



## Chapter 5

Tackling urban  
management issues:  
a cooperative effort

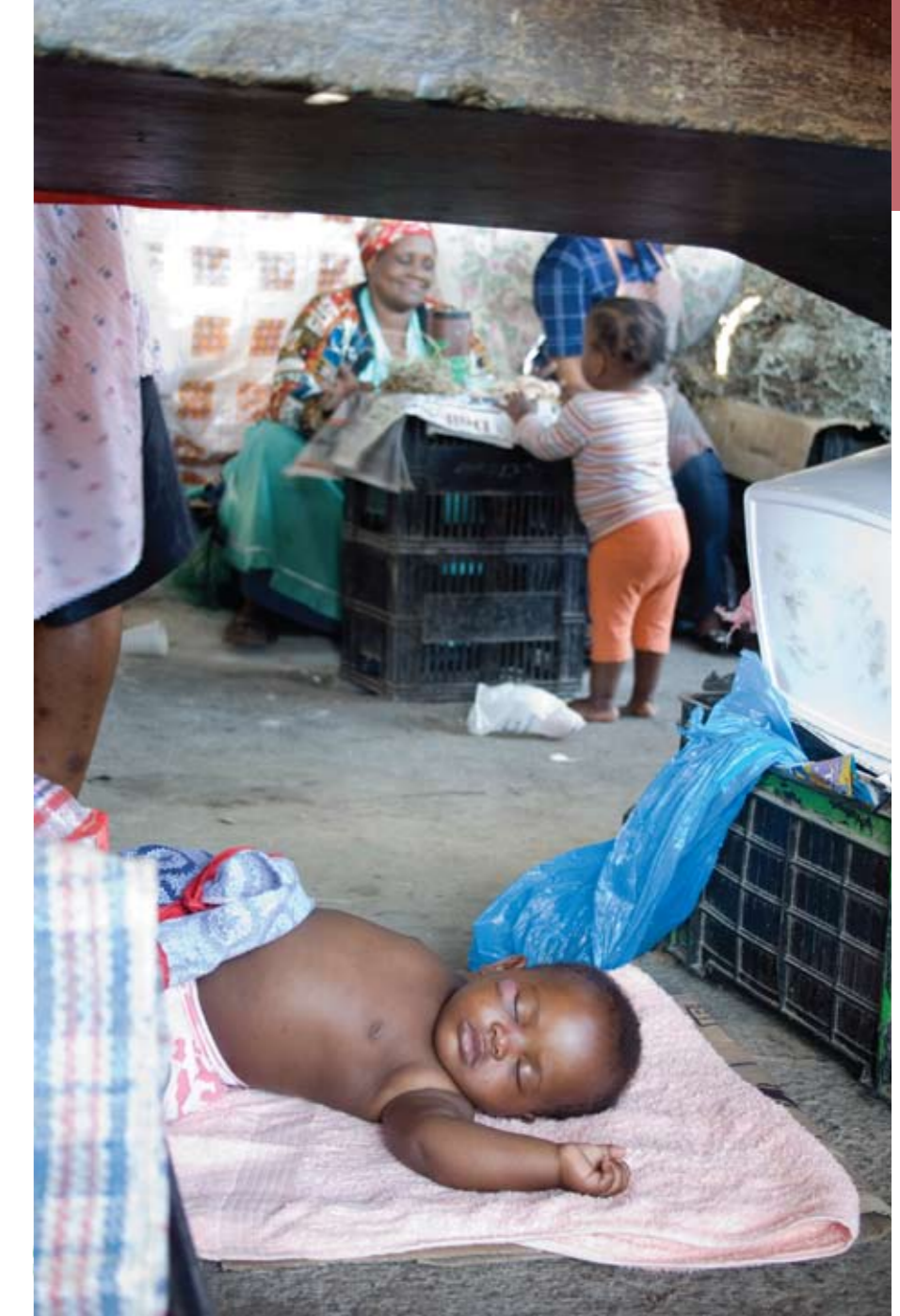


## Chapter 5: Tackling urban management issues: a cooperative effort

The Project team, together with the traders of Warwick, have shown that maintaining a basic level of safety, cleanliness and hygiene is not an impossible dream. Nor is it an aspect of urban management that could only have been accomplished by this particular local authority. In fact, the Project team had to begin its task in an area where addressing crime and grime had, at best, been severely neglected. At worst, the apartheid government had used crime and grime to justify removals from the streets.

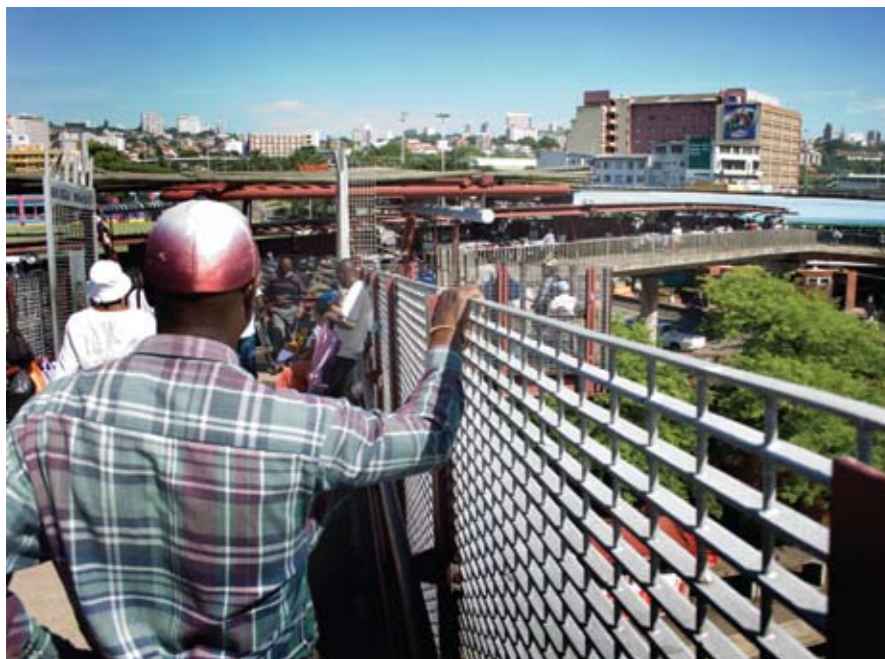
When officials started to put energy and resources into the area, traders recognised a new dispensation, where the days of apartheid removal were over. As they were drawn into all aspects of the regeneration work through their leaders and organisations and consultations, they began to develop a sense of pride and ownership and were prepared to invest time in 'sweeping our own back yards'. This response by traders has been a significant aspect of the success of Warwick.

This chapter describes crime, cleaning and other urban management issues that the Project faced. These are concerns that most local authorities managing street trading areas are likely to face – what to do about ablution facilities, how should pavement sleeping be managed, how can consumer health be protected, what should be done to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and manage its consequences, and how should street traders' children be accommodated? The Project grappled with all these issues, with varying degrees of success. Their successes may give other local authority officials ideas about how to deal with these issues.





Appropriate timing of traffic signals eases congestion



An example of balustrade design

## Tackling crime

South Africa's crime statistics are some of the highest in the world. In 1996 it was estimated that there were over 50 murders in the Warwick area. In 1997 only one murder was recorded.

*When I started trading in Warwick the crime was really bad. It was every Friday and every Saturday, two, three, or even four people would be shot.*

Street barber

*Criminal activity was rife in the area. Some mornings when traders came to work there was blood on the pavement and sometimes even dead bodies.*

Shoe seller

The 'business' of crime in a city relies to some extent on how easy it is for criminals to operate. Can pedestrians walk along the pavements without having to look at their feet all the time? Can they change direction if they suspect someone is following them? Are there dark spaces that allow criminals to wait undetected?

The Project's approach was to examine those parts of Warwick where pedestrians and traders were most vulnerable and, through careful urban design, to attempt to minimise these.

### Reducing crime through environmental design

The following are examples of targeted design measures carried out by the Project in order to improve safety. They are also useful as suggestions for addressing crime in trading areas elsewhere.

**Easing congestion:** In highly congested and poorly managed areas pedestrians walk looking at their feet as they try to avoid traders, puddles and abandoned tables. It does not make it easy to be aware of suspicious characters alongside!

Solutions:

- Increase route options for pedestrians walking through the area.
- Adjust the timing of traffic signals to avoid extra congestion at intersections.
- Keep the trading area as clean as possible and free from unwanted debris.
- Proactively deal with management issues such as water collecting in puddles.

**Eliminating canyons:** As described in Chapter 1, a canyon is a route with only one entrance and exit point. These are notorious for muggings and theft, as individuals have no escape route. In Warwick there were a number of these.

Solutions:

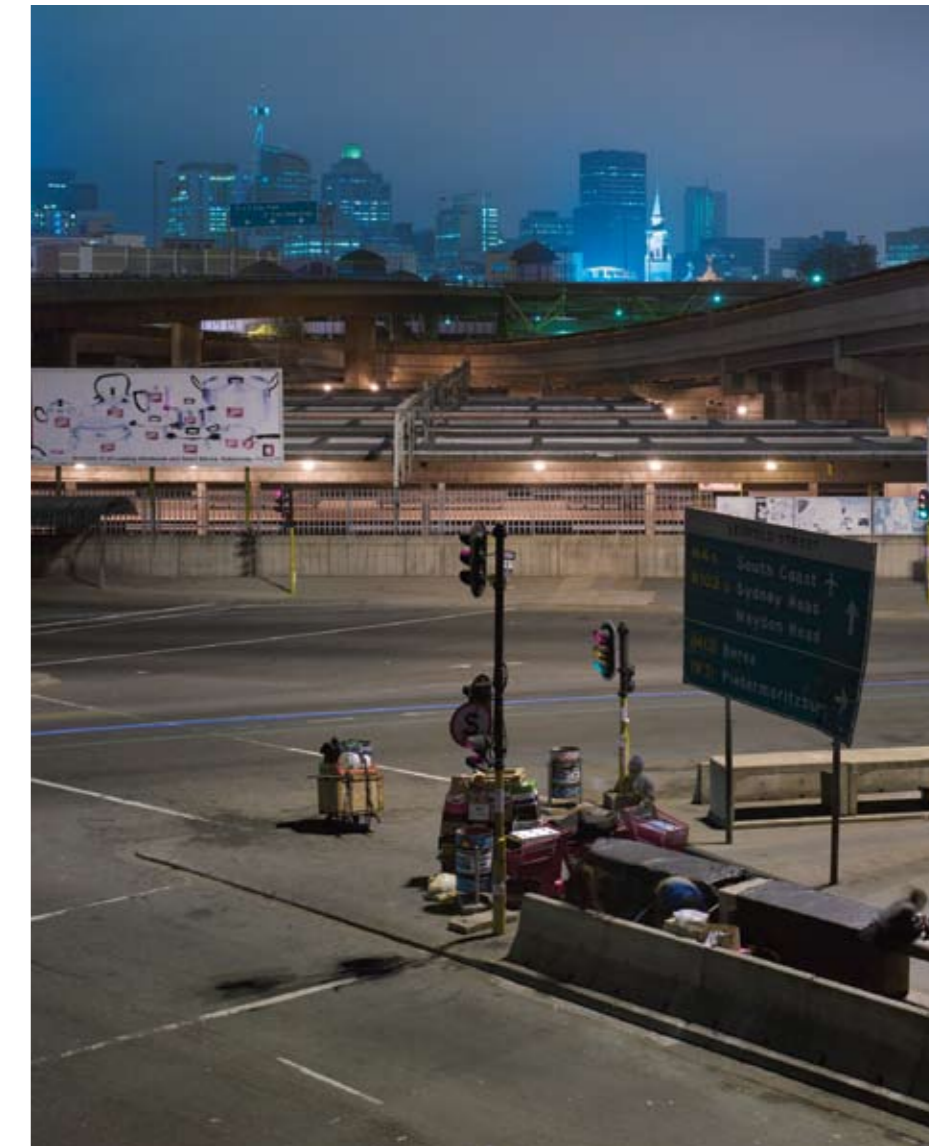
- Design alternative routes that allow people to change direction if they sense they are being followed.
- Plan so that people in surrounding spaces can see what is happening. For example, in Brook Street the mezzanine floor and multiple walkways allow for bird's-eye views of what is happening below.
- Where narrower pathways are unavoidable, for example on bridges, put up balustrades along the edges of the canyon that are open enough to allow people to see through, while not causing vertigo or a feeling of insecurity.

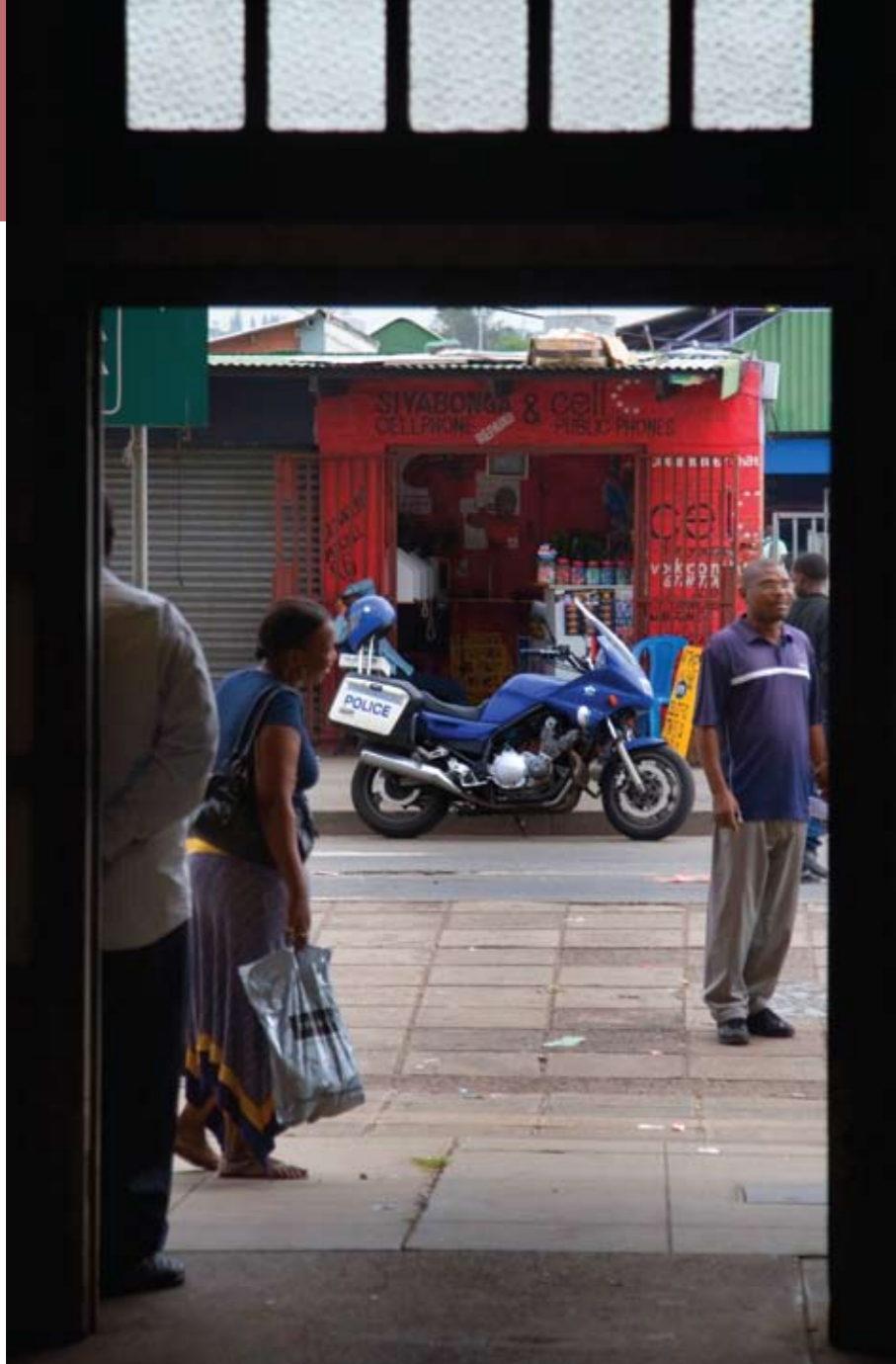
**Reducing concealed spaces:** Dark corners or large pieces of street furniture where people can hide from public view are ideal places for crime. The way space is organised should minimise these.

Solutions:

- Increase street lighting.
- Stipulate that tables should be able to fold away.
- Regularly clean the area to remove unused objects lying alongside pavements where people could be concealed.

**Improving street lighting:** Lighting up the streets is an obvious way to make them safer for pedestrians and traders alike. Project staff worked in consultation with traders to find the optimal height for lights and to institute a system that ensured ongoing maintenance of the lights. Traders were encouraged to report any faults to Project staff.





**Community policing – Traders Against Crime**

Even before the Project team began its work, a group of traders were working together on an entirely voluntary basis to try and deal with the problem of crime and so protect their businesses as well as their customers. The organisation is an impressive example of the extent to which traders are prepared to work together in a dangerous and time-consuming activity for the mutual benefit of all who make use of a trading area.

*I became involved in Traders Against Crime (TAC) because I hate crime. People would not buy because they were scared that somebody was looking at them, trying to see how much money they had. Buses come through the area, taking people from the factories to their homes. Those people would not even think of walking around in the area. This was all because of crime...TAC was formed to fight crime. As traders we've seen that many customers are victims so we decided to form the organisation. Policemen were not doing well in fighting crime. So we decided to try and reduce crime in our area ourselves.*

Music trader

*My involvement came after I saw a policeman stabbed to death at Berea station. He was trying to help a woman who had been mugged. One of the muggers stabbed him in the back. I realised that the area was really dangerous - a fully armed cop had not even been safe. I decided that as someone who lived and traded in Durban, it was my responsibility to do something. TAC ended up working 24 hours. Male traders would trade during the day and patrol the area at night. We decided to give our time and work at night. We would escort a person through Warwick without them being aware of the protection we gave.*

Shoe trader

Traders initially operated under very dangerous conditions and had to know how to defend themselves. Initially the methods used by the group to catch criminals were controversial, often violent and almost always illegal. The Project staff began working alongside this group of traders.

*We started to work with Traders Against Crime. They themselves*

*wanted to improve their processes and organisation so we started to deal with some of their concerns.*

Project leader

A concern of TAC members was that criminals that they handed over to the police were often back on the street again within hours. Liaising with the South African Police Service, Project staff realised that there were a number of explanations for this – for example the citizen's arrest had not been performed correctly or there was insufficient evidence to charge a person. Also the traders had often assaulted the criminal, so it was difficult to establish who was in the wrong. Policemen and women feared that they would be accused of the assault.

It was clear that to change this, TAC volunteers would have to be made more aware of the rights of suspects and how to apprehend them properly. A bigger police presence was also needed in the area. A training programme for TAC members, in conjunction with the Project, the South African Police Service and Durban Metropolitan Police organised a training programme to explain the rights of both traders and of all individuals, including crime suspects.

The training included:

- How to make a citizen's arrest.
- The need to make a statement to the police about the chain of evidence leading to the arrest.
- The importance of getting a case number to be able to follow up the case.
- Being prepared to go to court if the person is prosecuted.

Initially the traders' response was disbelief. A council official recalls:

*I can remember the gales of laughter coming from these guys. 'You're telling me that we are going to have to look after these crooks?' But slowly people started to deal with it. If you wanted a conviction, then this is the way you must do it.*

TAC members were also supplied with t-shirts and whistles. For a couple of years a group of 50 were operating in Warwick, some of whom patrolled

the streets at night. TAC had members in most of the densely traded sites throughout Durban. Traders are positive about the role that TAC has played.

*The crime levels have been greatly reduced. If criminals come we blow whistles and they get dealt with.*

Pinafore seller

*Traders Against Crime do make a difference. If there is a problem, they come and help.*

Mealie seller

In 2005 one of the TAC members was stabbed in Warwick and died. Although TAC is still functioning, this event significantly impacted on the morale of members.

**Increasing police presence**

The final and most obvious strategy to reduce crime is to increase police presence. The irony in Warwick was that TAC brought down crime statistics so successfully that the South African Police Service did not think an increase in staff assigned to the area was warranted. However, the Project did work directly with Metro Police, a number of whom are representatives on various operations task teams.

The problem of crime still remains in the area. Traders report that more recently there has been an increase in incidents although not near the number and severity of the mid-1990s. They identify inaction from the police as part of the problem. Some believe the police to be corrupt while others feel that TAC is not working as well as it had in the past. The crime situation is unlikely to improve until there is increased presence of the police in the area and until corruption is investigated.





High pressure hosing of the pavements

## Cooperating to keep Warwick clean

*All the women listened when I said that this was our city and we had to take care of it. If you don't sweep in your own yard it gets dirty and looks ugly.*

Fruit and vegetable trader

As Chapter 2 explained, the initial clean-up programme was pivotal not only in improving the general appearance of the area but also in demonstrating what could be achieved when departmental officials worked together as a team.

The initial work dealt mainly with the surface mess. Tonnes of unwanted rubbish were removed from the streets, opening it up for a much more thorough deep cleaning afterwards. Two anecdotes from the Project leader:

*Early on in the Project I was supervising the removal of a shipping container from the sidewalk, and as it left the ground, cowering almost next to each other was an enormous rat and a cat! At the time I recall thinking that if two natural enemies could find this decisive moment of cooperation, then Warwick was going to be an interesting place.*

*As an old abandoned refrigerator was lifted onto a refuse truck, the driver mentioned to a Project official that he remembered sweeping around the same refrigerator each day when he had been a street sweeper, 12 years earlier. Abandoned and untouched for 12 years!*

As its work progressed the Project developed a much clearer understanding of what was contributing to the existence of dirt and the unhygienic conditions. Solutions often entailed working with traders. For example, as described in Chapter 4, traders initially used tables that could not easily be removed and prevented proper pavement cleaning.

### An annual 'blitz'

Since the initial clean-up there is a cleaning 'blitz' every year in spring. This is a week-long council initiative undertaken by officials from a number of departments in consultation with traders. Although the

blitz disrupts trading, traders are warned well in advance. This has happened for ten years so now traders know what to expect. One official involved in the process noted:

*Traders soon appreciated the positive impact it had on business and readily cooperate in the process.*

Aside from high pressure hosing of the pavements, abandoned furniture and other material are removed from the pavements. Between 1999 and 2008 more than 1 420 tonnes of material were dumped. This greatly improves health, safety and environmental conditions in the area.

The storm water drains are also checked before the summer rains. As they are not flushed out by rain in the winter, litter that builds up in them can form a 'plug' that leads to local flooding. Officials examine the rubbish in the drains to see which groups of traders are responsible for throwing it there. Officials then approach these groups to discuss alternative ways of disposing of their rubbish.

In addition each year a different part of Warwick receives special attention. Early in the week an interdepartmental group of officials identify maintenance issues like damaged pavements, light outages, missing signage and road markings. This routine maintenance is often difficult to do when the area is in full use. The appropriate departments then address these issues before trading resumes.

On a lighter note, the Project and Durban Solid Waste also used this week to include training, street theatre and other promotion opportunities. For example one year a team educated the public about the difference between a sewer and a storm water drain and another year a person from Durban Solid Waste paraded through the area as a talking litter bin!

An interesting point was raised by the Project leader about how to avoid some of the difficulties of keeping areas such as this clean. He said:

*One of the single most important messages that emerged from the cleaning operation was the importance of drained, hardened, durable paved surfaces in areas that encourage street trading. I would even argue that the first and best way to spend an annual cleaning budget is to commit it to paving.*



## Volunteer cleaners

Alongside the Project's programme is a group of women street traders who spend hours every week cleaning the streets because, as one of them explained, 'the people who work for the municipality do not reach every corner'. The more active volunteers spend three hours on the street twice or three times a week. They have said that their motives for doing this are that it is good for business and that they are proud of their city and concerned about its image.

*We don't want people who visit the city to go back with a picture of a dirty Durban in their minds.*

Mealie seller

*I know that our city can be something; we are not just working for 2010. We must love Durban... It's my factory and if it's clean and beautiful people will come.*

Fresh produce trader

A council official describes meeting the group late at night cleaning an area that was nowhere near their own trading sites.

*One evening at around 9 o'clock I was leaving the Project Centre and I came across three women. They came out of the dark, in gumboots, gloves and with plastic bags tied around them. I asked 'What on earth are you doing here at night?' They told me they had been sweeping up the Old Dutch taxi rank. I asked why. The answer was quite simple: 'How can visitors come to our city and see it looking like this?'*

*I mean, hands up who would sweep a taxi rank in Warwick at nine o'clock at night?*

The Project arranged support for this group. They were provided with brooms and bags by Durban Solid Waste who began to work with the group and offered them training.

When officials saw the level of commitment of these women, who were prepared to sacrifice so much time to keep their workplace clean, some of them began a measure of volunteerism themselves, adding extra hours to their working day.



Taxi washing



Secure water point managed by traders

## Transforming toilet and water facilities

Toilet and water facilities impact directly on cleanliness and crime prevention and are constantly raised by traders as issues of concern. For this reason the Project team spent a great deal of time working on how best to set up water points and how to design toilets so that they would be easier to maintain and less susceptible to crime. The extent to which they succeeded was due to careful observation and consideration of the existing problems, along with innovative design and improved management.

Warwick's apartheid legacy meant that water and toilet facilities were negligible and those that did exist were often used for activities for which they were not designed: for example, bathing and washing; getting large volumes of water for cooking; taxi washing and washing fresh produce. All of these caused continual damage to the facilities; for example the taps over the hand basins were forcibly redirected to allow buckets to be filled. Also not enough attention had been paid in the design to avoid dark secluded spaces, making users vulnerable to criminals.

The Project team set about upgrading the existing toilets and building many more. The new facilities were built in smaller blocks so that toilet facilities are well distributed throughout the area. Attention was paid to lighting in the toilets with maximum use being made of natural light. The fittings and finishings are robust and easy to clean. The Project's team also decided to establish water points near activities like the bovine head and mealie cooking which need a lot of water. The water points are housed in robust lockable cabinets containing a tap and water-meter. The management of these water points is outsourced to traders as a small business opportunity.

An outsourcing system is also used for managing some of the new toilet facilities. For example, the management of the six new facilities located near taxi ranks has been outsourced to taxi associations. Traders reported they found this system to be working well as they often had an established relationship with those managing the facilities closest to them. For other users this system has not worked as well. Officials have found that some taxi associations limit access to the facilities they manage, since the fewer people that use them, the less they need to be cleaned. This shows that ongoing monitoring of outsourced services is likely to be necessary.

## Managing pavement sleeping

Late into the night there are still commuters going home, while others start making their way to work very early. Those without homes and those who cannot afford to pay the taxi fare to get home often find shelter in Warwick, where pavement or rough sleeping is a long-standing phenomenon. Before the market was built Project staff estimated that there were over 100 *muthi* traders sleeping under plastic sheets on the side of the road to protect their goods. Women are particularly vulnerable to crime and violence.

To go some way towards addressing rough sleeping in the inner city, the city's Housing Department and their provincial colleagues established Strollers - a very low cost hotel charging R30 a night. There are separate floors for women, men and couples. A unique security system has been devised to separate access to the various floors. To keep costs low the sleeping spaces are small and washing facilities are provided as a separate service. A shower costs R3. This particular service has proved very popular among not only the residents but also other people in the city.

Although some better-off traders use Strollers, pavement sleeping continues in Warwick, with many saying R30 is too expensive. Another solution that has been considered is converting a public transport rank into a rough sleepers' facility at night. The design and management of such a facility is under discussion.



## Addressing health issues

### Protecting consumer health

In the early 1990s when it was clear that street traders were to be a permanent presence, the responsibility to protect the health of consumers buying street traders' products and services weighed heavily on environmental health officials. There were norms and standards used to regulate formal businesses but since street trading had largely been banned, there was little guidance about how this new set of businesses should be dealt with.

Durban's City Health Department initiated a health training programme for food traders in 1994. Staff devised a set of minimum health standards for informal traders who sold food items. Since then interactive training sessions have been conducted. Issues of personal, food and environmental health are discussed and the code of good trading practice disseminated. Once traders have been through the training, environmental health officers visit them at their site to assist them in applying these health standards.

This training is sensitively designed for traders. It is conducted in Zulu and does not depend on participants being literate. Traders identified Wednesday mornings as a quiet trading time, so this is when training sessions are held (because time away from the streets is money lost). The training takes place at the Project Centre, close to trading sites. Time is thus not wasted getting to and from the training venue.

Traders who have been through the training and applied the standards receive a certificate endorsed by the Chief Health Inspector. These certificates are issued at a ceremony often attended by the Mayor or his deputy. Since 1994 over 2 500 certificates have been awarded.

This programme was identified by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation as a good practice in 2002.

### HIV/AIDS work in Warwick

In South Africa clinical health issues are provincial and national government responsibilities. However a disease as pervasive and serious as HIV/AIDS becomes a local government issue; it has to be dealt with every day.

The effects of the pandemic are horrifyingly evident throughout Warwick and since the Project was first established a number of traders, trader leaders and officials have died. For example when a former SEWU leader was asked about the cardboard collectors they had organised in the mid 1990s, she said most of these women had died. Due to stigma HIV/AIDS is seldom singled out as the cause but is likely

to have been a factor. In the province of KwaZulu-Natal nearly four in every ten women attending antenatal clinics are HIV-positive.

As the information box shows, older women traders support large numbers of children and grandchildren as they lose income-earning family members. They struggle with increasing medical, food, and funeral expenses and the costs of taking time away from paid work to care for the sick. Often the women themselves are living with chronic, largely untreated and often stress related illnesses, such as hypertension, asthma, diabetes and arthritis.

The Project secured a site for a local non-governmental organisation, Life Line, to run voluntary counselling and testing in Warwick. Warwick is accessible and also offers those worried about their status a greater level of anonymity than they would have if they took the test at a local clinic. This site conducts 40% of the total HIV tests in the city. Unlike many other facilities, the results of the test are available within 10 minutes. Pre- and post- test counselling is offered.

A Project team member arranged for certified training on HIV/AIDS issues at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Medical School, and City Health officers have conducted awareness training courses with two groups of traders in particular: traditional medicine practitioners, who are increasingly dealing with HIV/AIDS and related illnesses; and barbers, who run the risk of transmitting HIV/AIDS if they do not clean their electric shavers thoroughly between clients.

### NUMBERS OF DEPENDANTS OF SOLE BREADWINNERS

The following figures emerged from an interview with a group of women selling live chickens and demonstrate the burdens that women bear as the sole breadwinners of ever-expanding households.

**INTERVIEWER:** *Can you tell us how many people you support with your incomes?*

- Trader 1 :** *I have 6 children and 1 grandchild to support.*
- Trader 2 :** *I support 6 children and 1 grandchild.*
- Trader 3 :** *I have 6 people who depend on my income.*
- Trader 4 :** *I have 9 people to support including grandchildren.*
- Trader 5 :** *I have 6 children and 1 grandchild dependent on my income.*
- Trader 6 :** *I have 8 people to support, including grandchildren.*
- Trader 7 :** *I have 8 children and 4 grandchildren to support.*
- Trader 8 :** *I have 18 people in total to support.*
- Trader 9 :** *I support 8 children and 3 grandchildren.*
- Trader 10 :** *I have 7 people to support. Some of us don't receive any grants.*

## RUNNING FOUR INFORMAL BUSINESSES

### Sibongile Khumalo

Sibongile Khumalo is a remarkable woman. Not only does she run four separate informal businesses, but she has found time to organise a volunteer group of women, all traders, who run a soup kitchen for people attending a clinic that treats sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

Sibongile is 48, and lives in a township not far from the central city. Her household consists of six other family members, three of whom are at school. In comparison to many other women working in Warwick, Sibongile is fortunate in that two other household members have work and are able to contribute an income to the household.

Her day starts before 5 a.m. when she leaves her home to catch a taxi into Warwick. Here she collects newspapers from a distributor and sells them at a well positioned site with lots of commuters going past. Once the early morning rush is over, she moves on to her next occupation. A friend, and co-volunteer at the soup kitchen, sells sweet cakes at the same spot, and together they have a good combination of early morning products.

Sibongile has two sites at the Berea Station, both under shelter. At the first she retails a variety of goods such as shoes, sandals, hats, socks and mirrors. Her main site, at the station is where she makes and sells traditional Zulu and Xhosa craft. These are mainly clothes for ceremonial occasions. Wedding skirts, for example, sell from R150, while a full heavily beaded skirt costs R500.

This site for her traditional ware doubles up as her takeaway kitchen in the afternoons. Here she cooks and sells beef and chicken stew or curry. She can expect to serve 30 to 50 customers a day and for those who are not hurrying past, there are two chairs and a table. This is where she makes most of her money.

Sibongile's voluntary work takes place at the Prince Cyprian Zulu Clinic in Warwick, which has become an important site for distributing antiretroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS. Sibongile is aware that for the patients' medications to be effective, they need a regular meal each day, which many clinic patients cannot provide for themselves. It is this that has motivated her to organise 15 women to work as volunteers with her – all of whom are informal workers in Warwick and belong to a registered co-operative. Each of them gives one morning a week of their time, to help prepare and serve soup for up to 500 outpatients who come to the clinic each day.

The kitchen receives bread from the city's Health Department and money for the ingredients for the soup from a research unit at the hospital. The contribution is always insufficient and the women add to this from their own pockets.

Sibongile leaves the central city by taxi at about 6pm each day, arriving home well after dark.



Sibongile runs four separate informal businesses and helps run a soup kitchen



The new childcare facility



Children playing at a trader's site

**Providing childcare**

Women traders often have no choice but to have their young children or grandchildren with them on the street. There are real dangers for these children – hot cooking liquids, electrical wires, unstable displays and structures, and, most importantly, traffic. One Project official noted: 'I have personally rescued more than one young child who was about to wander into the street'. In addition to the concern for the well-being of the children, traders find it difficult to manage both childcare and trading. The provision of childcare was an issue raised with Project staff by individual traders and by the Self Employed Women's Union.

When the Project team first started working in the area they found a local church group had established a small school that operated on the pavement. The challenge was to improve the environment for these children and to increase the number of children this facility could cope with. The Project approached this in two stages. First, two shipping containers were



The first creché housed in two shipping containers

secured and the play space outside was cordoned off. Art students at a nearby technical college decorated the containers.

In the meantime the operations team found a new site and converted it into a facility that now accommodates approximately 70 children. The Project committed funds to establishing the facility, but since the support of crèches is a provincial government responsibility, the Project could not fund running costs. The church continued to support this initiative and has managed to secure provincial funds.

The school has introduced a school-readiness programme and established relationships with local inner city primary schools. These schools tend to have better educational standards than township schools and so the prospects for these children, most of whom are the children of traditional medicine traders, are improved.







### The overall impact of these support services

The support services described in this chapter are essential to improving the lives of all who use Warwick and to making it an area that traders can be proud of. These are overarching aspects that significantly enhance the quality of trading and the willingness of consumers and pedestrians to use the area. Traders can function more effectively, because general working conditions are improved and because in some instances their accommodation, childcare and health concerns are dealt with. These are issues that stand alongside the major infrastructural improvements in Warwick as they too contribute to the overall impact and the efficiency of the area.

