

# TRANSITION TOWNSHIP

---

**Engaged responses to Climate Change in an  
urban context**

NMMU Engagement Colloquium

19 June 2017

# Why 'Transition Township'?

- ***Piloting Localised and Sustainable Township Economies in Kwazakhele, Nelson Mandela Bay***
- Transition away from a fossil-fuel based economy in the current global context of climate change
- Transition to a new model of economic development in working-class communities, where residents and workers take control of their own resources, and create sustainable livelihoods in an integrated and localised economy

# Conceptual framework

- Community mobilisation, participation and self-reliance
- Integration
- Sustainability
- Permaculture design
- Resilience, localisation, livelihoods
  
- Solidarity economy
- Community economy
- Asset-based community development (ABCD)
- Food sovereignty
  
- New economic theories.....circular economy, steady state economics...

# The 'hidden assets' of townships

- Markets (for basic needs) – who supplies these currently?
- Property (De Soto's argument)
- Land (unutilised)
- Infrastructure (buildings, roofs, electricity pipelines, gaptaps, unused power station...)
- Human capital (skills, experience, creativity)
- Natural assets (wetlands, grazing, mountains)
- Waste to wealth
- Social capital (community networks, solidarity)

# Creative solutions: Localisation

- Localised production (cheaper for some things)
- Cooperatives (production, distribution, service provision)
- Local ownership of resources
- Local control of services (waste, water, energy)
- Local markets with diverse, cheap, quality goods
- New technology allows for custom made goods

# Development corridor, Kwazakhele







# Service provision in Kwazakhele, 2011 census

NMB Ward	No of households	% access to water at or above RDP	% access to electricity	% access to sanitation at or above RDP	% access to refuse removal
18	4992	95	79	77	86
19	3141	99	64	66	95
20	3474	97	97	95	99
21	3209	99	95	96	97
22	3732	100	97	100	96
24	3520	98	92	93	96
25	3450	100	99	99	100
Average	3645	98	89	89	96
Total	25518				







# The Methodological Framework: Participatory Action Research

- Catalyst for new developments in the social sciences, exploring and piloting new models of local economic development (NIHSS Catalytic Research project)
- Maximum participation, ownership and empowerment of the research process by the residents themselves
- Community Research Team model

# Participatory Action Research process

- Training of Community Research Team from four Wards
- Mapping, interviews, transects, documentation 'on the ground', household surveys - using PRA methods
- Community workshops, consultations using ABCD approach
- Cooperatives and management alternatives exploration
- Analysis and desktop research (helioscope, google earth, technology, comparative studies)
- Compile feasibility studies
- Establishment of pilots to test the model



# CRT members conducting research









# Possible projects

- Food gardens established on permaculture principles (self-sustaining in terms of inputs) which are integrated into local fresh produce markets
- Finance, energy, waste and food cooperatives which are integrated with each other and are both owned and controlled by residents of the Ward.
- New housing developments integrated with wetland recreational and ecotourism development
- Cultural industries integrated with local businesses such as jazz cafes providing a platform for local performers and restaurants utilising local ingredients.
- Conversion of the Swartkops power station into a 'hub' for new industries, in particular renewable energy and food processing as well as service provision and cultural industries.





# Pilot project

- The projects will use the existing infrastructure and resources to create livelihoods through integrated provision of goods and services: starting with one 'gaptap cooperative':
- Integrated design and neighbourhood ownership
- Energy generation through solar PV, feeding into the Municipal grid
- Food production for local markets
- Waste management (waste to energy/recycling) for income





# Strategy and potential outcomes

- Test the pilot and then expand to 120 gaptaps in Kwazakhele
- Sustainably provide for needs (food, energy etc) through creating incomes
- Engagement with local government, NGOs, other universities, industry professionals (eg renewable energy)
- Change power relations – “social relations of production, consumption and distribution”
- Take control of resources within current economy – ‘use the space’ and pilot new economic models which empower residents of townships





# The 'gap tap' neighbourhood cooperative pilot.....a catalyst for changing society

