KwaNobuhle

1 KwaNobuhle is a geographically dispersed settlement, divided with numerous greenbelts, river valleys, public land and servitudes. Residents are reliant on vehicle transport to access high streets and shopping facilities.

2 The first generation of council houses were built according to the apartheid defined NE 51/9 model. Some home owners have substantially enhanced their properties, though many original houses remain unaltered and undeveloped.

3 Most renovations incorporate embellishment into the design.

4 Urban agriculture fulfills a role in supplementing livelihoods and sustaining cultural traditions.

5 Home owners with resources have chosen to invest in their properties, such as building a garage, additional rooms, upgrading doors and windows and a tiled roof.
2 Rosedale and Langa

1 The broader area of Rosedale is highly diverse in settlement characteristics, containing suburbs, formal council houses and informal settlements.

2 McCarthy Informal Settlement contains over 900 dwellings; there are merely two communal water taps.

3 Whilst the area supports a number of ‘middle income’ suburbs, such as Mountain View and Gamble, many of the original council houses in Rosedale have not improved since 1994 when owners acquired title deeds.

4 Sewerage spills out onto the street in Blikkiesdorp, one of the oldest settlements within this site.
3 Historical Legacy

1 In 1985, 35 people were massacred by the security police when they attempted to march from Langa to KwaNobuhle to attend the funeral of three anti-apartheid activists. This event has been memorialized in both KwaNobuhle and Langa. The Langa Memorial site is fenced and locked – See 3.

2 These foundations memorialize the forced relocations from Langa to KwaNobuhle under the apartheid programme of separate development.

4 Traditional celebrations to communicate with the ancestors are widely practiced in KwaNobuhle and Langa.

5 Floodlights are characteristic of the township and help to illuminate dark places and open grounds where no street lights exist. These lights symbolise people’s insecurity at night.
SLF recruited and trained 14 field researchers from KwaNobuhle and Rosedale communities.

SLF operated from the Lovelife Y-Centre in KwaNobuhle and the Ikhwezi Lomso educare in Kabah.

Field workers conducted interviews using a survey instrument contained on a tablet device with the data uploaded to a cloud based storage system.

The field team was divided into a cycling unit and a walking unit. Bicycles enabled the cycling team to cover an extensive area, whilst also providing the researchers with a unique means of identification.
5 The research process was overseen by highly experienced SLF research specialists who recorded the precise locality of each business using a Garmin GPS device.

6 The field researchers acquired new skills and built friendships amongst each other.

7 SLF conducted a focus group discussion with young entrepreneurs working in creative industries to understand their business strategies and opportunities for growth.

8 Part of the research process required building bridges with the community to earn their trust and support.
5 Spaza Shops

1 Spaza shops are the apex business in both sites. The sector is now dominated by Ethiopian shop-keepers.

2 Most of the immigrant-run spaza businesses are significantly bigger businesses than the historical spaza store. These new spaza shops stock fruit and vegetables, hair care products, hardware and homeware, cosmetics and a large range of food and beverages. Most shops are informal and unregistered. The great majority of shop employees are immigrants, notably from Malawi.

3 Young girls and boys are often found ‘hanging out’ outside spaza shops. Shops have become the meeting point for local ‘gangsters’, though the state of gangsterism is relatively tame in most cases.
6 Hair Salons and Tattoos

1. In KwaNobuhle many of the hair salons are situated in high street localities, operating from containers and shacks.

2. Immigrant entrepreneurs, notably Ghanaians have established businesses in the hair care sector in KwaNobuhle. A few of these businesses provide tailoring and shoe repair services.

3. In Rosedale many barbers operate either at home or on a mobile basis serving clients within their network. There are few high street salons. A number of individuals have established tattoo businesses, responding to the growing demand for tattoos and body art. As the equipment is costly, entrepreneurs have innovated to build their own tattoo guns using home based appliances.

4. There are a small number of businesses providing other forms of personal services, such as nail bars.
Mechanics

1 The research identified numerous mechanics and mechanical services. Most of these businesses are run by South African men. Although some mechanics are currently employed or once worked in the auto-motor industry, most acquired their skills 'on-the-job'.

2 Mechanics have good technical skills and have invested in tools and equipment. Most work environments are highly informal and work practices are not systematic, such as the storage of tools in buckets. This hampers productivity and efficiency.

3 Informal tyre sellers provide a cost-effective service. But as the sign says, there is no guarantee.

4 The range of businesses includes auto-trimmers, exhaust repairs, panel beaters, welders, as well as persons renovating collectable vehicles.
8 Home Businesses

1. The selling of sweets, ice-lollies (boompies), chips and cigarettes is a common homebased business. Profits are thin. These businesses are run by middle aged women as a survivalist strategy. Their core market is school children.

2. As spaza shops dominate the retail market in most food products, we found few home based businesses selling meat or vegetables, surprisingly (and in contrast to other settings).

3. The collecting of glass bottles at home is the most common enterprise activity in KwaNobuhle. Collections are sporadic and profits are very thin.

4. Plastic is not widely collected for recycling.
9 Services

1 Doctors and Dentists have established practices in Uitenhage townships.

2 There remains a strong demand for traditional medicine, faith healing and the communication with ancestors.

3 In Rosedale (and Langa) the embellishment of teeth is fashionable. We were told that dentists are willing to charge this service to medical aid schemes.

4 In both communities, there has been substantial investment in religious institutions, especially churches. A question should be posed as to whether this important social infrastructure is fulfilling a suitably broad role in the community, especially in the context of government under performance in the provision of social infrastructure?
10 Taverns and Take-aways

1. The leisure economy is an important component of the local economy in KwaNobuhle and Rosedale.

2. Shisa nyama restaurants and taverns are popular localities with synergies to other businesses, including car washes.

3. In most taverns, the business model is focused on selling a high volume at low profit rather than providing a higher quality service. Taverns are formalized and registered businesses.

4. Although the trade in liquor is subject to sector regulation, we identified a number of businesses operating with expired licenses. We noted that immigrant entrepreneurs are operating businesses in this sector, with the business (unlawfully) using the license awarded to the original business owner or landlord.
11 High Street Dynamics

1 Unlike many townships, the pedestrian traffic on the high street is of low volume. Hence there are relatively few street based businesses, apart from those operating from containers and buildings.

2 Coke has invested in a SMME development project to provide young entrepreneurs with a business-in-a-box. These are situated on the high street. It seems as though the businesses are not performing well.

3 Important and successful high street businesses are car washes, whose clients include the informal taxis.

4 The shopping mall is the main commercial node in KwaNobuhle. The mall design does not accommodate opportunities for small township businesses on the adjacent high street.