



## Community Based Alternatives to drinking?

Young people in these communities are frequent tavern goers. Many residents believe that this is because there is little else for them to do. Many children sit at home after school and watch television. Only a few get involved in activities within their communities.

The Amaphiko Township Dancers project was started by Janet Buckland in 1993. It continues to engage children in the township, using dance as a means of raising awareness around issues such as woman and child abuse, HIV/AIDS, crime and drug abuse.

When asked about these initiatives to keep children away from taverns and ultimately, from crime, there are usually mixed reactions from community members. Many believe there are too few to really make a difference. Some school students have taken matters into their own hands and have started their own dance groups which meet after school.

These dance groups practice mainly local and traditional dances. Sinethemba Solani is a grade eleven learner who began the well known Sakulutsha Dance Group group two years ago. Solani believes that the group takes children away from crime and doing drugs, as it gives them something else to do with their time.

## Know the Law Know your Rights

In these areas children may pass as many as five taverns on their way to school. Protect your children and yourself by knowing your rights about the places where alcohol is consumed and stand up for your rights when laws are broken.

The following information is included in the Eastern Cape Liquor Act (Act 10 of 2003):

1. Trading hours: Monday – Thursday: 11:00 – 24:00  
Friday – Saturday: 10:00 – 02:00  
Sunday/Public holidays: 11:00 – 22:00

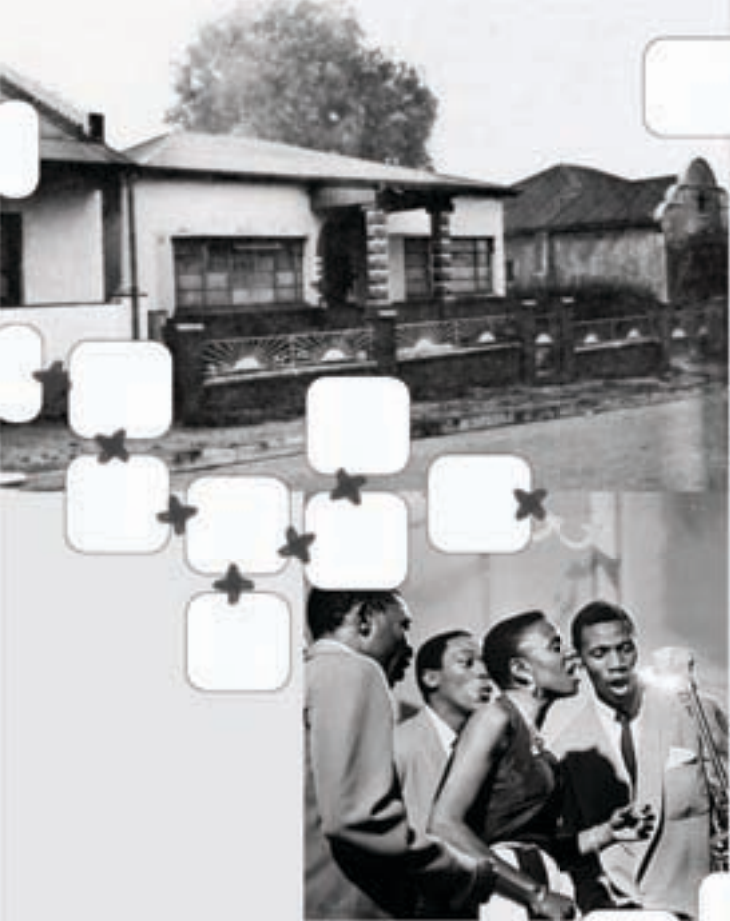
If you see taverns that are selling liquor past these times, do not hesitate to phone the police.

2. Taverns or shebeens may not interfere or threaten the other public buildings in the area.
3. Taverns are not allowed to be closer than 500 meters to a church or a school.
4. Tavern owners must own the property on which the tavern is built must and live on the property.
5. The area where the liquor is sold must be separate from the area where the owners live.
6. There must be separate access to the tavern or shebeen.
7. The playing of music should take place in business hours. Music should not disturb neighbouring houses.
8. There must be more than one entrance and exit to the building in case of a fire.
9. No off-sales (selling alcohol) will be allowed without a licence.
10. If the tavern sells food the premises must be clean and hygienic.

Be aware of your surroundings.  
Know your neighbours.  
Protect your children from harm.

## Community Taverns Then and Now





## Taverns Today

People from all walks of life, young and old, go to taverns to drink beer and dance to the jukebox. In the iRini areas of Zolani, Xolani, Hlalani and Tanty, taverns are contentious spaces due to the amount of crime that occurs around them. They are no longer places where struggling communities can find solace and solutions to their daily problems.

Several tavern owners dispute the claim that taverns attract crime. Some view themselves as family businesses and allow taxis to operate outside their establishments, offering lifts to people after a night out. However such taverns remain in the minority.



## Ekhaya: It's our home

'Ekhaya: It's our home,' is a civic journalism initiative that investigates the issue of crime in the iRhini/Grahamstown areas of Zolani, Xolani, Tanty and Hlalani and the impact that taverns have on crime and the general social fabric in these areas.

'Ekhaya' also aims to increase peoples awareness of their rights as a community. Believing that a community is foremost a 'home' it hopes to reinforce the community members' sense of ownership of their community.

The initiative explores the history of taverns in pre and post Apartheid South Africa. It touches on recent trends in local alcohol consumption in taverns; in particular the connection between taverns and increased crime in and around the establishments.

'Ekhaya' tries to uncover reasons for the increase in crime and alcohol consumption from the community itself. It also asks the community to suggest possible solutions to address these issues.

Moreover the initiative acknowledges that these issues form part of a broader social context, in which there are many contributing factors besides poverty. It seeks to paint a balanced picture of the issues prevalent in these communities and of the communities themselves.

## The History of taverns

Historically, taverns were social spaces where people met to dance, drink and to talk about issues of the day. During apartheid non-whites were banned from public places so they came together in jazz clubs and dance halls as a form of protest against the restraints on their lives.

In these clubs legends like Kortboy and Dolly Rathebe were born. Taverns were also places where political leaders such as Steve Biko and writers such as Can Themba came together to discuss national issues.

It was not just in South Africa that hardships drove people together. During the Depression of the 1920s, such taverns were called 'Speakeasies', because they allowed people to speak freely without reserve, about their thoughts and problems.

## The Issues

Drunken brawls are not the only concerns shared by tavern customers and surrounding residents. Tavern customers are frequently robbed while walking home at night, especially if they are drunk and more vulnerable than usual.

Some residents believe that the tavern owners are to blame, for serving alcohol to people who are already drunk. In turn tavern owners, who purchase their stock from SAB, are under pressure to sell all their stock in order to afford their next consignment. For many, owning such an establishment is the only form of employment available to them in these poor communities.

Taverns owners also use their right of admission when troublemakers enter their establishments. Different communities are perceived to be more violent than others and non locals are frequently excluded. As a result, the fear of crime means some people are excluded from these places of community.

