

Survey of Joe Slovo is an eye-opener

One toilet for every nine people

ESTHER LEWIS
Staff Reporter

RESIDENTS of the Joe Slovo informal settlement have made a bold leap in their continued battle for better living conditions by undertaking a detailed study of their own community.

The government has agreed to engage them on the strength of their survey that has found that the 17-year-old settlement is home to nearly 8 000 people, and that its most urgent needs are electricity, water and toilets.

The Joe Slovo household enumeration report, compiled and researched by the Community Organisation Resource Centre (Corc) and the Joe Slovo community task team, was released yesterday afternoon.

Instead of using sample groups, 36 volunteers from the settlement went door-to-door, collecting detailed household information on aspects like employment, income, education and migration patterns.

Deemed a first for the community situated on the outskirts of Langa, the task team started the process at the beginning of May.

It found there were 896 community toilet blocks – one for every nine people.

But only 706 toilets were functional, due to vandalism and poor servicing. There were 34 fully functional taps.

It was also found that while



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only 32 percent of residents were employed, the community contributed over R2.7 million to the city's economy monthly. The average household spend was R967 a month.

A total of 13 percent of the population received grants on a monthly basis – largely child welfare grants.

When it looked at migration, it was found that just over 80 percent of the settlement's population had come from the Eastern Cape in search of better employment and living opportunities, and had lived in Cape Town for longer than five years.

A total of 36 percent had lived in the city for 10 to 15 years.

Mzwanele Zulu, a member of the task team, said the fact that the survey had been pulled together by the community themselves was a major accomplishment, and this was a great tool for government to use.

Zulu said the community, now armed with accurate information, was ready to engage government officials tasked with managing the upgrade and possible relocation of residents.

Consultation with the community had been lacking pre-

viously, and the task team hoped the government would use the report to come up with a "people-friendly" development.

Zulu said the findings, and also the entire survey process proved that the community was capable of being involved in its own development.

"We are not lazy criminals who loiter around all day doing nothing."

"We have been forced to house ourselves here because our government has not been able to help us be housed," said Zulu.

He added they would welcome any meaningful interaction with government in resolving their issues.

The provincial deputy director-general for housing operations, Mbulelo Tshangana agreed that there needed to be more emphasis on the social aspects of developing human settlements.

"Once you understand the role of the community, it becomes easy to drive the project," said Tshangana.

He praised the task team for its good work and announced that his department would now be engaged with the community.

Tshangana said he would peruse the report to fill any gaps. "There was a lot of good community organisation, and they have done an amazing job," he said.