh mealies (corn on the cob). They are bought by the vegetable traders and particularly by the sellers of cooked mealies who turn over R1 million a week providing commuters with a hot 'pick-up-and-go' snack. (See Chapter 3 for more about this trade.)

The taxi ranks that line the three busy roads intersecting here make this an ideal spot to attract customers with limited incomes who are hurrying through to catch their transport. Produce is presented in small piles for the convenience of those who do not have refrigeration at home and who must squeeze into a crowded taxi.

As in other areas of Warwick, small fresh produce traders are amongst the poorest. Most of them are women who can take their produce back to their households if it is not sold. There are no shelters or trading counters along these pavements, but painted squares outline individual sites. For hygienic reasons traders who do bring tables onto their sites must cover them with thick plastic and they must be able to fold them away at night so the pavements can be cleaned. A carpenter in Warwick supplies benches and fold-away tables: just one example of the employment opportunities generated by these activities.

The importance of indicating individual trading sites authorising traders to use the space for themselves was brought home to the Project team by a delegation of street traders from Kenya which visited Durban. A woman asked, 'Do these lines allow a trader to conduct her business here?' When she was told that they did, she bent down and stroked the lines with her hand.

The stalls are colourful, the produce is inviting, and the women are friendly, but the daily grind of this work should be recognised. The women must estimate how much produce they need for the day so that not much is left over, buy the produce, run their stalls,

<sup>6</sup> Warwick Avenue was renamed Julius Nyerere Avenue in 2008.

pack up at the end of the day or earlier if it rains, and frequently face a long trip home. If they live too far away or have not made sufficient income in the day to pay for transport home, they face a night sleeping on the streets.

### WOMEN TRADERS

- In Durban and other South African cities it is estimated that six out of every ten street traders are women.
- Women are often involved in less profitable trades such as fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Research shows that women are more likely to spend their earnings on household necessities like food, clothing and education.
- Women street traders often have specific needs, like access to child care facilities.







The Bovine Head Market and general food court

### 3. The Bovine Head Market and general food court

Noticing cows' heads defrosting in the sun, some people might think it better to avoid this market where cows' heads are boiled and prepared as a Zulu delicacy. But it is well worth a visit as it is one of the places in Warwick where old customs and practices have continued in a modern urban context.

Traditionally the meat from a cow's head was prepared and eaten only by men, but by far the majority of the cooks at this market – about 30 – are now women. Although there are men and women customers, it is only the men who sit down at the long trestle tables provided to enjoy their meal. For women, it's a takeaway!

The day starts with the arrival of the trolley (pushcart) operators who have collected fresh or frozen heads from suppliers. Another set of porters – the barrow operators – deliver large wooden crates from the storage facility. These are used to store cooking pots and utensils and sometimes serve as mini-kitchens where the meat is boiled on a primus stove (a portable paraffin cooking stove) inside the crate to shelter it from the wind.



Each cook has her own cubicle for preparing and cooking the meat. Preparation begins with skinning and chopping the head and removing the meat which is then boiled quickly. Portions are laid out for customers along counters that line the front of the cooking area. Condiments are provided and some cooks also add bread or dumplings to the meal.







Sketch design of the Bovine Head Market

Designed by architect Joanne Lees

This is an example of a facility designed specifically for one activity. Before the intervention of the Project team the heads had been boiled on fires along the pavements. Water and grease was going into storm water drains and endangering Durban's recreational water. The diagram shows the cooking cubicles, serving tables and drain running between the two.

The bovine head cooks contribute to a number of employment opportunities in Warwick. In addition to the porters, other service suppliers include water bailiffs, cooks' assistants who skin the meat and cut it off the bone, and a paraffin (kerosene) supplier.

### Support and cooperation amongst the cooks

Although the cooks work alongside one another and are all competing for custom, there is a high level of cooperation amongst them.

*We work well together. There are so many reasons why people could have bad relationships – the spaces are small so your water can splash your neighbour, customers use other traders' utensils ... but we don't fight about all that. We help each other a lot.*

Cook at the Bovine Head Market

This kind of support is evident throughout the market, as in a case where a trader had died and her neighbour ran her business for over a month while the deceased trader's mother arranged to take over the trading site.

### The general food court

The photo on page 12 shows the general food court to the right, alongside the Bovine Head Market.

Here customers can choose to sit down for a meal or pick up a takeaway (sandwiches of processed meat between thick slices of white bread, for example). Some of the cooks here expand their business by taking lunch time orders from traders throughout Warwick. Runners deliver these carefully wrapped plated meals together with a cup of tea.







Fresh produce trade outside the Bovine Head Market

#### 4. Mixed trading strip

Along from the food court is a busy and often noisy section of the road where traders sell a variety of goods and perishables, ranging from cigarettes and snacks for the rush hour pedestrians, to hand lotions, music, crockery, small hardware items and even rat poison!

Items and quantities for sale vary depending on the time of day and the needs of potential customers. In the early morning items are geared to people going to work who may want to pick up something on the way - a cigarette or a packet of chips. By the middle of the day stalls are set out to attract customers looking for specific items, such as hardware or music and other more durable goods. At the end of the day the emphasis has once again shifted to attract customers needing something to buy for the evening meal or other immediate household needs. Sometimes traders share the same site at different times of the day. This trading strip demonstrates how responsive street traders are to the needs of their customers. This is what gives them a competitive edge over formal shops.

#### PERMITS AND RENTALS IN WARWICK

To secure rights to a site in Warwick, traders have to fill in a permit form, that is the equivalent of a lease agreement with the city, and pay a monthly rental. Rents vary depending on what facilities are provided. The highest rates are for sites in built markets.

Throughout Durban's inner city, including in Warwick, in 2008 street traders with shelter paid R68.90 while those without shelter paid R39.90 a month for a 2 metre by 1 metre site. Rentals used to be paid monthly. In 2007 the city introduced a new ruling that rentals be paid 6 or 12 months in advance. Advance payment is often difficult for poorer traders.

Although traders complain about having to pay in advance and that the cost of rent is too high, in general they prefer to have permits as it gives them legitimacy. As one longstanding trader noted:

*The permits have been very important for us. If you have a permit you can eat. You trade the way you want to trade. No one disturbs you.*

Traditional medicine trader







Inside the Early Morning Market

### 5. The Early Morning Market

Beside the mixed trading strip is the Early Morning Market. In the late 1990's the city's Department of Markets spent R13 million renovating this lovely old building and now light filters through the new roof onto a daunting number of stalls filled with fruit, vegetables and other staple food items, as well as fresh flowers.

*The old market was very hot. The fruit and vegetables would spoil quickly. This new market allows the air to move. It is much better.*

Early Morning Market trader

There are over 670 stalls in the market, specially designed for fresh produce trading. They have wire enclosures that can be locked at night and the market itself is also locked, so there is no need to find overnight storage.

Most traders buy their goods either directly from farmers or from the primary bulk fresh produce market south of the inner city. They sell in bulk to street traders and also to individual customers. When the market closes at 3.00 p.m. street traders up their prices as they are then the only source of fresh produce. Over the years, and for obvious reasons, moves to extend market trading hours have met with strong opposition from street traders.

#### Chicken traders

Chickens are for sale inside the Early Morning Market and also just outside it. Unlike those in the supermarkets these are not battery fed fowls but have scratched around for food in the yards of their owners. Most of them are sold live, packed up in a cardboard box for the buyer. The common white fowls are bought to be eaten while others, especially the black and white ones, are sold for ceremonial purposes. Animal slaughter is an important part of local traditional rituals.







## WORKING AS A CHICKEN TRADER

### Thandi Nxumalo<sup>7</sup>

Thandi Nxumalo is 64 and has been trading in chickens in Warwick for over 20 years. This is the only income generating work she has ever done. Her home is too far away to return to each day so she stays in a women's hostel in the city until the weekend.

She and 12 other women trade outside the Early Morning Market. Many of these traders come from the same area down the South Coast. Having traded here for years, these traders have built up a strong relationship. She says 'we get on very well' adding 'we are all here for the same purpose, to make a living.'

During the refurbishment of the Early Morning Market, a large chicken coop was constructed. The coop is a simple airy structure which can be locked up at night. Thandi says she does not worry about her stock been stolen since there is a night watchman at the market. She pays R7 a day for rent, and says she has no reason to complain about this. She is happy with her location as it is busy. She would however, like a shelter outside the coop to protect her and her fellow traders from the sun and rain.

The chicken coop has between 50 and 80 chickens at any one time. They are bought from local farmers. She sells the small black fowls, which are used for ritual purposes, for R35 and the larger white ones, which are for cooking, for R40. With rising prices the costs of both chickens and food have risen. At the end of each month custom is good but at other times she has to go through Warwick looking for buyers.

Street trader incomes in Warwick vary greatly. Thandi is one among a group of poorer, largely older women traders earning about R1 000 a month.

She is a widow and has six children and four grandchildren to support. Many of her fellow traders' husbands have also died.



Street trader incomes in Warwick vary greatly. Thandi is one among a group of poorer, largely older women traders earning about R1 000 a month.

<sup>7</sup>The names of all those who have contributed to these personal accounts have been changed.





Barrow operators taking a break

**The porters of Warwick**

The porters of Warwick need a special mention. Anyone walking in Warwick – and particularly around the Early Morning Market – will not fail to notice them. Used by wholesalers, street traders and customers alike, they weave through the crowds transferring goods around the city and to and from the multiple storage sites.

Their working days can stretch from 4 a.m. until after 9 p.m. In the middle of the day, when work slows down, they often chat, smoke or sleep outside the Early Morning Market. Two groups of porters offer different services. Shopping trolley operators tend to move lighter and less bulky goods, whereas barrow operators work with much larger loads. These men have developed huge physical strength as a loaded barrow can weigh up to 300 kilograms.

Each porter has multiple clients and so must remember where everyone's goods are stored – not only in which storage site, but whereabouts in the site. If a porter delivers goods before a trader arrives at work in the morning, fellow traders will ensure they are not stolen.

*There is a street norm that if you are seen touching other people's barrows there will be trouble.*

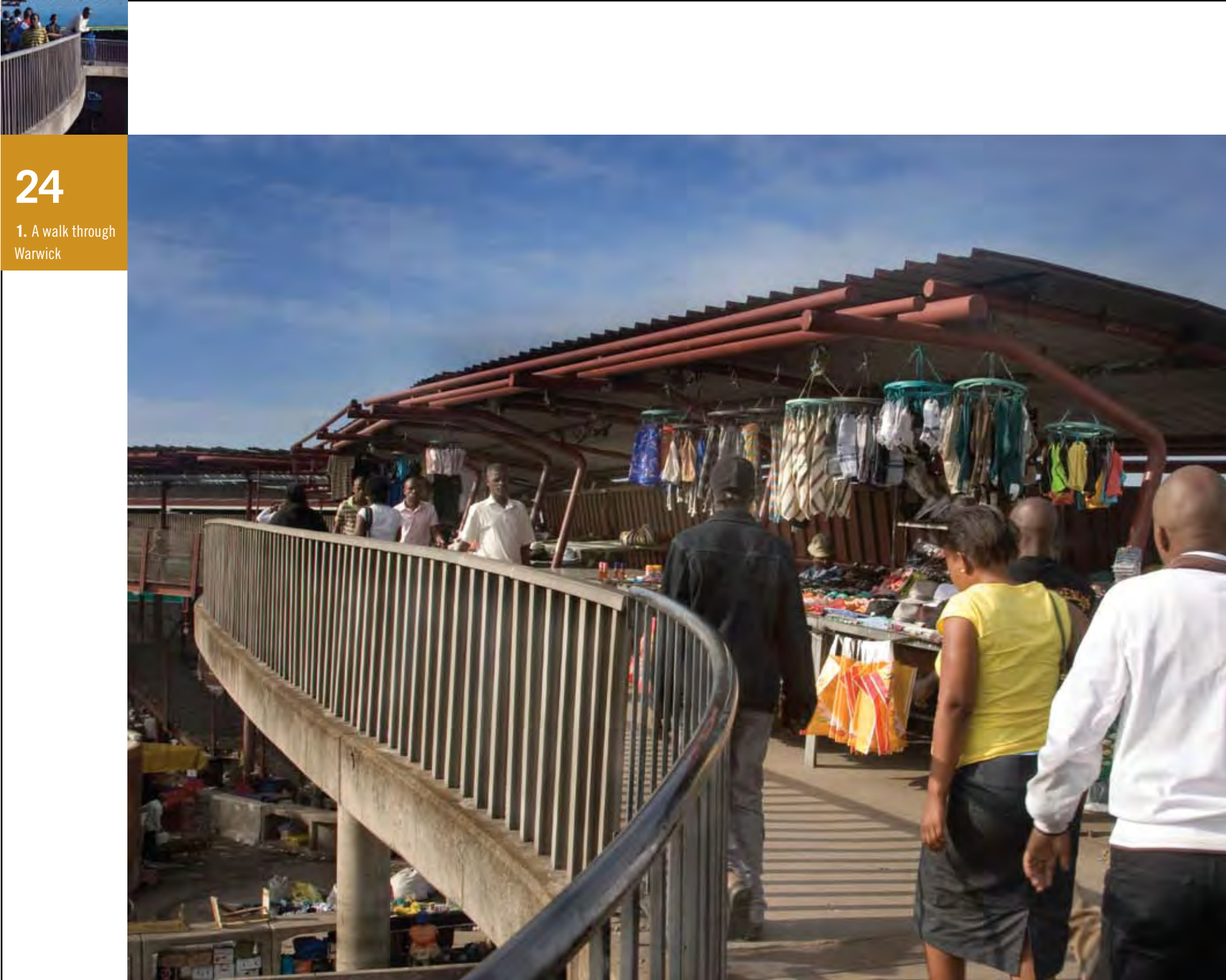
Council official

As a way of supplementing their incomes, porters sometimes guard goods themselves instead of paying for the storage facility. Late at night they can be seen sleeping in groups around their heavily laden trolleys.



Trolley operator delivering goods to a customer





The Music Bridge

## 6. The Music Bridge

The next stop in this walk is the Music Bridge – a wide pedestrian way connecting the Early Morning Market with the bus terminal and the station. It is now also a thriving trading area used mainly by young men selling music, hats, small hardware and other goods. The shelving along the bridge is specially designed to slope back at an angle to maximise the CD displays and make it easier for customers to make selections.

Vusi Nzimande, a music trader on the bridge, buys his CDs from the small formal retail shops in the area for about R40. He sells them for R80 each and estimates that he makes up to R500 on a bad day, but when trading is good he can make as much as R700. Vusi stores his goods in the Brook Street storage facility. Although he values his stock at about R35 000, he says he does not worry about its safety there.

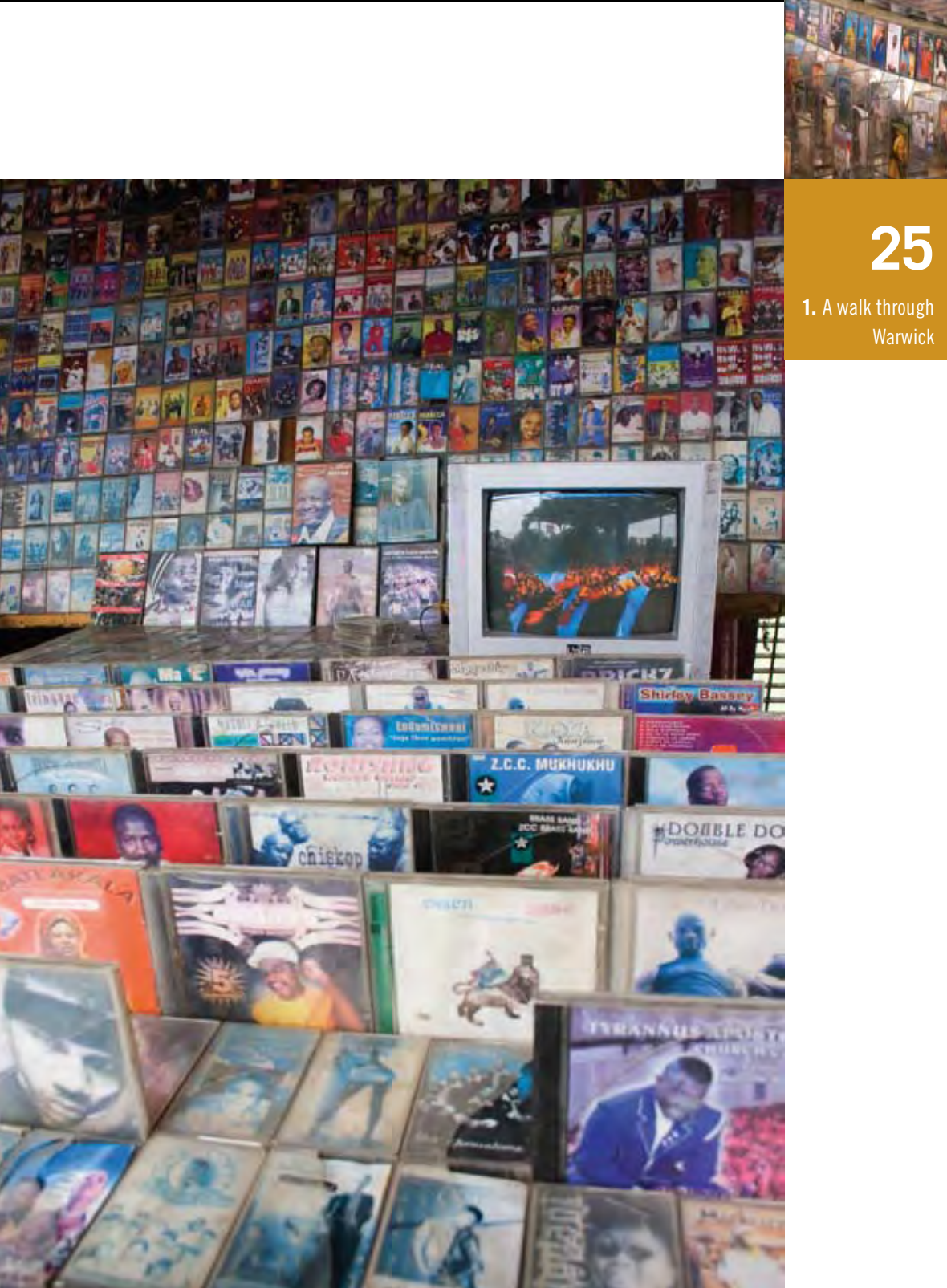
A conversation is almost impossible as the bridge pulsates with maskanda (Zulu folk music), gospel music and the latest hits. Battery technology improved in recent years so that most sound systems run off battery power.

Before it was renovated the bridge was notorious for crime. It was what urban designers describe as a canyon – pedestrians could be trapped, as there was only one entrance and exit point. The lack of proper barriers along the edge also made the bridge unsafe and at one point officials thought they had no option but to prohibit trading on the bridge.

However, the bridge was redesigned to address these safety concerns (see Chapter 5 for more detail on how to reduce crime through urban design) and traders themselves undertook to reduce crime.

*In the consultation process the traders asked 'What is the issue with trading here?' We explained that the city was worried about safety. Through the consultation process the traders agreed that if they were allowed to stay they would make sure that there are no incidents on the bridge. Since the redesign in June 2001 I'm not aware of any incident on that bridge.*

Project leader







The Nomkhubulwana mural

## Connecting the west side of Warwick with the east

Opposite the Music Bridge, and originally separated by a busy road, is the Traditional Medicine Market. The Zulu word for medicine is '*muthi*' so this market has become known as the '*Muthi* Market'. The market was developed along two incomplete freeway glide offs or spurs that run over railway lines, join together and then end with a sheer drop into the road below – a drop that was subsequently painted with the mural described below. There was no way to move onto these spurs from the Music Bridge without going on a long detour through the station, across the railway lines and then across a road.

The photograph below shows the freeway spurs before they became the *Muthi* Market.



The solution was to build a pedestrian bridge connecting the Music Bridge to the *Muthi* Market. This redesign reduced congestion and gave pedestrians an easier route over the roads and station. In addition it gave traditional medicine a standing in the city that it had previously not had.



The team responsible for the mural

### THE NOMKHUBULWANA MURAL:

The wall created by the end of the freeway spurs was once unsightly concrete. It is now a dramatic mural depicting Nomkhubulwana – or the Rain Queen – the provider and protector of Africa. Her towering figure surrounded by street traders is a symbolic presence in Warwick, promoting a sense of pride and identity and indicating the importance of street trading to the city.

The mural was an initiative of the Community Mural Projects Trust. It was originally painted in 1994 to commemorate South Africa's first democratic elections. In 2001 it was renovated by a team of artists and trainees.





## 7. The Traditional Medicine Market

Crossing the bridge from music to *muthi* is to move from new to old, from amplified sound and bustle to quiet respect for ancient medicine and traditional forms of healing. This is a place where people come for a specific purpose: to buy, to get advice and not just to stare – it is the equivalent of a modern pharmacy.

The market now has over 700 traders whose stalls are piled with herbs, roots, dried plants, bulbs and bark. There is the sound of chopping and grinding as assistants help to mix and process medicines for customers. *Izinyanga* (traditional healers) consult from the privacy of small kiosks, while herbalists and healers dispense and sometimes give on-site diagnoses. Traders have gradually shifted from wearing western dress to traditional clothing, more appropriate for the work that they do.

It is remarkable that this thriving market is located at the heart of the city. It signals the recognition of traditional practices so long denounced and repressed by the apartheid government. (See Chapter 3 for more about this trade.)







### Foreign barbers

Barber booths, advertising the variety of hairstyles available to customers, are found in many parts of the market, often away from other trading areas. The space underneath the spurs is one of them.

Most of the barbers in Warwick are foreigners, predominantly refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Although they have a range of vocational or professional skills, many of them have been unable to find work using this expertise. Engineers, teachers and tradesmen are just some examples of the men who are now attending to the hairstyles of their customers.

Foreigner traders contribute to the informal economy by bringing in new ideas, skills and knowledge about new products and their marketing, all of which add diversity to local markets. The account by Michael Lumumba shows how the foreign barbers of Warwick have been quick to recognise the benefits of investing in battery driven clippers as opposed to hand clippers. This enables them to offer a better service to their customers. Local traders however, sometimes resent this type of innovation.







Foreign barbers operating at a Warwick bus rank

## WORKING AS A BARBER

### Michael Lumumba

Michael Lumumba left the Congo to escape war and poverty and to find a better place for his family. He took a risky and lonely journey to South Africa and only brought his family to live with him once he was established in his work. He now has a residence permit which gives him the right to work legally in the country. He was a primary school teacher in the Congo but his professional training is not recognised in South Africa.

A fellow Congolese trained Michael in barbering. He now has his own booth in Warwick where he has been working for over ten years. Some of the South African barbers still use hand clippers, which restricts the types of haircuts. Foreign barbers have come into this market and are now offering a better service. They are prepared to invest in battery driven clippers and are able to give customers any style of cut that they want.

Many of Michael's fellow barbers are harassed by some South Africans. Michael says he is one of the lucky few who have not had these problems. This is because he has been trading there for so long that he has established a good relationship with the South African traders working around him. He says this is also because he has made the effort to learn Zulu.

Like other barbers working in Durban's inner city, Michael charges R10 for a haircut and an extra R3 to trim a beard. On a busy day he will have up to 20 customers, on a quiet day there can be as few as four customers. To cope with the increasing cost of living Michael works from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Saturday and for part of Sunday. He earns about R2 500 a month.

Michael is a member of an organisation of barbers that has been lobbying for their rights. This organisation has been an important source of support for him. They meet regularly at the Project Centre. Michael says:

*We need a place to meet and talk about our trade. We used to have to meet outside. Now we meet at the Project Centre. We don't have to pay. You just go and ask to book the hall. If no one else is using it they say yes, even if we want to meet over the weekend. This is a big change for us. We are happy about this.*

Michael is the main provider for his extended family of seven. There is only one school in Durban where his children can attend, a private school, because a South African identity document is necessary to register a child in a government school. This same problem applies to applications for training or loans to set up small businesses.



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The Brook Street Market

## 8. The Brook Street Market

The Brook Street Market presents a startling contrast to the rest of Warwick. Anyone walking in here from the *Muthi* Market, over a curved purple pedestrian bridge will want to stop and gaze down over the vast and bustling shopping mall below: a concourse that is in essence a wide street, a few hundred metres long, with a high roof covering it.

The market is a colourful hive of activity, so different to the quiet of the cemetery running down its east side. It provides a variety of types of trading spaces including kiosks for more sophisticated small businesses, and a food court. Tailor-made storage facilities line one section of the walkway.

One end of the market runs under the highway bridges and it is here that customers go to buy the clay used for traditional purposes. Zodwa Nene's account of her work explains more about this unique wholesale trade.

The goods available to shoppers along this concourse are too extensive to list and are best captured in the photographs which illustrate just a small selection of the purchasing opportunities on offer for those who wander through this inviting section of Warwick. (See Chapter 4 for a fuller account of how Brook Street was transformed.)







The wholesale clay market

## WORKING AS A CLAY WHOLESALER

### Zodwa Nene

Zodwa Nene is a clay wholesaler. Unlike most other traders at Warwick she does not obtain her product from a formal shop. She mines, prepares and sells the balls of red or white clay, shown in the photographs. These are used in traditional practices to spread onto the face or parts of the body, or to be eaten. Red clay is for trainee traditional healers and white for those who have completed their training. Faith healers use it to prepare a healing drink for people who have bad dreams.

Zodwa is 51 years old and has been trading in clay since 1995. She lives two hours from Durban in rural Ndwedwe, where all the other clay sellers in Brook Street come from. There are five people in her household whom she and her son support. In addition both her sisters have passed away leaving six children whom she tries to support when she can. Although the work is physically very demanding for a middle-aged woman, she says she has no alternative with so many people depending on her.

To obtain the clay she must dig it out of pits deep in the ground. She explains:

*You have to be very strong to collect the clay. You have to dig deep to get to the proper clay and also need to be strong to get the bags out of the mine. You have to take extra precautions when you go down to make sure that the mine doesn't close on you.*

The clay sellers occupy a section of the market away from the main concourse. As they all have to spend time at home preparing the clay, the number of people at the trading site varies from day to day. These women do not rely on 'passing feet' for their sales as their customers specifically seek them out. 'Our customers know where we are and they leave home knowing that this is where they are coming. They come from all over the province.'

In the week that Zodwa comes to Durban to sell her products, she sleeps at the trading site but feels much safer than she used to now that gates have been erected at each end of the part of Brook Street where they trade.

Zodwa sells her clay balls for R5.50 each. Her income often depends on how many other women are trading at the site. On a good month her turnover is R5 000 and in a bad month R1 000.



*'You have to be very strong to collect the clay. You have to dig deep to get to the proper clay and also need to be strong to get the bags out of the mine. You have to take extra precautions when you go down to make sure that the mine doesn't close on you.'*







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A walk through  
Warwick



Formal and informal retailers in the Grey Street area

## The Grey Street area

From the Brook Street Market the walk continues into another area that is part of Warwick Junction – the Grey Street area<sup>8</sup>. This is known for its fascinating mix of informal and formal trading and for its connection with the first Indian people to set up businesses in Durban in the late 1800s.

Shops here are mostly small privately owned businesses, some of which have been operating for decades with their owners still living above the shops. Trade is diverse and many shops accommodate the needs of street traders, selling pinafore material, cooking utensils, cell phones, small hardware items, watches and much else that can be found in Warwick.

This area links Warwick to the city centre with its shops, offices, City Hall, main library, High Court and other landmarks.



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A walk through  
Warwick

<sup>8</sup>Grey Street was recently renamed after the anti-apartheid activist Dr Yusuf Dadoo. However, the area around this street, which includes a number of others running towards Brook Street, is still referred to as 'the Grey Street area'.