

CHAPTER 3

Civil society has experienced something of an identity crisis in post-apartheid South Africa.¹ It is not always clear about what its role should be. Civil society faced a very different kind of challenge during the apartheid era when it had to find ways of counteracting the destruction of an enabling political and social environment by the state. Freedom of association was thwarted by the banning of organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC). New organisations had to be created in order to fill the vacuum left by the banning of the older organisations (Baskin, 1991; Seekings, 2000). These included the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu), which later became the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). The pass laws, the creation of homelands and the declaration of a state of emergency in the country hampered freedom of movement. There was also censorship of the public media and very little access to state information. Meaningful political participation in the country was reserved for whites. Indian and coloured people were allowed to participate in the toothless tri-cameral parliament in terms of the 1983 Constitution while Africans were supposed to exercise their political rights in the homelands. Not surprisingly, the efforts of civil society organisations were focussed on achieving political emancipation. The relationship between the state and civil society was adversarial, characterised by conflict and violence. Civil society played a leading role in obtaining the end of apartheid and realising democracy in the country.

The democratically elected government has introduced progressive laws that give civil society an important role in the consolidation of democracy in South Africa. The National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac), for example, brings government, organised business, organised labour and organised community groupings together on a national level to try to reach consensus about social and economic policy.² The adoption of South Africa's new constitution in 1996 was a particularly significant development for civil society. The constitution defines all citizens, regardless of race, gender, age, political affiliation and religion, as equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of the country, including the right to basic health care, sufficient food and water, social security and the right to freely associate and to join and take part in the activities of different organisations. Civil society organisations have used the constitution and the constitutional court as tools to bolster their demands to the government. Organisations such as the Treatment Action

Campaign (Tac), the AIDS Law Project, the Community Law Centre, the Women's Legal Centre and the Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality have taken various government departments to court for violating specific rights entrenched in the constitution. While the state has sometimes reacted to the demands of civil society in ways that are reminiscent of the old order (Bond, 2000; Desai, 2002; Vally, 2003), civil society organisations have been prepared to resist state pressure and have also helped shape the policy process itself. Some organisations, however, have only played a 'watch dog' role and have had no real influence on policy in the country.

Despite more recognition and legal protection than in the past, civil society in South Africa has experienced set-backs in the post-apartheid period. As already indicated, serious tensions between civil society and the ANC-led government have emerged, including differences between tripartite alliance partners Cosatu, the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP), and between the South African National Civics Organisation (Sanco) and the ANC. Cosatu has challenged the ANC about national decision-making processes. It accuses the party of not properly consulting the unions through the existing structures in the tripartite alliance or the forum provided by Nedlac that is intended to discuss the country's macro-economic policies. Ongoing mass action by Cosatu affiliates has fuelled tensions in the alliance. Relations between Sanco and the ANC have been strained by disputes over the division of seats in transitional local government councils (Friedman & Reitzes, 1995).

Civil society, as I have mentioned, experienced some confusion with the advent of democracy in South Africa. While the objective of ending apartheid had been met, it was no longer always apparent what the new objectives of civil society should be. Many organisations were 'left without a purpose.' The goals of achieving democracy and developmental policies appeared to have been met with the elections in 1994 and the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Many of the older organisations, especially those with a strongly political character, lost direction and even the rationale for their existence. The trade unions tended to become preoccupied with workplace issues and failed to adequately address questions such as high unemployment, the fragmentation of the labour market and the rise of new forms of work. The 'social movement unions' of the 1980s disappeared and 'business unionism' was born in the late 1990s (Buhlungu, 2001, 2002, 2003). Nevertheless, poverty, unemployment and AIDS still required a strong and effective response

from civil society as did the continuing legacy of violence in many communities. Fortunately, new social movements and counter-movements began to emerge and fill the vacuum left by the failure of the older organisations to engage with pressing contemporary issues. There has been a recent upsurge of new social movements which demand respect for the rights of citizens, de-commodification of services and greater access to essential services (McDonald, 2002). Examples include the Landless People's Movement (LPM), the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) and the Tac.

The rise of social movements in post-apartheid South Africa has been driven not by the existence of an illegitimate government but by the implementation of what many consider to be 'illegitimate' policies. This has taken the ruling party by surprise (see Desai, 2002). Indeed, the close relationship that existed during apartheid between the ANC and civil society is slowly eroding.

The new movements respond directly to community concerns. They are prepared to vigorously engage local government about issues such as service delivery. Rather than focussing on the 'assets and capabilities of the poor', they demand that people's basic needs should be met and that poverty should be eradicated. They have been active in different forms in both Mpumalanga and Enhlalakahle. This chapter will examine their role and work, concentrating especially on the Mpumalanga Concerned Citizens Group (MCCG) and the Tac in Mpumalanga and on the home-based community health workers from the Emseni-Hospice Organisation in Enhlalakahle. I will show that community-based organisations are central to the efforts of the poor to gain access to key services. This leads me to argue that the household should not be seen as the only resource at the disposal of the poor in their livelihood struggles. Organisations also offer social, economic and political resources. While income insecurity, for example, remains largely a matter that requires a response at the level of the household, access to services is mostly a matter that needs to be addressed at community level.

The churches have also started to address a range of issues facing the two communities. They have become the main source of hope for many in their struggle with poverty, violence, unemployment and AIDS. Accordingly, this chapter will examine the important role played by the women's groups of the Methodist, Anglican and Lutheran churches in both Mpumalanga and Enhlalakahle.

In the course of its critique of the livelihoods approach, and of social capital specifically, the chapter provides evidence of the need to disaggregate social networks and to develop an analytical approach that acknowledges the dynamic and conflictual nature of social change. In an attempt to move away from the consensual view of politics that underpins the livelihoods approach, the chapter will examine the way in which various community organisations – formal and informal, old and new – have responded to the crises of poverty and HIV and AIDS in the two communities.

Relations between the state and civil society are also examined. As I have mentioned, these relations are often tense, as citizens demand better service delivery from the state with increasing urgency. Engagement between the state and civil society can result, however, in new ideas of citizenship and lead to stronger community ties that are based on reciprocal relationships rather than on monetary exchanges. This sort of engagement also promotes the possibility of alternative state policies, more effective governance and greater accountability from elected political leaders.

THE POST-APARTHEID STATE: FROM LABOUR TO WELFARE POLICIES

South Africa's social welfare system, as we have seen, is a mixture of state transfers, market or contributory schemes and, less formally, family or private transfers (Seekings, 2002). Market or contributory transfers only benefit the few who are formally employed (Theron, 2004). The majority of people, those who are employed without benefits or those who work in the informal economy, do not have access to this sort of transfer. Companies save money on worker benefits and wages by outsourcing and subcontracting work. Home-based contract work is especially encouraged in the textile industry (Theron, 1996; Allen & Wolkowitz, 1987). Thulisile Zondi's work, as we saw in chapter one, often comes from successful tenders from companies such as Playtex:

Last year, I got a tender from Playtex, a women's underwear company. It was not the first tender I got from a big company. I got several others from local textile factories. The tendering process is usually full of mismanagement and corruption, so success is not always guaranteed. Depending on the tendering process, I get big or small tenders. I then decide, based on the work given, how many people I will hire to help me. There are a lot of experienced women in the township, and it is not a problem to find them.

I have big machines and space in the house to do all the work here. I sometimes turn my living room into a mini-factory (*Thulisile Zondi, Mpumalanga*).

The inability of the state to effectively enforce labour legislation and create stable and secure jobs for new entrants into the labour market, mainly the youth, poses serious challenges for meaningful economic transformation and wealth redistribution in the country. In addition, the new labour laws have focused on standard employment relationships or formal labour markets at the expense of informal and irregular labour markets (Kalula, 2003).

As we saw in chapter one, the private and family transfers that have always been based on the earning of a salary in the formal economy have been rapidly disappearing in the face of mass unemployment. It was also this type of transfer that traditionally kept rural-urban linkages alive. This is no longer the case. Instead the main function of the linkage today is not the transfer of income so much as the hiding of urban poverty and disease.

Although South Africa's formal social welfare system is the only one in Africa that includes non-contributory grants and the country, proportionately speaking, has one of the largest welfare budgets in the world, South Africa is still plagued by poverty and extreme inequalities. The dramatic increase in the social welfare budget has not reduced the problems of maladministration, low take-up and corruption.

There are a lot of backlogs in the social department office. The local district surgeon is also known for refusing to sign documents that would allow people who are terminally ill because of AIDS to receive government grants. Magistrates have also refused to sign consent forms for AIDS orphans. There is general non-co-operation from government departments (*Reverend Zondi, Enhlalakahle*).

Corruption within local social department offices has impeded progressive social welfare policies and service delivery. The matron of Enhlalakahle Hospital, Mrs Gcisa, described the social welfare system as 'sluggish.' An official of the Umvoti Local Municipality admitted to a history of corruption in some government departments, but was quick to point out that 'all that had changed'.

There used to be a lot of corruption. For example, when elderly people applied for their pension funds, they had to pay a R50 bribe for their

application to be processed. If they did not pay R50, they would be told that their applications were missing and could not be processed. But now all that has changed under new management.

The transformative potential of the present welfare system is questionable. Social grants do not meet people's most basic needs, especially those of children.

The R740 per month has to feed so many people in this house now. It is just not enough. The children do not have money to go to school and to buy school uniforms. This is everyone's problem. There are too many mouths to feed with very little money (*MaMkhize, Mpumalanga*).

Even with well intended labour and social policies, the majority of poor South Africans are not protected. It is not surprising, then, that inequalities in the country continue to be replicated along race, gender and class lines. The poorest sector of the economy is largely made up of black women. They are unorganised and vulnerable. Their insecurity is compounded by the absence of a comprehensive social security system and proactive industrial policies.

POST-APARTHEID TOWNSHIPS

The perceived or real failure of the state to deliver services has led to civil society playing a major role in the lives of households and communities. A range of formal and informal associations and networks fulfil social, economic and political functions. Examples include political organisations, faith-based organisations (FBOs), *stokvels* and burial societies. Despite their diversity, community-based organisations (CBOs) are generally lumped together as a form of 'social capital' in the livelihoods literature, which also tends to celebrate them as the 'missing link' between the poor and economic prosperity.

Membership of community organisations

The information in this section was gathered from all the households in the study in both communities and comprises 29 life histories and 44 semi-structured interviews. Membership of community organisations that do not require a monetary contribution is high in both areas. People participate on the basis of reciprocity rather than monetary payments. This

explains why organisations that require regular monetary contributions, such as burial societies and *stokvels*, have low membership numbers. Although most people do not belong to formal burial societies, they participate in informal networks that provide a crucial source of support in times of need, especially during funerals.

Only 11 per cent of the respondents belonged to trade unions at the time of the study; this is not surprising because most of the interviewees were either unemployed or worked in the informal economy. The church remains the most common form of organisation in both communities. Even though many people said that they were not formal church members, they still reported going to church at least twice a month. Women's groups are also popular and are often linked to church organisations. A few people said they were members of a political organisation but that they did not participate in the day to day activities of the local structure or have membership cards. They were quick to point out, though, that they knew which party they would vote for in the next elections.

Forty-four per cent of the respondents were members of non-governmental organisations such as the Tac, concerned citizen groups and HIV and AIDS volunteer organisations. The work of these organisations directly addresses the problems faced by the people of the two communities. People affected by HIV and Aids join Tac and various HIV and AIDS volunteer groups while people affected by water and electricity cut-offs take part in the activities of the concerned citizen groups. People tend to belong to several organisations at once since the different organisations provide different kinds of service and address different issues. People also maximise their benefits in this way.

I belong to a number of community organisations. I am a member of the church choir and women's group. I also belong to a family burial society. I benefit a lot from my church; they often come to my house to pray for me and my family. Other people also benefit from my involvement in the woman's group in church. I visit the elderly and the sick and take care of them (*Bongani, Mpumalanga*).

Although people participate in community organisations in both Enhlalakahle and Mpumalanga, there are notable differences in the levels of associational life between the two townships. There are more community organisations in Mpumalanga than there are in Enhlalakahle and more

people participate in them. Unlike Enhlalakahle, Mpumalanga has a history of being a vibrant public and political community. It has always been home to local branches of national political organisations, resident associations, trade unions, student organisations and church organisations (Bonnin, 2000). While this legacy was undermined by political violence in the 80s and 90s, people in the township have still been able to draw on it in order to respond to current problems. Many branches of the old community organisations were re-established in the township almost immediately after the political violence ended. New ones were also formed. This has not been the case in Enhlalakahle, where the local branches of the old political organisations have not yet been fully re-established.

The current political and economic context in Mpumalanga makes the emergence of alternative community organisations easier than it does in Enhlalakahle. The fact that the township is an ANC-led ward in an ANC-led municipality provides organisational space and opportunities. Chances of effective mobilisation are more limited in Enhlalakahle because it is an ANC-led ward in an area that is an IFP stronghold. In addition to its 'politically friendly' environment, Mpumalanga also has a relatively large population. This is also an important factor in the growth of community organisations. The proximity of Mpumalanga to other townships facing similar problems of unemployment and lack of service delivery also promotes the creation of community organisations in the township.

The end of monetary contributions

As mentioned earlier, high unemployment and declining individual and household incomes have affected the sustainability of systems of economic exchange that seek to reduce the costs to their members, such as *stokvels* and burial societies, including the burial societies set up by the banks. Unemployed people simply cannot meet regular monetary obligations.

It was becoming too expensive to keep my burial society membership. I did not have the R75 monthly contribution. I thought to myself, with R75 I can buy food for my family (*Nathi, Mpumalanga*).

I know I needed the burial society but I could not afford it anymore. One needs to prepare for the eventuality of death, particularly nowadays when so many people are dying and when things are so expensive (*Matilda, Mpumalanga*).

The burial societies are being replaced by informal systems of reciprocity, based on the principle of help in-kind. People help the bereaved family with cooking and baking and lend them dishes and pots during funerals. Monetary contributions are also still highly appreciated from those who can afford them, however, as there are lots of costs associated with funerals. Instead of contributing equally to formal burial societies, people contribute according to their means.

Even though I no longer belong to a burial society, I know my family will have a decent burial. Not only will the family members who are working cover the costs of the funeral but my neighbours will also assist where they can. My neighbours and I have decided to form an Umasisizane (helping each other). This is the same as a burial society but it is very flexible. We only meet when there is a crisis like a funeral. We contribute whatever we have. Sometimes I do not have money but have time to cook and help with funeral arrangements. We help each other in these ways (*Zandile, Enhlalakahle*).

People know which households are able or willing to help them when there is a funeral. Some households have a reputation for helping other households. These households often get more support from the community when they need it than do those households that are generally reluctant to help. An unwillingness to render assistance can also become a source of tension between households.

The crisis of representation

The failure by trade unions and political organisations to grapple effectively with the challenges posed by South Africa's economic, social and political transition has led to a crisis of representation in the country. The poor, in particular, relied on these organisations to articulate their needs during the apartheid years, but no longer feel that they represent their interests.

Their inability to protect the most vulnerable workers in casual and temporary work has been a traditional trade union weakness. Progressive labour legislation also fails to cover the unemployed and workers in the informal economy. People distrust political organisations as a result of their experience of the violent political transition in KwaZulu-Natal, although they will turn to individual politicians if they need their help. The cost-recovery and cost-cutting policies of the ANC-led government have dashed people's hopes for employment and service delivery.

The new challenges facing political organisations

As we saw in the introductory chapter, both communities have had direct experience of political violence. This has left a legacy of disenchantment with political organisations and local politicians. People in Enhlalakahle are angrier with the IFP which controls the local government than with the ANC. They don't entirely trust the ANC either, though. IFP supporters are still angry with the ANC-led local government in Mpumalanga. Disillusionment with political parties is reflected in voter behaviour. Voter registration declined from 89 to 77 per cent between the elections of 1999 and 2004.³ Generally the respondents did not have a good opinion of politicians:

I am an ANC member. I carry my card in my wallet everywhere I go but that does not mean I trust them. These people are just politicians; they only think of themselves, their families and then we come last (*Buhle, Mpumalanga*).

It is precisely because of political organisations that we had a civil war in this province. When they were supposed to protect us, they killed us. I honestly do not know why these politicians cannot work together (*MaCebekhulu, Enhlalakahle*).

It was political violence; now it is unemployment and the electricity card system. The people whom we voted for do not fulfil their promises. We are still poor and they are to blame for it (*Mabusi, Mpumalanga*).

However, this bleak view does not reflect some of the more hopeful political developments in the two areas. While tensions are still rife at provincial level, a more co-operative relationship exists between the two major political parties, the ANC and the IFP, at township level. The political violence that marred the township in the 1980s and 1990s has disappeared and people no longer identify themselves and others primarily according to their political affiliation. The local branches of the two parties are trying to work together. As one representative of a political party commented:

The two parties are working together for the good of the community. We lost many of our members because of political violence and the community was falling apart. We realised that working together was the only way to have a peaceful township. Besides, at national level, our leaders are doing the same thing (*Buhle, Mpumalanga*).

Local community leaders from different political parties have become agents of local government. They also act as sources of information, especially with regard to welfare. People who need to access welfare grants will often go to a political leader whom they trust for information, at either the local council office or their home. New democratic structures have been set up with the intention and expectation of fostering co-operation between the community and local councillors and other representatives of political parties. Not everyone, though, is convinced that the political peace in the two townships is genuine and deep-rooted. This is particularly the case with IFP supporters in ANC-dominated areas. An IFP leader commented:

The ANC and the IFP both exist in the township. There are a lot of power struggles between the organisations and within the ANC. Some of the people do not feel free to approach a councillor because they are not on good terms with them. I have tried to bring the people together by asking all the councillors to address the local communities. The people from the townships will do and say anything to their so-called political leaders because they are hungry.

An IFP supporter in Enhlalakahle said:

To be honest, my neighbour does not know that I vote for the IFP. I was only really accepted in this community because they think I am an ANC supporter. This is an ANC stronghold and you either lie about your political affiliation and have peace and keep your house or else.

Local government efforts to rebuild houses that were destroyed during political violence sparked tensions between the IFP and ANC in Mpumalanga in 2001. Some people were seen to benefit from the process while others lost out. People's opinions about the fairness of the process differed, though. A woman whose house had been burned down and whose IFP-supporting husband had been killed in the violence was happy with her situation:

My family has been homeless for the last ten years. My children lost their father and home. I voted in 1994 because the ANC promised to rebuild my house. This did not happen. I voted again in 1999 and I waited patiently. My house is now being rebuilt and I am happy, because I will not be a burden to anyone anymore (*MaZungu, Mpumalanga*).

Some IFP members, however, complained that the houses of ANC members had been rebuilt first and that only a few houses belonging to IFP members had been rebuilt at all. Job contracts have also been an issue, with several local councillors accused of nepotism and corruption. Things came to a head in the Enhlalakahle area in 2000 when two ANC councillors were charged with attempting to murder the mayor of Greytown, Councillor Ngubane, in 1999 (*Greytown Gazette*, May 2000).

Tensions within political parties have also made the political organisations less credible in the eyes of the communities that they are meant to serve. This is particularly the case in Enhlalakahle. In 1994, Mr Solomon Mzolo, a chairperson of the ANC branch was shot dead, allegedly by three ANC members, because of internal power struggles in the ANC.

One of the ANC councillors, not all of them, is too politically minded. He engages in politics even when it is inappropriate. The man was not brought up well because he could not finish his education. There was a long case here in which he was accused of killing his colleague, a former mayor of this town, who was also from the township. But I think one has to live with that. You understand, sometimes you become very rational, even if he says nasty things to you, you have to be calm when that person is around (*official of the Umvoti Local Municipality, Enhlalakahle*).

Colossal challenges face local governments. Their relationships with local people are seldom smooth. This stems from their contradictory roles as both agents of cost recovery and agents of service delivery. In addition, many municipalities are unwieldy. They straddle urban and rural areas, townships and suburbs. They are expected to deal simultaneously with the demands of urban expansion and rural development without the necessary administrative and financial resources. Many Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) remain no more than 'shopping lists' of potential projects.

The end of social movement unionism and the crisis of social institutionalism

Trade unions have traditionally recruited their members from the ranks of permanent workers, who are able to pay their subscription fees. It is easy to organise this category of worker since they are registered and stay in one place. The commitment of trade unions to workers has therefore been mostly limited to the workplace. However, this changed for a period in the

1980s and early 1990s. From 1983 onwards, workplace issues were extended to include community issues. Many trade union officials played a significant role in the political mobilisation of communities, especially since the ANC and other political organisations were banned. This kind of 'social movement unionism' became important as a way of linking workplace struggles about higher wages and discrimination to the broader struggle for democracy in the country (Von Holdt, 2002).

The trade unions have had to operate in a totally different environment in post-apartheid South Africa. The new political context largely rules out militancy. Instead, the unions have been drawn into processes of dialogue, negotiation and compromise (Buhlungu, 2001). This has removed the basis of much of the organisational vibrancy and the sense of political direction that trade unions possessed during the apartheid era. New democratic institutions, such as the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac), offer trade unions the opportunity to participate in decision-making. Much of the collective character of the trade union movement has also been eroded by the individualism that is associated with the movement of members into business and government. In addition, as we have seen, the economic context of 'full' employment has been undermined by retrenchments as South Africa adopts a macro-economic policy that emphasises international competition, industrial restructuring and labour market flexibility. As Franco Barchiesi (1999) predicted, a *crisis of social institutionalisation* has emerged as a result of retrenchments, growth of atypical work and unemployment, all of which have undermined the strength of the trade unions. Their membership has dwindled accordingly, as has their power to engage with government and influence its policies.

Retrenched workers in the two areas unanimously resent the trade unions, describing how they have 'sold us to employers' and 'have lost their power and commitment to their members.' As one retrenched woman, a trade union member for ten years, angrily remarked:

I was only useful to the trade union when I was employed and could pay my subscriptions. However, when the factory closed and I was unemployed, the union did not want anything to do with me. Even though I paid my subscription fee every month for ten years; the trade union did not help me get my retrenchment package. I still do not have the retrenchment package five years later (Thulisile Zondi, Mpumalanga).

Retrenched workers often have no option but to turn to independent and often corrupt lawyers in order to get their retrenchment packages. A typical example concerns the case of the workers at Hebox Textiles, a clothing and textile factory in Hammarsdale, which closed its doors in 1990 and retrenched all its workers after the owners claimed bankruptcy. The retrenched workers claim that Hebox Textiles opened another factory in the area using a different name. The retrenchment packages that the trade unions and management promised the workers failed to materialise.

Numerous individual attempts to recover the money were unsuccessful. In return for R200 from each of them, an independent lawyer promised to take the matter to court on behalf of 200 retrenched workers. He then disappeared with the money. The same happened with a second and third lawyer. In 2002, the group employed the services of a fourth lawyer who brought the case to the Council for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration (CCMA). The story of Hebox Textile underlines the weakness of the trade union as a social and economic network outside of the workplace. Its rules of entry are limited to those with permanent employment and its benefits do not extend beyond the workplace.

The exclusion of retrenched workers and other people from the protection offered by the trade unions increases their vulnerability, especially if they do not have access to other reliable social and economic networks or alliances. This is certainly the case with the retrenched workers who came from elsewhere to work in Hammarsdale. They have no family networks in the area to draw on for free housing and alternative work. As one of the women from the Eastern Cape said about the predicament of migrants in Mpumalanga:

We came here to work and, now that we are no longer employed, we have to go home. Some of us decided to come with our children and not leave them with our parents. I do not have a house of my own; my family is very far away and getting a job nowadays is difficult since it depends on whom you know. I don't know a lot of people here. I only met them at work and that was it. I regret coming to Mpumalanga (Fezeka, Mpumalanga).

Outsiders are often shunned because they do not come from the area, do not always speak isiZulu and are perceived as taking jobs and houses away from the local people. This is the case even though people who come from outside the province are not in fact eligible for low-cost government housing.

They also face many other restrictions and complications when it comes to securing a livelihood in the area. They are not always welcome in local factories, for example.

We had a quota system in place. 40 per cent of the workers had to come from town while 60 per cent could come from surrounding areas. But now people are of the opinion that, no, that was not good. These factories are here in town and should only be for people from the township. There was a hell of a problem when the ward councillor led a march against the factories. It is difficult to get new factories to come here now. Even if they do, they are scared, although this municipality is an IFP municipality (*official of the Umvoti local municipality, Enhlalakahle*).

Faith-based organisations: responding to new crises

It is evident that the trade unions have failed to adequately address the contemporary needs of the two communities. Retrenched workers feel abandoned by the unions and fall prey to devious lawyers. The lack of trust in the unions is being passed on to a new generation of workers. While people feel let down by the trade unions, they still see religious organisations as a source of support. Community members draw a great deal of emotional and spiritual strength from churches. The churches have adapted their work in order to meet the new challenges facing their members, especially that of HIV and AIDS. The Methodist, Anglican and Catholic churches, in particular, have adopted an approach to HIV and AIDS that is encapsulated in the slogan: 'healing, community building and teaching.' While it could be argued that the response of the churches to HIV and AIDS could be more effective, at least the churches offer people hope.

The Manyano Women's Christian Movement

The women's organisations in the churches provide a very effective source of support for their members. Organised women's groups flourished among both black and white South Africans in the early decades of the twentieth century, but they emerged earlier and grew more rapidly among black women (Gaitskell 1997:253). By 1940, there were 45 000 black members of the Methodist Church movement for women in South Africa, ten times as large as the movement supported by their white co-religionists.

Strong women's church organisations in South Africa include the

Manyano (a Xhosa word meaning working together) women's group of the Methodist Church and the Anglican's Mother's Union. *Manyano* has been described as an indigenous form of African women's Christianity. It is a 'hidden' site of knowledge and holds the possibility of social transformation (Haddad, 2001; see also Wilson & Ramphele, 1989). Its members visit people's homes in order to care and pray for the sick and offer comfort and support to bereaved families.

I joined this group when I was young. In fact, my mother-in-law recruited me into this church. I was an Anglican member and when I got married, I became a Methodist member. I later joined *Umanyano*. It was a great experience to do womanly and motherly things for the church and my community (*MaMkhize, Mpumalanga*).

As a *Manyano* woman, I always wear my red and white uniform with devotion. I serve my God and community with pride. I am extremely proud of being a *Manyano* woman (*Nonhlanhla, Mpumalanga*).

I am an Anglican member and belong to a church women's group. I joined it when I was 23 and today I am 62, 39 solid years of hard work and dedication. I have contributed so much to my church; I only wish that young women, like yourself, would heed God's call to serve your community (*MaNtombi, Mpumalanga*).

While women were largely excluded from the ministry itself, their organisations became a platform for educated women in the church, especially minister's wives. Revivalist Christianity's emphasis on weeping, confession and repentance became an important part of the religious expression of African women. Christianity also gives motherhood an elevated place. Mrs Zulu explains why she joined *Manyano* more than twenty years ago:

When I joined the women's group, I felt blessed. God gave me the answer to my problems. Even though I never had children of my own, I was given the status of being a mother. I became a mother in my church and community. I took care of the sick and the elderly. I prayed for them. I showed them the light. I was in a group with other mothers. It was a great feeling. It is good to know that you can be a mother and do all those things that mothers do (*Nonhlanhla, Mpumalanga*).

Manyano also played a significant political role during the apartheid era in South Africa. The movement was often described as 'the shield to ward off the white man's arrows' (Gaitskell, 1997:267). This was not surprising if one considers both the central role played by women in the struggle against apartheid and the importance of the church in their lives.

The ministers' fraternity

Ministers from different Christian denominations have formed ministers' fraternities in both Mpumalanga and Enhlalakahle in order to organise community prayer meetings and explore ways of working together.

A few years ago, we formed the Ministers Fraternity, bringing together ministers from all the churches. We wanted to work together for the good of this community. As ministers, we had common problems and a common vision. We lived through the era of political violence where priests were also seen as targets, depending on which political organisation they were thought to come from. Now there are new problems such as unemployment, AIDS, alcohol and drug abuse, and domestic violence (Reverend Zondi, Enhlalakahle).

The Ministers Fraternity in Enhlalakahle has been working together with consultants from the University of Cape Town on two programmes – the Democracy for Education Desk and the Economic Development Desk. The fraternity is also linked with other ministers' organisations at district, provincial and national level, such as the Christian Council of Churches of South Africa.

It is through the Ministers Fraternity that numerous community workshops have been organised in which people are educated about their relationship with the local council. Economic development workshops have also been organised to encourage people to develop themselves (ANC leader, Enhlalakahle).

Priests face enormous challenges. In many cases, they perform the role of social workers or social welfare officials.

There are so many occasions when people come to us and say, 'Mfundisi [priest], can you please give us bread?' We help in every way we can. We

help grandparents fill their grant application forms. We accompany them to the welfare offices. We visit them at their homes and act as mediators when there are family conflicts. We make sure that grandparents receive their money and money on behalf of the AIDS orphans in their care (Reverend Zondi, Enhlalakahle).

The interviews with priests were often cut short because of urgent application forms that needed to be sent to welfare offices immediately or were interrupted by children who had been sent to call the minister to a house in which there was an emergency. I was amazed by how the ministers were always willing to drop everything and attend to people's needs (Field Notes Diary, October 2004).

The churches are not immune from criticism, however. People complain that they do not take the economic status of their members into account when it comes to asking for church contributions. An old woman who had not been contributing to the church for two years expressed fears about the consequences of non-payment:

I have not been paying my dues precisely because I do not have money. I am a pensioner and have my children and grandchildren to feed. I am a sickly old woman and my day is near. When I finally close my eyes, I will not be 'buried in church' [have a funeral service in the church] like all Christians should, but my funeral service will be held here at home. Everyone wants a proper Christian burial (Sizakele, Mpumalanga).

Several new church organisations have emerged in the townships in the last ten years. The Universal Church is one example. It has been growing in membership throughout the country. It is defined as a Pentecostal African Initiated Church (AIC) or Bazalwane-type church (Anderson, 1992; De Gruchy & Germond, 2004). It is especially popular among the youth. Sermons in the church tend to 'relate the Bible to reality as experienced by the people' (Interview 33, Mpumalanga). The proliferation of new faith-based organisations has been more marked in Enhlalakahle than it has in Mpumalanga. There are more than twenty faith-based organisations in this relatively small township.

There are almost 27 churches in the community. Some do not even have proper structures. They operate in people's yards, in halls and in schools.

Some are legitimate churches that have the interest of the community at heart, but some just want to make money out of poor people (*Bafana, Enhlalakahle*).

There are a lot of splinter churches here in Enhlalakahle. They all claim to be working for the good of the people. I know that these churches are just family organisations. They are started by individuals who are disgruntled with their ministers. They think they are popular and that the congregations will follow them when they leave. The truth is, congregations never leave with them, and only family members do. Hence, these splinter churches become family-based. Anyone can open a church here; it is their democratic right. But I think there should be a body that monitors and regulates the activities of churches. Some are just money-making schemes operating as churches in the community (*Zweli, Enhlalakahle*).

Inevitably, the proliferation of churches in Enhlalakahle has led to competition between churches and ministers to attract members.

There are a few churches that work together, while others stand aloof on the side. This is because they are taking the difference between Pentecostal and 'Save' churches way too far. When we called a meeting of all the ministers in the township, I was shocked that only representatives of 12 of the 27 church organisations turned up. Ministers tend to use the pulpit to recruit members by criticising other churches. They have no respect for the doctrines of congregations. We are all leaders as brothers in Christ, but if we swear at each other, what will the congregation say or do? (*Reverend Zondi, Enhlalakahle*).

Islam is also making inroads in Mpumalanga. It offers many benefits for the poor, including free funeral costs and schooling. The people of Enhlalakahle, however, often shun people who convert to Islam; and Muslim households remain isolated from the rest of the community.

New community-based organisations and the new crises

While some social theorists predicted the emergence of new social movements in South Africa, and even exaggerated their potential to achieve change, their emergence in post-apartheid South Africa in opposition to a legitimate government has come as something of a surprise to most people

(Desai, 2002). The new movements have not opposed the government as such, though, but rather what they see as illegitimate government policies. They consider these to be responsible for unemployment, lack of service delivery and ineffective HIV and AIDS treatment. Communities around the country have challenged local and national governments and their 'anti-poor' policies. Mpumalanga is no exception. Efforts by new local government structures, such as the Durban Metro, to force people to pay for services in the township have elicited intense resistance.

A survey of the new social movements in South Africa revealed that they:

- emerged because of the high and growing level of poverty and inequality in the country, inherited from apartheid but intensified since democracy;
- are 'not spontaneous grassroots uprisings' but rather depend on a variety of factors such as networks and resources;
- are shaped by the post-apartheid context which embraces political and human rights;
- focus on distributional issues, social and economic injustice concerns
- either work with or against the state – hence the contradictory relationship between them and the state; and
- have the potential to consolidate South Africa's democracy (Ballard et al., 2004:14-18).

It is not adequate to analyse South Africa's social movements only in terms of who is or is not involved in them. It is necessary to also examine the tactics employed; the kinds of mobilisation involved, the issues; ideas and policies contested; and identify where the different organisations are politically and geographically located (MacAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001; see also Foweraker, 1995 and 2001).

The emergence of Concerned Citizens Groups

The emergence of various community groups, demanding improved service delivery and political accountability, is symptomatic of the appearance of new ideas of citizenship in South Africa. These groups tend to level their 'rights-based demands' at local governments. The response of local governments has often been repressive. They refuse to negotiate with protesters and frequently send the police to break up marches.

Although the new community organisations have made significant contributions to the consolidation of democracy at local level and have

encouraged good governance, their motives have been questioned by many. They have been accused of electioneering and petty party politicking.⁴ The political affiliation of concerned citizen groups, including those of Mpumalanga and Enhlalakahle, has also been the subject of much debate.

Mpumalanga Concerned Citizens Group

The Concerned Citizens Forum (CCF) was launched in 2001 in Chatsworth (an Indian Township) in Durban. It was not a membership-based organisation and had no formal structure. Some academics and student organisations participated in its activities. The CCF rapidly expanded to African townships such as Mpumalanga, Umlazi and KwaMashu, co-opting the already established citizens' groups or residents associations in the process. Its focus on broad human rights issues, such as electricity and water cut-offs and evictions, attracted people. It organised the Durban Social Forum (DSF) march against the government in 2001 during the World Conference against Racism. It also joined the protests outside the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Since December 2002, however, the organisation has been largely inactive. This is attributable to the 'change in tactics by the local government who [like the CCF] have retreated ... from direct confrontation and mass generalised evictions and disconnections in areas where the CCF emerged' (Dwyer, 2004:12).

The Mpumalanga Concerned Citizens Group (MCCG), formed in 2000, was one of the eighteen affiliates of the Concerned Citizens Forum. Its main concern was the installation of water meters in the township. It insisted that the people of Mpumalanga were too poor to pay regular water rates, proposing instead that each household pay R10 a month, as they did in the past. It organised a 'Ten Rand Campaign' in 2001, which soon spread to other townships. The Mpumalanga local government rejected the R10 a month demand. Protest marches followed. The municipality disconnected water pipes and meters (*The Mercury*, 11 April, 2001). The police were called in and a number of people were injured and arrested. A community leader recalled the campaign:

It was not long ago, just a few months ago. We took matters into our own hands. The community was tired of being taken for granted. We wanted what was rightfully ours and what we were promised during elections: free water for everyone. How can the ANC blame us for demanding our basic rights? (*MaZungu, Mpumalanga*)

Councillor Lesoma first informed a meeting of the eThekweni Municipality in April 2001 of possible unrest in Mpumalanga. The mayor had received warnings that services and civic activities would be disrupted if the installation of water pipes continued in the area. He reported that he had submitted a statement to the commissioner of police and would be meeting with him soon to discuss the state of affairs in the township. A Mr Malaza mentioned that work on the water system had been interrupted by the protest march. It was resolved that the installation of water pipes and the connection of households to the water supply be continued in the area and that the law take its course with regard to those trying to disrupt the installation of the pipes. The mayor was granted authority to interact with the most senior officer of the SAPS and the SANDF, with a view to addressing the situation in Mpumalanga and deploying additional forces in the area (eThekweni Council Meeting: Minutes, April 2001). In March 2002, it was agreed during a council meeting that a task team comprising the mayor, the chairperson of the Infrastructure, Transport and Culture and Recreation Committee, the Masakhane Working Group, officials from the Consolidated Billing Department and officials from the water department undertake a fact-finding mission to Mpumalanga.

The MCCG was led by prominent political party leaders in the IFP such as Mr Mlaba.⁵ They argued that they were moving away from 'basic politics' to concentrate on the more 'serious issues' that affected the community. Both IFP and ANC followers supported the MCCG initiative, which came at a time when people were accusing the local ANC-led municipality of a lack of accountability. In the words of an elderly woman:

I remain an ANC member, but I will not keep quiet when I think it is not being accountable to its members, those who voted for it. I support initiatives that aim at making my situation better, no matter which political leader is involved. It is the issues that I support, not the political party, the IFP (*MaXulu, Mpumalanga*).

The MCCG was able to raise awareness in the community and mobilise people to challenge government programmes that they thought were not beneficial to them. It was also able to link their struggles to community struggles across the country, in Cape Town and Soweto, for example. However, the MCCG became largely inactive once the water crisis had been resolved. It proved to be a short term and unsustainable initiative, especially after most of its key leaders left to work for the government.

The Concerned Citizens of Enhlalakahle

Even as the ANC was celebrating its victory in the national elections of 1994, power struggles were simmering in many of its local branches, Enhlalakahle included. The post-1994 election period saw a serious rift in the ANC branch in the township. In effect, some individuals unofficially left the organisation and established an opposing organisation, the Concerned Citizens Group of Enhlalakahle. This organisation emerged within the structures of the ANC and was led by disaffected members who accused their own party of dragging its feet in demanding accountability from the local IFP-led council and the delivery of services to the township.

One of the founders of the Concerned Citizens Group, who did not want to be named because of his position in the ANC, explained the motives behind the initiative:

We wanted to effectively represent the community. The ANC was taking its time and did not really articulate the desperate needs of the people. The community was yearning for people who were not afraid of the ANC and IFP. We took the community's grievances to the IFP. People wanted jobs and better and cheap service delivery (*Solomon, Enhlalakahle*).

The ANC branch chairperson saw things differently:

These were a group of ANC members who broke away and opposed the ANC because of leadership and power struggles within the organisation. They claimed to be representing the community. They took advantage of desperate people who thought that no development was taking place in the township. They poisoned these desperate people and promised them jobs. Only three-month contracts were negotiated with the municipality and only a few people benefited (*ANC leader, Enhlalakahle*).

The Mayor responded to criticism of the three-month contracts:

We give casual jobs in the municipality on a three-month contract basis. People say it's a problem. I talk to our people here and to the companies. Whatever they do needs special attention so that they are catered for (*Mayor of Umvoti Local Municipality, Enhlalakahle*).

The Concerned Citizens of Enhlalakahle organised well-attended public meetings. Service delivery and unemployment were high on the agenda at all the meetings. Electricity payments were a particular source of contention, with people adopting different positions regarding the introduction of the card system of payment.

The meter readings are faulty. No one came to do these meter readings but people were getting bills every month. In most cases, the amount would be exactly the same for three months. It is impossible to pay R507.60 each month, without the amount increasing or decreasing in some months. We questioned this, and nothing has been done. Some people want the card system, but not me (*Bafana, Enhlalakahle*).

Some people accused the organisation of hijacking ANC issues. The truth was that many people were confused about the difference between the organisation and the ANC. The leaders of the organisation were also active ANC leaders. One of the demands 'hijacked' by the group was the installation of the electricity pre-paid meters (card system) because the issue 'was not managed well' by the ANC in the area. The position regarding the introduction of the pre-paid meters system was far from clear-cut, though. The IFP-led council was reluctant to introduce the card system but was pressured to do so by the ANC and community organisations in the area. Prepaid electricity and water meters had been installed in ANC-led councils in other townships, including Soweto, Orange farm, Kwa-Mashu, Umlazi and Khayelitsha, but were being opposed by community organisations because the poor could not afford this method of payment.

Like the MCCG, the Concerned Citizens of Enhlalakahle made rapid progress initially but then fizzled out. Leadership problems shortened the lifespan of both organisations. They lacked political vision, will and resources. They were also too dependent on individuals. The MCCG disintegrated when Mr. Mlaba, the driving force behind the organisation, was co-opted into government. Members of the Concerned Citizens of Enhlalakahle were labelled as disgruntled and power-hungry ANC officials and were disciplined by the ANC:

Official structures were used to discipline these elements and thorns within the organisations (*Bafana, Enhlalakahle*).

Home-based care: volunteerism in the community

Home-based care occurs at a patient's residence rather than in a medical facility such as a hospital. The South African government has embarked on a home-based care programme as part of a strategy to provide more 'effective service delivery.' It employs nurses from the Department of Health as well as community development workers who are linked to the Department of Local Government as community health workers. They earned R880 a month at the time this study was conducted. The government programme has not been a great success, however, and the burden of care has shifted to non-profit community organisations that rely on the services of volunteer community caregivers from local communities. The number of employees and volunteers working in NGOs, and the non-private sector as a whole, in South Africa is very high. 645 316 people worked for the non-profit sector in 1999. Of these, 49 per cent were volunteers and 47 per cent were full-time employees (Swilling & Russell, 2003).

Given the limited resources of many NGOs and the government's inadequate response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic, especially with regard to the provision of medication, their role has mainly taken the form of providing psychosocial care and support to HIV and AIDS patients and their families.⁶ The nature of this sort of community caregiving means that it is generally performed by women (Budlender, 1998:19). It has been pointed out that the reliance on women as caregivers 'reinforces the existing gender division of labor and the disadvantaged position of women in livelihood generation and formal employment' (Tester, cited in Lucas and Harber, 1997:31). There is also an underlying assumption that community-based care is cheap as costs are not measured and people are not properly compensated for their work (Budlender, 1998:19). This is consistent with the low status that is accorded this sort of work. Nevertheless, the impact of HIV and AIDS has made the care of infected and affected people in households an undertaking of great importance, and there is a pressing need for organisations and people who are willing to take on the task, especially given the lack of capacity of the state health services.

While older women form the backbone of the caregiving organisations, volunteers are recruited across gender and age lines. Many unemployed people join these organisations with the hope of being trained and later reimbursed for their efforts and hard work (Interview, Matron Gcisa of Enhlalakahle Hospital). Caregivers, such as Mrs Gwala (see below), consider volunteerism a serious limitation because volunteers cannot always afford to devote enough time and resources to the needs of their patients.

The home-based care programme is based on the single-service home-based care model, one of three forms of home-based care models. It recruits volunteers, trains them and links them to patients and families in neighbouring communities. It is organised by a service component, hospice (Uys, 2003). The other two care models are the integrated home-based care model, which links all service providers with patients and families (Louden, 1999) and the informal home-based care model, which focuses on families and the support that is available from their own social networks but which offers no training. This latter phenomenon is the oldest form of care-giving and is offered mainly by older women.

Research shows that community caregivers like Mrs Gwala visit patients in various states of health (Uys, 2002). The majority of the patients are very ill and weak, many of them are bedridden and unable to take care of themselves. Most of Mrs Gwala's bedridden patients, for example, needed to be bathed and given medication and food. Mrs Gwala and her fellow caregivers were willing to do this as part of their duties. Unfortunately, though, they had to rely on their own resources, as most patients did not have income, food or medication. Patients have come to take it for granted that community caregivers will provide them with food and medication, even though they are informed that the caregivers are volunteers and do not have resources. This expectation often creates conflict between volunteers and patients.

An interview with Mrs Gwala

I used to work as a staff nurse at a hospital. Then I had to undergo an operation because I was very sick. I was unemployed for about nine years. One day when I was sitting at home I received a call from Matron Gcisa, from Enhlalakahle hospital where I used to work. She told me that a home-based care centre was going to be opened and said that if I wanted to join them I should. So I attended a course that they conducted, and I really loved it. With my experience, I was asked to share my knowledge with other people. As a person who has learned more about health, I teach people about basic health. I teach them how they should take care of sick people and that they must have compassion and be able to keep other people's secrets.

So far, there is some progress because people understand when I sit down with them and talk and explain to them what home-based care means, how you take care of yourself and how you conduct yourself. When

you ask them about what they have learned and if it has changed their lives in any way, they tell me that when they go home all the things they have been taught make sense and they can see the difference. It has had a big and good impact on a lot of people and they have changed the way they took care of themselves and others. We do home visits for those who are sick.

The main challenge is the infants whose parents die of HIV and AIDS-related diseases, live with their grandparents and are not well looked after. Some of the parents receive the child support grant payment and still leave the children with their grandparents. The other challenge that we also come across is those people who are ill and get locked up in their homes when others go to work. If we find a person staying alone at home, we often advise other family members or relatives to find someone who can look after the sick person. If the sick person is seriously neglected, we consult social workers. The most difficult part of my job is when we do house visits. We visit each house in a certain area. The other day we visited this house and we found someone there who had suffered a severe stroke and was staying alone and was trying to help himself. I took him to a clinic. Today I will go and check if he is still at the clinic or if he has been transferred to hospital. If this place had proper facilities we would have taken this person in, to come and stay here so that he could have someone to look after him.

It is a lot of work but what excites me is that there are a lot of people in the townships who attend home-based care training, so whenever I need someone I'll just call them. We do have some government community health workers; two of them work in our area. We work with them. They also visit sick people at their homes and offer them advice about how to take care of themselves. If they have a lot of cases, they refer some of those cases to us. I visit five houses a day, or more if I start early. Sometimes I do follow-ups and then I don't waste time, unlike if it is my first visit.

My workload is increasing because previously I didn't see any reason to do house visits, but now all that has changed. There are more people who need my help. There are some areas that I wish to visit but I cannot because of time. There is more need for our services in the communities. There are many people who are sick and grandparents who are looking after grandchildren. The fortunate grandparents are those who have children who are educated and are working. At least they have someone who will look after them.

In some areas, I find that everyone is happy because the neighbours

understand each other. In other areas, unfortunately, it is not like that, and everyone has to fend for him or herself. Those that are not well looked after receive our help and they get very excited about that.

Most of the community members know me by now and do not think that I am nosy. They welcome and accept me into their homes. However, being a volunteer sometimes confuses people, I think. When they tell you their problems, they expect you to bring them something when you come around next time. In some families, you find that the parents are not working and they have eight children. I do not know how to help them because you will find that none of the children qualifies for a grant. I do not have any food; the only thing that I have is the home-based care kit. When a person dwells on the issue of food, I do not know what to tell them. We discussed these issues with the social workers and they told us that the department that deals with issues of food is not allowed to give anyone food parcels. She told us that the department only assists those grandparents who have already applied for a grant and whose applications are still being processed. But it is difficult to know how to assist a person who has not applied for a grant.

Not getting paid affects us in a big way. We have a lot of dedicated people here but some of them cannot afford to do lots of house visits so they neglect or delay their duties. Besides the fact that we do not have money, I have not come across major challenges, except maybe when there is a person who is very ill and there is nothing you can do. It is beyond your powers. You have to take that person to a clinic or some other government office. Those that we have helped really appreciate our work although some people assume that we are being paid because they do not understand how we can afford to leave our homes and come here to work for free (*Mrs Gwala, 19 November 2003, Enhlalakahle*).

Mrs Gwala's story reveals a lot about the mounting challenges that are faced by volunteer home-based workers in communities that are ravaged by poverty, unemployment and AIDS. The volunteers' work is central to the survival of households and communities, yet they are not compensated and have few or no resources with which to carry out their duties. Few of the volunteers have Mrs Gwala's background as a health worker. Many are young men and women who are either new entrants to the labour market or have been employed before, usually as casual workers in the local retail outlets of Greytown.

I used to work for OK Stores on a contract basis. When my contract ended, I did not have a job, so, since I had a passion and love for working with the community, I decided to join this organisation. I came to this hospital, spoke to the matron, and told her my plans and wishes. She gave me an opportunity to work here. I then did a course in home-based care, which means I take care of people who are sick and at home (Interview, Jabulani, *Enhlalakahle*).

Community volunteerism has become a force for achieving social solidarity. It reinforces the principle of reciprocity. It also potentially offers an alternative livelihood activity. Women like Matron Gcisa and Mrs Gwala play a leading role in the formation and success of the programme. '[C]are in the community becomes care by the community, a self-help activity that needs to be sustained without, or in the South African case, for example, with only limited state support' (Marcus 2001:6). While people like Mrs Gwala are still few and far between, the idea of volunteerism, which has always been a feature of church membership, is gaining momentum in different organisations in most communities.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has explored the various kinds of community initiatives that have been taken in response to the crisis of poverty, unemployment and HIV and AIDS. Some old, formal organisations such as the churches have stood the test of time and secured their place in post-apartheid society. The trade unions have not been able to re-invent themselves as successfully. They have failed to make significant strides in moving beyond the borders of the workplace into communities. This is surprising because the trade unions played a decisive role in linking workplace struggles and community struggles during the apartheid years.

The failure of the old organisations to adapt to new conditions and the ephemeral nature of most of the new social movements has led to the emergence of informal social networks, largely based on reciprocity, volunteerism and non-monetary contributions. Membership of organisations that require monetary contributions, such as *stokvels* and burial societies, has declined at the same time as non-monetary, informal networks have grown in popularity.

Post-apartheid South Africa has seen the emergence of social movements in most communities. The Treatment Action Campaign and Concerned

Citizens Groups have been the most prominent. The government's response to these social movements has often been surprisingly hostile. It has labelled them as 'ultra-left' and 'anti-ANC' and accused their leaders of opposing the legitimate government. It has employed a number of apartheid-era laws to combat them and has also created some new ones of its own: 'In addition to the apartheid-era laws such as the Regulation of Gatherings Act, a smorgasbord of Bills that gives the security and intelligence agencies additional powers is in the offing. These include the Interception and Monitoring Bill, the Intelligence Services Bill, the Electronic Communications Security (Pty) Ltd Bill, the National Strategic Intelligence Amendment Bill and the Anti-Terrorism Bill' (Vally 2003:20).

Civil society, including Tac and the ANC's alliance partners, have found it necessary to publicly declare that they are not anti-ANC and have no intention of challenging the ANC during elections.

Tac is not in opposition to the government or the ANC. You see, we have a new democracy and we were never told how to implement our rights. Tac should not be seen as anti-ANC or anti-government, but it should be seen in terms of how it is assisting in terms of service delivery. Our own policies and constitutions allow us to do that. And also when you talk about HIV and AIDS, everybody has seen what this disease can do. We have good policies and constitutions, but how do we implement and monitor the implementation of these policies.

As Tac, we compliment our government on the things that they are doing. But civil society requires that we play an active role in terms of monitoring and assisting the government. The role of civil society in our democracy is no longer clear; we just pretend as if everything is normal. Tac assisted the government in the case against the pharmaceutical companies. Tac assisted the government so that Pfizer could donate Pifonozone. In fact that proposal was made by Tac and it was passed to the government. Tac assisted the government to write a global fund proposal, but that is not an issue because Tac will always assist the government in any way that it can. We must assist and monitor. We will raise our concerns when we see that things are not going according to plan (Tac district co-ordinator, 22 June 2004).

It is sometimes argued that community-based organisations, including political parties and trade unions, have the potential to lift people out of

their misery (Scoones, 1998; Carney, 1998; Moser, 1998; Foley and Edwards, 1999). These organisations are seen as the poor's 'social capital' and are held up as examples of the resourcefulness of 'the poor'. I will argue in chapter four that such concepts do not tell us much about how the poor actually survive. This chapter has shown that not all CBOs are assets or capital for the poor, as proposed in the livelihood approach's capital and assets framework. On the contrary, the historical context and current position of some organisations, political organisations, in particular, actually make them sources of 'anti-social capital'. Rules of entry and membership rights exclude many people from benefiting and using these organisations as assets. Trade unions, for instance, have become almost irrelevant since they have concentrated only on their traditional base of permanent workers and have failed to cater for the majority of people, most of whom are either unemployed or working in the informal economy.

The frequent presence of conflict and power dynamics in faith-based organisations and political organisations undermines their potential to become sources of assets and capital for the poor. In addition, the government's response, repressive laws and the stigmatisation of HIV and AIDS have thwarted the growth of many community organisations. Their success depends on a number of factors: their members, the community and the role of the local and national government. Community support for these initiatives and willingness to participate contributes to their effectiveness. As we have seen in this chapter, the various women's church groups, such as *Manyano*, and volunteer organisations, such as the Treatment Action Campaign, have been the most successful.

NOTES

- 1 Civil society refers broadly to all public or community life that is expressed by means of various formal and informal community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It is linked to public action and notions of citizenship and social citizenship rights such as health, housing and education. Civil society is associated with social movements, trade unions, political organisations, faith-based organisations (FBOs) and many informal groupings such as burial societies and *stokvels*. Civil society also coincides with the non-profit sector, which consists of non-profit organisations (NPOs) (Swilling & Russell, 2002). It must be remembered, though, that civil society is not homogeneous; its different components and players do not always share the same objectives and roles. Any comprehensive understanding of civil society also needs to take into account the complexity of its relationship to the state.
- 2 Organised business is represented in Nedlac by the newly formed Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), which brings together the Black Business Council (BBC) and Business South Africa (BSA). Organised labour is represented by the three main labour federations in South Africa: Cosatu, Fedusa and Nactu. Organised community groupings are represented by the South African Youth Council, the National Women's Coalition, Sanco, Disabled People South Africa, the Financial Sector Coalition and the National Co-operatives Association of South Africa.
- 3 This reflects a national trend. South Africa's voter turnout declined from 85 per cent in 1994, to 64 per cent in 1999, and 58 per cent in 2004 (Talbot, 2004).
- 4 In the 2001 municipal elections, just 48 per cent of South Africa's 18, 4 million registered voters cast ballots. Voter turnout in one predominantly working-class Indian suburb of Durban was less than 25 per cent. Candidates supported by the CCG, an organisation that had fought the Durban council's lack of service delivery and privatisation policies, won one seat on the council, and performed well in other wards. However, a similar organisation in Soweto, the Anti-Privatisation Forum, failed to win a council seat (Dixon, 2001).
- 5 The late Mr Mlaba of Mpumalanga was very instrumental during peace negotiations in the township and the province. He later became a councillor in the area.
- 6 For many years, the government's response to the epidemic was characterised by denial, inaction and the neglect of those who were infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. This has changed in recent years. There has been a dramatic increase in the roll-out of medication (antiviral drugs), for example. While numerous problems persist in relation to access to medication, public education and curbing the rate of new infections, both the government and civil society are committed to addressing these problems.