

From the Politics of Protest to the Politics of Redress. The Planning of a Sanitation Unit in a South African Slum.

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Joe Slovo is an informal settlement in close proximity to the city of Cape Town, South Africa. Joe Slovo settlement shot to national prominence in 2006/7 when upgrading and relocation started in the area. A high profile national project met with considerable resistance from the residents. By 2009 about half of the residents of Joe Slovo had been relocated to transit accommodation in the immediate vicinity or to a new mass housing development on the outskirts of the city. The remainder of the residents have been able to remain on the land while litigation between the State and the community ended in the Constitutional Court, where an ambiguous judgement opened space for a negotiated solution.

It is now the intention of the State to provide housing on site to all people currently residing on the land. This development was scheduled to start in March 2010, but there has been no activity to date. The residents of Joe Slovo are in for a long period of waiting. In the meantime basic services remain seriously inadequate. In order to address these short to medium term challenges the community leadership has decided to build communal toilet facilities. This will provide an interim and partial solution to the problem of sanitation - one of the most critical issues currently faced by the people of Joe Slovo.



Area highlighted is the part of Joe Slovo where residents are living in shacks. The opened adjoining areas have been 'cleared' for the N2 Gateway project and housing on the left is part of the N2 Gateway development

When the National Government identified Joe Slovo as the pilot for the N2 Gateway Housing Project in 2004, the Community Organisation Resource Centre (CORC) tried to engage the State to do an enumeration to be led by Fedup (nationally) and residents of Joe Slovo as a way in which to engage the residents and start addressing issues together. The state decided to do a survey but put it

out to tender and appointed a private company to do this, thereby losing its value as a means of engagement.

In January 2005 there was a massive fire in Joe Slovo that razed 2 000 shacks to the ground. Government used the dislocation of 3 000 inhabitants as the catalyst for relocating of fire victims from Joe Slovo to Delft, a township on the outskirts of the city.

In October 2007 Fedup leaders in the W Cape tried to set up saving schemes in Joe Slovo. They met up with resistance from the Joe Slovo leadership who had been misled to believe that Fedup and Corc were 'puppets of the state'. As such the Joe Slovo leadership were hostile towards the formation of saving schemes and it became very difficult for Fedup to mobilise freely. A very small saving scheme of about 20 members was formed in Zone 30 on the east side of the settlement.

In February 2008 there was a fire at Joe Slovo in Zone 30, which destroyed 150 shacks. Ikhayalami, an NGO linked to CORC and FEDUP, wanted to offer some support to the poorest of families affected..

An important link was then forged with the Joe Slovo leadership. The idea of blocking out part of the settlement was often spoken about but due to legal proceedings the leadership and their lawyers decided best not to move any structures or build anything in Joe Slovo.

During the ten days while Ikhayalami was building the 15 shelters the coordinator of the Joe Slovo Task team, Mzwanele Zulu asked if Ikhayalami could build a community hall for the Joe Slovo residents. Mzwanele explained that the community holds many meetings but have to hold these meetings in the open. Funding from Percy Fox Foundation was set-aside for this purpose. However the building of the hall only took place in Dec 2008 as a shebeen had been built on the area that had been demarcated for a hall. Eventually the community agreed to move a few shacks that were next to the shebeen to make way for the hall. A 54sqm hall was built on the 9th of December 2008. In January 2009 a trustee of the Percy Fox Foundation visited Joe Slovo and was so impressed with the Joe Slovo community and the hall that he commissioned an extension. The hall is now 96sqm and has become the centre and heart- beat of the community.

In March 2009 there was another fire in Joe Slovo that destroyed 512 shacks Ikhayalami was asked by the Joe Slovo Task Team to assist with a re-blocking exercise. Within 3 weeks 125 Ikhayalami type structures had been built back to back by the Joe Slovo community with lanes in between. This regularisation of part of the settlement drew attention from government. As a result a meeting with the City's Informal Settlements Department was arranged to facilitate a dialogue between the City Informal Housing Department, SDI, Ikhayalami and CORC.

A series of meeting followed that have resulted in an agreement with the city to work on 11 pilot informal settlement upgrades (or as the city like to call them

'improvements'). This department is a very forward-thinking department and the first department of its kind in the country.. The Informal Settlement Department in Cape Town realises that informal settlements are not going to be "eradicated" in the foreseeable future and, as such, people's living conditions in these settlements need to be improved.

In May 2009 the Informal Settlement Network (ISN) was launched in the Western Cape. The aim of this network is to create a united voice of the homeless and landless poor across all informal settlements in South Africa. Joe Slovo is part of ISN and the coordinator of their task team, Mzwanele Zulu, has been appointed as the vice president of ISN nationally. From its inception in the Western Cape members of its executive as well as members of Fedup and PPM have formed part of the team engaging and working with the Informal Settlement Department with regard to the 11 pilot projects

Fedup works in tandem with ISN. Once ISN has a presence in a settlement then should the members of the settlement want to start a settlement wide saving scheme or conduct an enumeration FEDUP provides support on both fronts. In Joe Slovo a number of saving schemes have been launched in the different zones.

In June 2009 an enumeration was conducted in Joe Slovo led by the Joe Slovo community with the support of Fedup and Corc. This enumeration was a very important step for the community in understanding their needs and thereby empowering them to engage government around their findings.

These community-driven activities were taking place on the ground while important national developments were also impacting on the fate of the residents of the settlement. Most prominent were the Constitutional Court hearings on the 10th of June 2009. As mentioned already, the Court ruled 'part in favour and part against' the Joe Slovo community. Dates were set for the start of relocations on the 14th of August but the court also ruled that meaningful engagement with the community had to take place. In addition the three tiers of Government had different ideas about the development, resulting in much goings on between them. There was also the occasional consultation with the residents of Joe Slovo.

In the meantime the Provincial Government has used the community led enumeration to plan an alternative development with increased densities to accommodate the number of households currently residing in Joe Slovo. In August the Provincial Department of Housing recommended these changes to a newly constituted National Human Settlements Department who approved these changes on the 30th of October.

Dates for the proposed relocation have been postponed thrice with the last postponement issued in October as being indefinite. On the 30th of November the Provincial Minister of Housing announced that the Joe Slovo residents will not be moved off the land and will be the beneficiaries of the development, which will be built, in-situ. All tiers of government, as was initially the case, are now part of this development with Province and National government being the main actors.

SDI President visits Joe Slovo

In July 2009 Jockin, the SDI President, was in South Africa visiting the Federation of the Urban Poor. Jockin also met with members from ISN. In addition he went to Joe Slovo to meet with community members, savers and their leadership. After the meeting he was taken on a tour of the blocked out area. While strolling through the lanes he asked about ablution facilities. He was informed that all 3 000 families in Joe Slovo use what is referred to as the 'bucket system'. This comprises of single freestanding cubicles made from precast concrete with a toilet seat and container (bucket) underneath. The Municipality pays a subcontractor to empty and clean these buckets once or twice a week.

What actually happens is that many of these cubicles either no longer have the bucket type toilet in them due to vandalism or theft and those that remain are so unhygienic that no one wants to use them.



Conditions outside the toilet 'booths'



Bucket system 'booths in background

Jockin immediately commissioned the use of SDI funds for the building of an ablution block. He was also impressed with the blocking out that had been done and said that a further 100 double storey structures should be built but this had to go in tandem with people saving towards such an upgrade of their homes.

As everything related to Joe Slovo was in the balance and unclear especially with relocation dates set by the Constitutional court, the Joe Slovo task team felt that it would not be right to use SDI resources for a blocking out as development could start any day. They said that once things are clearer as to what was going to happen then the issue of an ablution block could be revisited.

By the end of September it became apparent that the Joe Slovo residents were not going to be moved. The Task Team then declared that 'the ablution block needs to be built as we are not going anywhere and people are desperate for better sanitation'.

Social aspects

Discussions began as to how the ablution block would be run. The task team appointed someone from the community to be the caretaker of the ablution block. It was suggested that the community should select a family who is trustworthy and whom can be employed and trained to maintain the facility. It was agreed that it would be strategic on many levels to select a woman saver who has been saving consistently for a long time. Not only will that reward self-reliance and send a friendly signal to FEDUP but most importantly it would become the basis for accountability and transparency. This would then become the benchmark for change in community participation and accountability.. The Joe Slovo task team are open to revisiting the appointment of the caretaker and other ideas of how to manage the ablution block – especially the appointment of a management committee that hopefully would include outside professionals and representatives from the City. This committee will oversee and supervise the caretaker and keep clear financial records that are reported to the community.

In February 2010 members from Joe Slovo went on an exchange to Zimbabwe to learn from the Mbare Federation who manage and run an ablution facility. Many of the systems learnt about in Zimbabwe will be incorporated into the overall management structure of the Joe Slovo ablution block. A key feature that the Zimbabweans utilise is a collective management structure where 6 Federation members 'volunteer' on a permanent basis and form part of the day-to-day maintenance and management of the facility. Apart from expenses incurred and money kept aside for maintenance the rest of the money that is collected is divided amongst the 6 volunteers. There are 3 additional members who have been appointed to oversee things and report back to the broader Federation. They receive no remuneration.



Joe Slovo exchange to Mbare, Zimbabwe

It has also been agreed that the residents in Zone 32, where the ablution block will be built, will make a contribution towards the building of the ablution block. This has been agreed upon in principle by the Joe Slovo task team. They have been reluctant to implement this until such time as the City has given the green light for the building of the ablution block.

There has been wide scale engagement and consultation at community level with regards to the building of the ablution block. The residents of Joe Slovo are very excited about this development. The community, at their general meetings has discussed the idea of payment for using the facility. There is agreement that this

must be done in order to maintain the ablution block and pay for the caretaker/s. The time is fast approaching that all the social aspects related to this project are set in place as this is the single most important ingredient that can make this 'project' successful, sustainable and replicable.

Technical issues, logistics and partnership with the Municipality

Discussions about the design of the toilet block between City official and community leadership have been taking place on a regular basis.

It was eventually decided that there would be 2 x 6m x 6m sections – one each for men and women, with a 3x6m caretaker's residence in the middle. The ablution block will be comprised a male and female section with 6 showers (3 for men and 3 for women). An additional 4 can later be added depending on demand. There will be ten (10) waterborne (flush) toilets, five in the women and men's sections respectively. The men's section will also have a waterless urinal. The overall size of the facility will be 90sqm.

Another discussion was centred on where the ablution block should be located. The task team proposed that it be located in Zone 32. They also proposed that it be placed close to where the current bucket system toilets have been placed. The bucket system toilets of 1sqm per facility are positioned in a horizontal line parallel to the dirt road that runs through the upper section of Joe Slovo. The current ablution facilities are almost directly under an electrical power-line.

The ablution block is set to be 6m deep, this would put the structure directly under the power-lines. The task team said that if government had a problem with this they would argue that the current facilities are placed so close to the power lines that it makes no difference if an ablution block was placed directly below the power-lines. The only difference in their eyes was that they would have decent ablution facilities.

Another issue that came under scrutiny was how to heat water for the showers. The Joe Slovo task team said that there was a great need for showers. Finding a heating solution for the ablution block has been one of the most complex issues and has had bearing on the design, capital outlay and future maintenance costs of the ablution block. Various options have been researched with the assistance of the University of Cape Town and Ikhayalami.

It was agreed that the most favourable sewerage option, if possible, was to connect to the bulk sewerage system. If this was not going to prove possible the participants. Two sewerage manholes were located by the community and their technical support professionals. One of them was very close to the proposed location of the ablution block. The community then decided they needed an infrastructural layout plan in order to check the carrying capacity, the level and the flow direction but they did not know how to get this information from the city.

A central dilemma that community and NGO were dealing with was when and how to further engage Government and notify them of the proposed community plans. On the one hand they felt that if they notified government and asked for their support they could run the risk of indefinite delays. At worst there was the possibility that Government could say that the community could not proceed, thereby denying 1 000 households access to decent ablution facilities.

On the other hand the community and NGO actors felt that if they went ahead without informing Government this would impact negatively on the constructive working relationship they were building with the Informal Settlements Department. . This challenge was debated intensively for over a fortnight. Finally the Community and NGO decided it best to consult the City and face the consequences.

Interaction with the City

Gerry Adlard was contacted and he advised us to speak, a Mr Garnett Jefferies. Contact was made telephonically with Mr. Garnett Jefferies on the 27th of October 2009. Mr. Jefferies is the Head of Water and Sanitation Department for informal settlements in the City of Cape Town. Jefferies was excited to hear of this proposed initiative and immediately arranged for the community to meet one of his technicians on site to assess the sewers in the area and see if they could take additional bulk. A date was set for a meeting to discuss the technician's findings and share general sanitary options as they have 11 different options. Obviously connecting to the sewers would be first prize and he acknowledged this. He said that if the sewers were not built to carry additional waste they would look into ways to increase its bulk capacity. CORC staff and community leadership were encouraged by his swift response and eagerness to work with the team.

On Thursday the 29th of October three members from Joe Slovo Task Team, three ISN leaders and three Ikhayalami staff met with one technician and two students from the Department of Water and Sanitation. They mentioned that Mr. Jefferies had told them to 'prioritise this meeting and do what ever is possible to facilitate progress'. Since the initial search for the drains the dirt road had been graded making other manholes visible. It was felt that it was better to use these as opposed to the ones that service the formal suburb next to Joe Slovo.

When the sewer manhole was opened it was discovered that the 'sewerage system' was blocked and not in use. The technicians then arranged a meeting with officials responsible for dealing with blockages of this nature.



Meeting with technicians on site



Opening the manhole



Inside the man-hole

First meeting with the Department of Water and Sanitation

Those present at the first meeting on the 3rd of November 2009 included 2 members from the Joe Slovo task team, 2 staff from Ikhayalami and students from UCT. From the department there were 5 officials including the Department Head, Mr Jefferies and a senior technical professional Mr. Mangaliso Matti, and

The City gave a broad outline of some of their challenges and lessons learnt with regard to delivering sanitation to informal areas. These issues include:

- R100 million being spent on informal areas over the past two years, with few positive results being achieved,
- Major challenges including vandalism and theft,
- Problem with installing cisterns as they get stolen so if they are to be used they need to be sunken into the walls,
- Learning from projects in Khayelitsha that community input is vital for the success of any project in informal settlements; and
- Struggling to develop partnerships, resulting in unmanaged facilities and little collaboration with communities.

CORC and the Joe Slovo Task Team then presented their plans for the proposed ablution. The City was generally positive towards the plans, and were keen on creating a working partnership.

Current designs and drawings were presented and discussed. The City mentioned a factory that is producing a mobile water-borne latrine. A combined factory site visit was arranged for the 26th of November. This joint site visit took place on the said date and proved very informative. Some of the concepts have been incorporated into the overall design of the ablution block.

The need was raised for energy efficient technology. It was agreed that this would be further investigated by UCT and the support NGOs.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the meeting was the city's offer to cover all costs associated with the installation of the plumbing as well as the costs of the cisterns, piping and toilet seats.

The proposed location of the ablution block was also discussed. The Joe Slovo task team identified an area in Section 32 under the power lines. The City argued that this would be a problem. The Task Team replied that the bucket system toilets are virtually under the power lines and as such there was no difference between the two locations.

It was agreed that a memorandum of understanding (MOU) would be drawn up between the City, Joe Slovo, iKhayalami and CORC, detailing how the various organisations would work together both with regard to the Joe Slovo ablution block and beyond.

Site visit to Joe Slovo

The meeting was followed by a site visit for the officials to Joe Slovo informal settlement, Zone 32, Langa to do the assessment for the proposed ablution block for the Joe Slovo community.

The drain that was on the pavement of the adjoining formal neighborhood was opened. This manhole proved to be linked to an active sewer. It was in close proximity to where the community wanted to build the ablution block.. In addition there was sufficient fall required to reach the manhole.



Verifying storm-water drain.



Opening of sewer

Based on this site visit two options were proposed, as indicated in the attached aerial photograph.



Aerial photograph showing both options

Option 1

Option 1 is very close to the existing sewer manhole and is under the Eskom high-voltage electrical power lines servitude. It is adjacent to Zone 32. At the time of the site visit the Joe Slovo Task Team still preferred option 1 due to the reasons that were raised at the meeting.

Option 2

Option 2 is situated 16m away from the electrical high voltage line servitude next to the gravel road inside Joe Slovo in Zone 32, block C, where there are a number of shacks. Joe Slovo leadership said that they could negotiate that the existing shacks move elsewhere in the settlement. However the leadership raised pertinent issues and said that they were reluctant to build on land that is under the jurisdiction of the Province and N2 Gateway Project. The City said that from a technical perspective they would recommend option 2.

The next step was for the community and the City Officials to meet with the Provincial Officials who were responsible for the proposed overall development of Joe Slovo.

The meeting was set up for the 4th of December at the Provincial offices. Brian Rossouw from Province was in attendance. In the meeting Mr. Rossouw explained that the housing project for Joe Slovo Informal Settlement will commence some time in 2010 and that building will start first in zone 30, the

Northern side near Vanguard Drive. The area that the community and the City had identified for the ablution block would be the last phase of the housing project and would start approximately 18 months from the day the overall project commenced.

During the above meeting the Community presented Mr. Rossouw with the proposed location and building plans. The participants studied the Province's proposed site layout to locate the proposed position of the ablution block. Fortunately the proposed location of the ablution block falls on proposed public open space. Mr. Rossouw gave the Community and the City the go-ahead and confirmed this in writing by way of email on the 15th December 2009.

'I confirm our discussions, and the presentation of the ablution block plans to us, that the said ablution block can be erected in the designated area resolved by us, in Joe Slovo. The location is in the future public open space shown in the preliminary densification layout.' (Mr. Brian Rossouw).

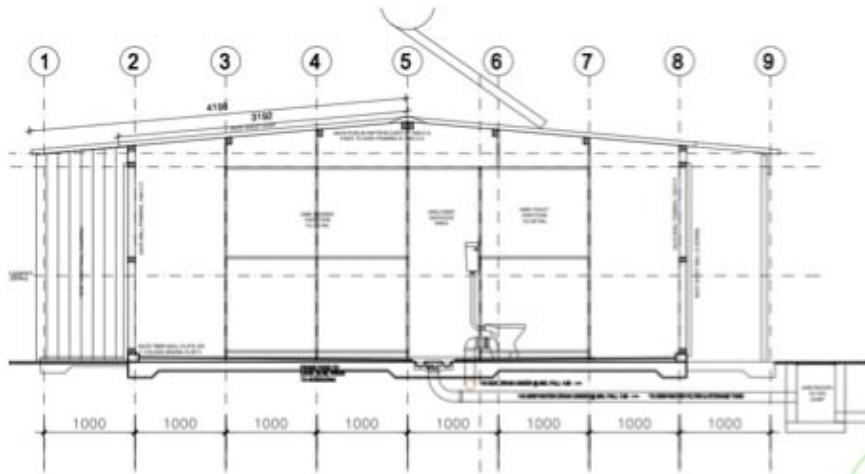
In January, following the Christmas break, CORC set up a meeting with the Department of Water and Sanitation so as to sign the MOU and set the project in motion. The date for the meeting was set for the 25th of January. On the 19th of January CORC received an email stating that the Water and Sanitation Department had received a directive that in order for this initiative to proceed Council approval is required so that the City can factor in future operation and maintenance funding and resource implications. They also wanted the NGOs involved to state that they were donating this asset to the City.

The next meeting on the 25th of January focused on these issues. It was made clear that the Joe Slovo community is going to make a monetary and labour contribution towards this asset, and that the community intended to take ownership of it and manage it. It was agreed that Water and Sanitation would prepare a draft report relating to these matters, send it to the Community for approval or changes and then send it to the required departments and finally to Council for official approval. According to the City officials once the report was to be submitted it was to take 1 month prior to approval being given. A report was finally drafted and sent to the Water and Sanitation Department on the 15th of March 2010.

Delays and obstacles still retard progress, but by the end of March sufficient progress had been made for the construction to begin once Province had signed off on the plans for the ablution block.

Design of ablution block

The designing process of the ablution block has been taking place from the onset of this initiative. A great deal of time and focus has been put into the design of the ablution block as hopefully it will become the basis of a prototype that will be rolled out to other informal settlements throughout the country. Aspects that were incorporated into the design gained reinforcement during an exchange to the Zimbabwe Federation ablution block in Mbare.



Section drawing: Joe Slovo ablution block

Other aspects that the technical professionals and the Task team have been researching pertain to more efficient and sustainable water heating technologies, water saving technologies and light generating technologies. The partners are considering the use of water heat pumps in conjunction with solar geysers, waterless urinals, push button showers and taps and the usage of energy saving light bulbs. The University of Cape Town's Social Justice Programme is busy compiling additional research and will submit their findings to the community in mid April. Thereafter in consultation with the community final decisions with regard to energy saving technologies will be made.

Impacts of the project thus far

The Joe Slovo community is looking forward to the building of this ablution block. In fact residents in both the two other zones – Zone 30 and Zone 31 are putting pressure on the City that they too want the same kind of ablution facilities. The community has agreed that they will be paying for the use of the toilets or showers and that this money will go towards paying appointed resident/s from the community to maintain the facility.

As a result of the exchange to Zimbabwe the saving schemes in Joe Slovo have been strengthened as well as their link and connection to the Federation. Those who attended the exchange experienced first hand the power of savings and unity. There are currently eight saving schemes in Joe Slovo.

A very important impact that the project has brought about is the regular engagements and collaboration with the Water and Sanitation Department of the City of Cape Town Informal Settlements Department. The specific objective of this collaboration is to provide a more dignified means of sanitation in the form of an ablution block, in this instance in Joe Slovo informal settlement, Cape Town.

The broader aim of the collaboration is to get the State to buy-in and provide resources for these new approaches to basic services provision in the form of water and sanitation to as many poor communities in informal settlements as

possible. It is crucial that these technical improvements be coupled with ***social processes*** aimed at delivering water and sanitation services which meets the needs of the community while being operationally viable into the future. The Water and Sanitation Department will be signing the MOU with the idea of replication, should it prove successful.

As the South African affiliates to SDI, CORC and the Federation are looking at this initiative as a pivotal project to set benchmarks and precedents. Should the parties be successful then the immediate result would be an increase in the scale of activities since every informal settlement in the SDI network will be calling upon Municipalities all over South Africa to provide similar solutions. In Cape Town the City has already agreed to do this 'project' with the idea of replication in mind.

A Sustainable financial model

The aim, of course, is for the State to take on the responsibility of replication. With regard to the Joe Slovo ablution block the community will be making a contribution towards the building of the facility. This is a standard SDI practise. In addition residents and passers-by will pay for the use of the ablution block. The money collected will be used to pay for cleaning agents, toilet paper, and soap, remuneration for the caretaker/s and any maintenance costs to the building. The City has agreed to pay for the monthly water and electricity costs as well as for the repair and maintenance of ablution facilities and blockages.

With regard to long term sustainability particular attention is being focused on the provision of energy efficient and water saving technology. This will have the added benefit of reducing costs for the State, as they will be covering these costs long-term. As such they will be more likely to be prepared to replicate this model.

Leveraging of additional funds

Through the positive engagement with the Water and Sanitation Department, the City has agreed to pay for all the plumbing, toilet seats and cisterns that will be installed. They will also pay for the connection to the bulk sewers. In addition the City will pay for the electrical connection to the grid system as well as the supply of 3-phase power. The amount that we will save as a result of the City covering these costs will be in excess of R50 000.

Additional funds of R50 000 have been leveraged from the University of Cape Town. These funds are to go towards costs for the installation of alternative and sustainable water heating solutions. The expected total cost for building this ablution block will be R450,000 (about \$60,000).

Final remarks

The amount that we have been able to leverage is R100 000.00 plus what is to come in from community saving contributions. We are now finally at the point of starting to move ahead with construction.. They are that Province who has agreed to the building of the ablution block sign off the drawings plans and the community comes forward with their contribution.