

Ndithulendiyoyika

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Extensions 6-9

An initiative by
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students of
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Breaking the Silence:

Stories from Extensions 6-9, documenting
crime and resilience in your community.

Editorial – Yenza Inqola!

By Peta Daniel & Emma Richards

What is the meaning of the word community? It is more than just a group of people living in the same area. It is a bond forged by dependence, by friendship and by familiarity. This deep connection results in a solidarity between community members, who will protect each other and fight for each other. This support structure is something that larger and richer communities miss out on. Where you live in Extensions Six to Nine, your bond goes even deeper. There is a much closer-knit community here, and this means that the potential for unity and pro-activism is extremely high.

Unfortunately, there are negative aspects to this closeness. Instead of uniting the community, a culture of fear exists throughout, isolating individuals. The fear of becoming a victim in such a high crime area is very real, and residents do what they can to protect themselves. Without the money for high walls, security guards and alarm systems, there seems to be nothing to do but keep your head down and your mouth closed. The reasons for this silence vary. The perpetrators in many cases are brothers, sisters, friends or neighbours. When you know that they are likely to be jailed for any lengthy period of time it seems pointless to report them and put your life in danger. This 'code of silence' might seem to protect you, but what it is really protecting and perpetuating is the culture of crime.

People are not the only victims of this silence. For many people, your livestock is your livelihood and this creates jealousies and tensions amongst community members. Theft and abuse of your neighbours' animals in retaliation is common, and without their own voices, your livestock rely on you to speak up for them. If you do not speak up for yourself,

who will take care of their rights? There are available resources like MaNDELA (Makana Ndlambe Donkey, Equus and Livestock Association) and the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) who are willing to help but rely on the community to begin talking.

A major factor which maintains the silence is the lack of media representation in a community like this. The gap between the local newspapers and the residents of Extensions Six to Nine stems from the crimes not being reported and from the police not following up on them. Steven Lang, Editor of Grocott's Mail offers his contact details to the community and invites and challenges everyone to be more vocal.

There are always exceptions to the rule, and the good work done by Extension Nine's Community Policing Forum (CPF) is a huge step in the right direction. The members encourage the community to help themselves by blowing the whistle on crime, literally. When in danger, residents blow their whistles and their neighbours are alerted and come to their aid. This initiative is a truly positive example of speaking out about crime. The Egazini Outreach Project is another wonderful resource in the Extensions, where the youth are encouraged to express themselves through art, dance and drama. Our team spent time at the centre helping the children create a banner that reads: "Crime is not my only option!" The realisation that there is an alternative is the first step towards breaking the silence to stop the fear.

We leave you with some sad stories, and some heartening ones in the hope that the community will consider uniting and raising their voices to end this cycle of fear and violence. The only way forward is loudly, yenza inqola! Make a noise!



The children of Egazini and the team show off the banner.

Photo: Kirsty Cooke

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The Egazini Sound

By Peta Daniel

Walk along any street in Extension Six and what you see is dusty earth, sparse grass and concrete. Among the short, square houses lying like a closely-knit patchwork quilt on the flat ground there is hardly ever call to look up. The roofs are low and the doorways are arched downwards. A tall gangly boy does not have to stoop to enter his redbrick home because his shoulders are already hunched and his eyes never leave the ground. The constant wind carries away any sound but occasionally a distant taxi horn catches your ear. The residents of Extension Six are aware and expectant. They know that nobody is safe anywhere. One young resident, Sibusiso, never wears anything even slightly revealing, never walks anywhere at night and never, never becomes too confident.

But, if you do lift your eyes a few degrees they are not met with just an empty sky. Against the backdrop of sprawling streets stands a large brick structure. The Egazini Outreach Project is a warm and airy haven in the otherwise cramped extension. Founded in 2000, it has been uplifting and encouraging in a place where eyes, shoulders and hearts are so easily dragged down.

The building itself is a converted prison and police station where anti-apartheid activists were allegedly interrogated and tortured. The walls that saw so much silenced suffering now hold a place where community members can come to test their voices and feel safe doing so. From the outside, the African themed relief sculptures and paintings in warm, earthy colours set the tone for what is inside. A different world from the dry, barren township welcomes you as you step over the threshold. Loud music reverberates from a dancing studio at the back of the building and youthful laughter fills the building right up to its high, tin ceiling.

The iKhaya Theatre Group have an office

on the left of the entranceway and are eager to meet anyone who wanders in. Bongani Diko, founder and director of the group declares that "this place belongs to everyone". One of the aims of the project is providing an environment where the youth can express themselves through different mediums. Visual art, dance and drama make up lesson time for children who regularly visit the centre and under the guidance of volunteers from the group they are given an introduction into the world of theatre.

The youth at Egazini are given the chance to explore a world outside of the fear in which they live and encouraged to break the silence bred by that fear. Children who are first-time offenders are enrolled in a rehabilitation programme where for three months they take part in the activities at Egazini. After their time is up many keep coming back to the centre where they feel safe, accepted and most importantly, heard.

Young adults also make their presence known within these walls. The three young men in 'The Squatta's' dance group move their bodies with amazing skill to the beat of loud music and love to be observed. "We have a bigger dancing group called 'The Dlalamajimbo's' who are more widely known", says Bongani. "The Squatta's' are a new addition but with their talent they're going to become known very quickly." 'The Squatta's' are very welcoming, indulging the younger children when they want to join in and even giving up an hour of their time to teach a group of rhythm-less journalism students a few easy steps.

Stepping out of the comforting warmth of Egazini is when you realise just how quiet it is outside. The music has gone, feet no longer bounce off the ground in excitement, the laughter, chatter and singing have stopped. Extension Six is silent. Turning around to give a last goodbye, the wind whips the words from your mouth before even you can hear them.



The front entrance of the Egazini Outreach Project.

Photo: Joe Hanly



The mosaic on the floor of the entrance expresses Egazini's mission.

Photo: Megan Lewis

All about Egazini

- The centre was founded in 2000 by Professor Dominic Thurburn, Professor Julia Wells, Nomatamba Tana and Violet Boo!

- Vukhile Teyise, Manager, Zanele Mjobi, who runs administration and Sinawu Djantyi, resident counsellor make up the staff at the Egazini.

- The project is self-sustainable. Artwork produced by volunteers and sold at the centre is the major form of financial support.

- The centre's social development programmes (among others) include:

- The Garden Project, where space and tools are provided and community members are taught to grow vegetables.

- Eziko, an HIV/AIDS awareness programme in the form of open forum theatre run at schools in the area.

Media contributes to silencing the community

By Emma Richards

A crime is committed everyday in Extensions Six to Nine. It seems absurd that so many crimes are not being heard and are going unreported. Grahamstown media is, therefore, contributing to silencing the community. The police are also major contributors to this problem.

Often the media in Grahamstown cannot write an article on the scanty and ambiguous reports received from the police. Also, these reports are sent to the Grahamstown media while the investigation is still underway. The police can only provide the media with what has been investigated so far. "When following up on the story it takes time for all the evidence to be processed. By this time the story is no longer newsworthy," says Steven Lang, Editor of Grocott's Mail.

Crimes reported to the Police are often not followed up on. Zalisile Xcinge, a resident in Extension Six says his house was broken into but he has heard nothing back from the police. There are so many crimes being committed, for example, there is at least one murder a week in Grahamstown and the police cannot attend to all of them. There is a much greater focus on the major crimes taking place such as rape and murder. These stories will finally reach the Grahamstown media and are reported. "Petty" crimes are often disregarded and not placed in print.

Violet Booi, a resident in Extension Six

says, "tomorrow they [criminals] get arrested and the next day you see them roaming the streets, they do not even stand trial." It is difficult to convict criminals without hard evidence and so often they return to commit the same crimes over again. Sibusiso Klaas, a resident of Extension Six says "often we don't bother to report the crime because we know they will end up back here". If the police have not been informed of a crime then these crimes are obviously not reported to the Grahamstown media and are left unreported in the news.

In previous years a freelance journalist, Madikane Jelu, lived in the area and provided Grocott's Mail and The Sun with stories on crime happening in the Extensions. As Jelu has recently passed away, there is no journalist operating in this area and so the local media are left unfed. It is difficult for journalists in Grahamstown to be aware of crimes taking place in this area, unless they are informed by the police.

Furthermore, there are not many places in the area where Grocott's Mail is sold. The Melisizwe General Dealer only receives 10 copies of Grocott's Mail a week. Phindile Santi, a shopkeeper says, "They don't need more Grocott's Mail because they will not be sold by the end of the week". The media need to reach the community more as Grocott's Mail is only accessible to a few residents in the area.

The Grahamstown media is further



The only Grocott's Mail to be found in the area lies forlorn against a barbed wire fence. Photo: Joe Hanly

unreachable in that our local newspapers are mostly written in English which introduces a language barrier. Xcinge says, "it would help if the media provided more isiXhosa in their newspapers." IsiXhosa is spoken by most in the area. It is, therefore, difficult for Grahamstown media to reach the residents in the community. Stories on crime are further not heard. However, Xcinge says, "I understand that most of the Grahamstown media is targeting the wider community of Grahamstown and not only the Extensions in which the majority of people can understand English. It seems only logical to print in English."

However, Violet Booi's sister tries to break the silence, Violet Booi says, "my sister is a teacher and she uses Grocott's Mail to teach the children at the school about crime and other issues so that the children become educated."

It seems difficult to provide a solution to this problem. There is a strong bond within the community and this solidarity can help to combat crime in the area. The community have a right not to be silenced and to be heard. This silence can be solved by community members continuing to work together to make their voices heard.





Three young artists pose for the camera.



Our hard workers take a break to eat some snacks and pose for a pic.



Making hand prints.



Learning new patterns.



A young boy gets advice on which colour to use next.

UDLAME ASIYONTO UNOKUYIKHETHA

The children of Extension Six pledge to choose against crime.

Crime is not the only option!

Photos by: Joe Hanly, Kirsty Cooke and Megan Lewis



This paint is messy!



About to make my mark.



The primary colours.



Laughter and fun with art.



The finished product and smiles all around.



Almost done!

Donkey violence



Moonbeam happily browsing for leaves at his new home.

Photo: Kirsty Cooke

By Peta Daniel

One evening the old donkey grazing outside his owner's house had a broken beer bottle shoved up his rectum. For three weeks he suffered quietly, still pulling his cart daily. The bottle was completely hidden inside him. His owner, worried at his lack of strength and the swelling under his tail called the SPCA on two separate occasions but as they couldn't see what was causing the problem, they just injected the donkey with anti-biotics. When the symptoms persisted, his owner, known only as Eric, driven by worry for the donkey that represented his livelihood, walked for kilometres to Nombulelo Primary School where he had heard there would be a donkey clinic.

"It was a Sunday morning when Eric arrived and told us about the donkey," says Jennifer Copley, court appointed animal welfare inspector of MaNDELA (Makana Ndlambe Donkey, Equus and Livestock Association).

"Luthando Matgedeni, one of our volunteers and I walked for ages trying to find him as the owner's brother had hidden him because he didn't want us to take him away." When they first found Moonbeam, as the aged donkey has come to be called, he was collapsed on the ground unable to move and semi-conscious. Jennifer and her team managed to get him standing and then onto a trailer. The vet arrived shortly after, and it was then that they made their gruesome discovery. "The jagged tip of the bottle was shoved up the anus and the anus had prolapsed. Scar tissue had formed so he couldn't defecate. We had to pull the tissue out of his body and you wouldn't believe the stench and the stuff that came out of there! It was only then that we found the brown shards of glass" says Jennifer.

Moonbeam's owner knew who the perpetrator was, but was not willing to report it to the police. "He wouldn't tell us who did it, but he did say that it was someone who was



Behind fencing, perhaps the only safe place for a donkey in the township.
Photo by: Kirsty Cooke



A burn mark from boiling water.

Photo: Supplied



Moonbeam's condition before they removed the bottle.
Photo: Supplied

upset with him," says Luthando. It is commonplace in the extensions to harm the livelihood of someone who has angered you. The donkeys can't tell on you and the abuse is not considered a serious enough crime to report to the police. "I cannot understand people who take out their anger on animals" says Luthando. "These animals don't understand why they are being made to suffer!" Moonbeam is not the only donkey to have suffered at the hands of his owner's enemies. Many others are stabbed, have boiling water thrown at them or are stolen and then overworked, starved and eventually given back in a weakened condition. When the people in the extensions don't use their voices to speak up against the crimes committed against themselves, who is going to speak on behalf of the donkeys?

"The thing is that most donkey owners are young adults who get into disputes about working on each other's turf, borrowing each other's donkeys without permission or any number of things" says Jennifer. When these young men

come home late at night from the taverns, a belly full of beer heightens their anger. The donkey owned by the man who makes more money than you, grazing peacefully on the roadside, is an easy target. Goodman Santi, a resident of Extension Six is very aware of the danger his animals are in. "They will stab your donkey, just like that! These people are very bad," he says. Nolukhanyo Boozi, a donkey owner in Extension Eight agrees. "I can't let my donkeys out to graze, I must keep them in my small garden where I can watch that they don't get attacked," she says.

Fortunately Moonbeam made a full recovery and is living out his retirement at Jennifer's animal rehabilitation farm in Manley Flats. "Everyone thinks it's time he was put down but I think he deserves some happiness before he dies," says Jennifer. Unfortunately for thousands of donkeys in the location, there will be no such happy ending. Even with all the good work that MaNDELA and the SPCA do, the violence continues for these silent victims.

Speaking out against livestock theft

By Emma Richards

The head and skin of a calf washed up on the banks of the river behind the house of Mayisine Bikitsha, resident in Extension Six and owner of this cow. There is no doubt that the rest of the cow had been sold on to a buyer. The remains of the cow had been found two days after the cow had gone missing. Bikitsha says angrily, "it will cost me that this cow is gone. My cattle are my livelihood."

Livestock owners living in Extensions Six to Nine and the surrounding farmers in the area are all victims of stock theft. Stolen stock has escalated, and "stock owners are making somersaults over this issue," says Captain Etienne Kitching, head of the Stock Theft Unit.

Some residents in the Extensions are slaughtering the cattle and selling them in town and therefore often not returned to their owners. There is a large amount of unemployment in the area. Stock is, thus, stolen to get money for the meat; either to provide for the families, although for some, says Kitching, "for alcohol and drugs".

Kitching says, "for many stock owners, this is their bread and butter." It seems ironic that the cattle are often stolen for the perpetrator's own survival. For those emerging farmers it shows status among the community. They are not only robbed of their cattle but of their status too.

In Extensions Six to Nine there is not enough grazing ground in most of the stock owner's gardens. Therefore, the cattle are often left to roam the streets in search of grass making it easier for the perpetrators to steal them.

Stock theft happens on a regular basis. Bikitsha says, "we [stock owners] are being silenced and are left feeling helpless". Vuyisile Mamkeli, Chairperson of the Stock Theft Association had his cattle stolen less than two weeks ago. However, the cattle were found and Mamkeli says "my cattle are safely back at home, however, they could not find the perpetrators which infuriates me." Little can be done by the police when stock theft happens as often the criminals cannot be identified.

The stock owners want to be heard so they have resorted to assaulting the perpetrators leading to many being hospitalised. Again there is little the police can do if they are both committing a crime. Stock owners have resorted to violence so that they can break this silence; however the violence has not made a difference.

Brushes, a privately owned horse used to teach township children to ride was stolen earlier this year. The horse was seven years old and in good condition before the theft. However, it was found two weeks later dead in the Extensions. Jennifer Copley, court appointed animal welfare inspector for MaNDELA (Makana Ndlambe Donkey Equus and Livestock Association) says "it was evident that the horse had been badly abused and over ridden". This is an example of how some animals are being stolen, abused by the perpetrators and finally left to die.

Copley says that when doing the autopsy the horse had blue fly maggots in its wound, situated on his right back foot, which suggests that the wound had been open for at least two weeks. The bladder was full of blood and the small vessels in the lungs had been burst. "Brushes was literally skin and bone," says Copley. "It is so sad because the animals cannot speak out for themselves." Unfortunately, the chief witness who identified the perpetrator was stabbed and died two weeks later.

People such as Mamkeli, Kitching and Copley are trying to break this silence and prevent stock theft from happening. Kitching says, "we are doing our best to find stolen stock and to find the perpetrators involved. We want to put an end to stock theft".

Stock theft is a sensitive subject and many people prefer not to discuss it with others. Therefore, there is a silence surrounding the issue. Mamkeli says, "These crimes can be easily solved if the community work together. "The community can just be aware of stock theft so that perpetrators can be identified and caught which will hopefully result in a small step to change," says Kitching.



Brushes lies dead on the roadside, just two weeks after his abduction.

Photo: Supplied



A cow roams the streets of Extension 8.

Photo: Joe Hanly

RDP Housing Increases Crime

By Belinda Japhet

When the government initiated The Reconstruction and Development Programme, (RDP) the intention was to improve people's standard of living by providing them with safe housing in which to live. However Extension Nine's RDP residents would beg to differ. Any question raised concerning the community's thoughts on the development plan is responded to with vehement dissatisfaction and anger.

Fundiswa Nyapa is a 54 year old Domestic worker and lives in a small one room house provided by the government. Although she lives alone, and the one room will suffice, she complains about the poor sanitation. "I have no toilet or bathroom inside and the toilet outside is not finished yet" she complains. Zolisa Mtaala a younger member of the community is frustrated at the impractically small size of the houses and their vulnerability to rain. "When it rains the water comes inside through the ceiling, one day it will just flood my house" she explains.

As the youngest amongst the Extensions, Extension Nine has a relatively high crime rate. Weekly gang fights, murders and rapes are not uncommon. The lack of street lights and taxi transport at night make its residents extremely vulnerable to crime and violence.

There is also a very surprising and direct link between increased criminal activity and

the RDP houses. According to the residence, all the houses have identical locks which means that one key can open all RDP doors. Many RDP house residents have suffered from crime and armed robbery due to this construction error. Zolisa recalls a night when she was sleeping and woke up to find a man rummaging through her possessions for electronic devices and money. He had let himself into the house with his own key or even a one he had stolen. "I pretended to be asleep while he went through my things, luckily he didn't want to violate me in any way" she says. Many others are not as lucky as Zolisa, and suffer violence and rape at the hands of walk-in robberies. The bulk of these crimes are committed by young men. Phondi Shoba explains that the youth living in the RDP houses are angry and take out their frustrations through crime. "The older people have gotten used to it but the younger people are very angry about the living conditions" says Zolisa

Members of Extension Nine, are combating crime by meeting at various household which are presumed to have a problem child. If the young person has committed a crime community members talk to them and try to convince them to admit to their wrong-doings. This method of intervention often works, but unfortunately the youth will admit to committing the crime but will not return the stolen goods.

How successful is the Community Policing Forum in your area?



Lulamile Ngotsini
Extension 6
Artist at Egazini

"There's no Community Policing Forum like the one in Extension 9 so we can't really do anything. People are silent because they are scared of being the next victims."



Nombulelo Saza
Extension 6
Domestic worker

"I don't know of any Community Policing Forum in this area, so they're not doing anything as far as I know."



Sizwe Cunge
Extension 6
Carwasher

"It is good that we have a Community Policing Forum because there is a lot of crime and it needs to be solved by the people in the community."



Lundi Mcwabeni
Extension 4
Rhodes University facilitator in the science department

"To be honest, I don't know about any Community Policing Forum. There's nothing that you see being done, you just know of people who are in it."



Asanda Solomon
Extension 7
Student at the EMC College

"The CPF is not working very well because crime is developing every day."



Zalisile Xunge
Extension 6
Unemployed

"They are doing nothing and there is nothing that they can do."

Photos by: Joe Hanly, Kirsty Cooke and Megan Lewis

**Blow the whistle
against crime**



Crime Stop: **08600 10111**

An initiative brought to you by Ndithulendiyoyika

Ndithulendiyoyika

Breaking the silence with YOUR help.

With your awareness, your community and home can be safe again. If you witness a crime, don't be afraid to call for help.



Police: **10111**

Ambulance/Fire:
10177

Settlers Hospital:
046 622 2215

