

Life in Buffalo City





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Message from the Executive Mayor

As I write, Buffalo City is still engaged in the throes of a far-reaching process of change that is part of the broader landscape of local government transformation in South Africa. This transformation goes far beyond the face of the municipality, but is intended to get to grips with the deep-rooted issues of what municipalities actually do, for whom they do it, and how well they perform, so that having answered these questions, one is able to begin to reorientate our institutions of local governance to better serve the needs and priorities of all our citizens.

A very important part of this process of reorientation has been the legal requirement that all municipalities must fulfil, namely to engage in a process of comprehensive and consultative planning that will ultimately ensure that real needs are being addressed, and that local resources are not being misdirected or wrongly allocated. This process will soon culminate in what is termed the Integrated Development Plan of Buffalo City.

Buffalo City, as the logical starting point of its planning process, has consulted extensively with our extended communities in a number of ways, to get an indication of what people at grassroots level are saying about their needs, frustrations and aspirations. One initiative of my office has been to conduct an extensive Listening Campaign that enabled me to hear at first hand what people were saying on the ground about service delivery in Buffalo City.

To complement the political process, we have also been engaged in a comprehensive process of technical analysis of community needs and service provision, identifying where gaps exist with a view to incrementally filling those gaps as our resources allow.

This process has been greatly assisted by a commitment from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to provide funding support for what was termed a Quality of Life survey in Buffalo City. This survey, which included a strong socio-economic research component, was very efficiently conducted by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Rhodes University's local campus.

We are most grateful to Sida for the support which made this survey possible, from a country that has continued to invest in the construction of a new South Africa, after playing such a significant role in supporting the demise of the old.

The results of the survey, which encompassed about 10 000 citizens of the broader municipal area, have now been published, and we are happy to be able to present a summarized record of the findings in a format that our communities will hopefully find both easy to read and also very useful in building our understanding of one another as we strive to define a new and unifying vision that can be supported by all in Buffalo City.

Sindisile Maclean
Executive Mayor



Foreword

In August 2001, the East London Branch of the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University (ISER) together with the Buffalo City municipality and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) undertook a research project to collect information on the Quality of Life of people in Buffalo City. Using a detailed questionnaire, based on the Quality of Life research programme carried out in Durban, field workers collected information from 2 477 households. This gave information about more than 10 000 people. The sample was large enough to represent accurately the views of all residents. Young and old, rich and poor, people living in informal housing and in well-off areas, unemployed and employed, African, White, Coloured, and Asian people were interviewed in the survey.

The survey findings will enable policy makers and planners to design and target programmes which will improve the quality of life of all residents.

Census data was used to provide details of the number of people in Buffalo City, what wards they live in, what ethnic group they are part of, and what type of housing they live in.

The information in this book is based on the main survey report which was recently completed. The book aims to be useful to a wide range of readers: councillors and council employees, civil society organisations such as NGOs, policy makers and planners, learners and teachers - the whole range of the people of Buffalo City, in fact.

The report that this book is based on is available from ISER, Rhodes University, East London. Contact details are at the back of the book.

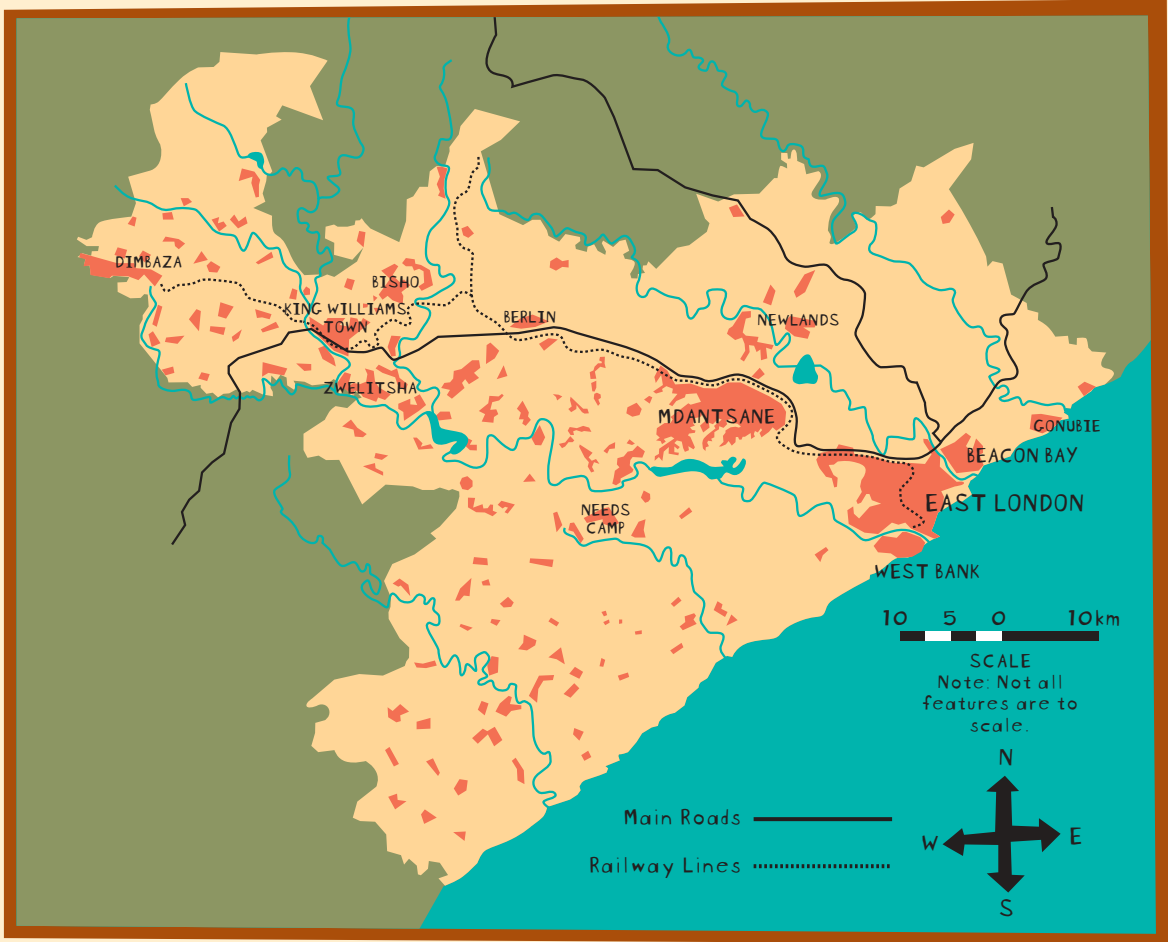
Robin Richards and Ellen Kamman: Urban Indicators and Local Government Programme
Institute of Social and Economic Research
Rhodes University (East London)

Acknowledgements

The Institute of Social and Economic Research is grateful to all of those who took part in the Quality of Life survey. Without the information which they provided, the project could not have been successfully completed.

Thanks also to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for financial support and for the expertise they provided; and to the Urban Strategy Department, eThekweni Municipality-Durban for their assistance at different stages of this project. We would also like to thank Development Research Africa who carried out the survey.

Thank you to the following for providing photographs for this book: the Daily Dispatch which provided many pictures from its archives; Sue Stewart and Riana Pretorius who took photographs of Buffalo City neighbourhoods; Mcebisi Qamarwana and René Plaatjies who carried out a photographic field trip on behalf of the project; and Jenni Muller for administrative support.



Map of Buffalo City.

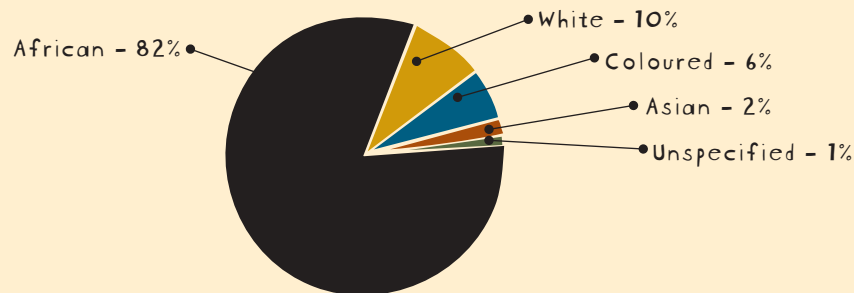
The people of Buffalo City

Buffalo City is the new municipal structure which came into existence after the 2000 local government elections. It includes East London, King Williams Town and Bisho, and many surrounding smaller communities.

This book is about the people of Buffalo City. It describes the homes they live in, their work, how they travel, how they spend their spare time, what sort of education they have, and other aspects of their lives. It talks about their worries and concerns: lack of jobs, poor housing and lack of services, crime, and many others.

It also describes what makes them happy and what they are satisfied with.

About 880 000 people live in Buffalo City. More than 80% are African, about 10% are White, 6% are Coloured and just under 2% are Asian. Just under half of the people are men, and just over half are women; this is the same as for the whole country.



The people of Buffalo City by population.

Here are some of the other main facts from the survey:

- A typical Buffalo City household is made up of four people.
- Almost a quarter of the people in Buffalo City are aged between 10 and 19 years old. The next most common age group - just under a fifth of the population - is 20 - 29 years. Jobs and education will therefore be important issues for the area for a long time to come.
- More than 40% of people have completed Grades 8 to 12 in school. Almost 10% of adults have never been to school, and about the same percentage have some post-matric education.
- Almost one third of Buffalo City's adults are unemployed. About four out of every ten people are either formally or informally employed, or self-employed.
- The average monthly household income is just over R2 655. The average African household's income is about R1500, for Asians it is just over R5000, for Coloured households it is about R2800 and for White households it is about R10 500.
- The most popular spare time activity is watching TV and video. People also like reading, cooking and baking, gardening, and being part of religious, cultural and political groups.
- Family and friends are very important in helping to make people feel satisfied with their lives.
- There are very big differences among the people of Buffalo City when it comes to income, educational levels, employment opportunities, housing and services.
- More than half of the people know about Buffalo City. Not all of them feel that they will benefit from being part of it, but they do have clear ideas about what they would like the City to do for them.

How people are described in this book

The expressions "African", "White", "Coloured" and "Asian" were used because of how being categorised in these ways in South Africa has shaped people's lives in the past. This has affected, for example, where people live, what type of education they have received, and what sort of recreation facilities and opportunities they have access to. It is of course hoped that divisions between the people of Buffalo City will continue to break down, and that they will all equally feel themselves to be part of the city.

For the purpose of the survey, "household" was defined as all people eating from the same kitchen and receiving their post at the same address.

Ways of describing households and service levels

A number of different categories were used to describe the types of households in Buffalo City. These categories refer to their incomes, and the range of services which they have access to.

Categories

- Formal home with high service levels and high income
- Formal home, with high service levels
- Formal home, with medium service levels
- Informal home, with medium service levels
- Informal home, with low service levels
- Traditional home, with low service levels

A household income of more than R6 000 per month is considered to be a high income. Formal homes are permanent structures made of solid material such as bricks and mortar. They are located in formally established and planned housing areas. Informal homes are not permanent structures and are sometimes known as shack settlements or shanty towns. They are sometimes located in areas not zoned for housing. New migrants looking for work in town often move into these settlements to live in existing shacks, or build their own, to save money on accommodation.

Traditional homes are often built out of mud and thatch, and are sometimes round in shape. They are usually located in rural areas and at the edges of cities.

Homes with high service levels are those which receive at least some of the best services available. These may include: a full water-borne flush toilet, refuse removal from the dwelling by the local authority at least once a week, water piped into the dwelling from full pressure pipes, and electricity in the dwelling with a conventional meter system.

Homes with medium service levels receive a lower level of service. Medium services include: ventilated improved pit latrine, chemical toilet, refuse removed from community refuse container, water provision via roof tank or ground tank, and electricity supplied through pre-paid cards. Homes with low service levels have access to the most basic of services. These include: basic pit latrine, refuse placed on a communal dump or burnt in a pit, and water supplied by street stand-pipes.

The information about the households was also analysed according to which population groups live in them, and whether they are formal or informal houses.

Categories

- Formal African household
- Formal Coloured household
- Formal White household
- Formal Asian household
- Traditional African household
- Informal African household

Income, employment & unemployment

Having an income, and being able to pay for housing, food, school fees and other expenses is extremely important to everyone.

50c Income

The survey asked people what monthly income is brought into their home. Asking people about their income can be sensitive; almost 9% refused to answer, and just over 5% said that they have no income.

The most commonly earned monthly household income is between R1 and R1500. 57% of African households earn this amount. Only 10% of these households earn R3500 or more a month. A quarter of Coloured people, half of Asian people and almost three-quarters of White people live in households earning this much.



Average monthly household income by population group.

Employment

"Work" can include a large range of activities.

However, we normally consider "work" to be full-time or part-time activity for which we are paid. This can be formal employment - working in a factory or shop, for example, and being paid weekly or monthly - or informal employment, such as helping a street trader. 42% of the people of Buffalo City are students or children. Although some students may work part-time or from time to time, to earn money to pay for fees, they are not actively looking for full-time work.

Just over one in five people are unemployed and looking for work. Taking all population groups together, only 15% of adults have full time formal work. Another 4% work full time informally, or part time. About 3% are self-employed.

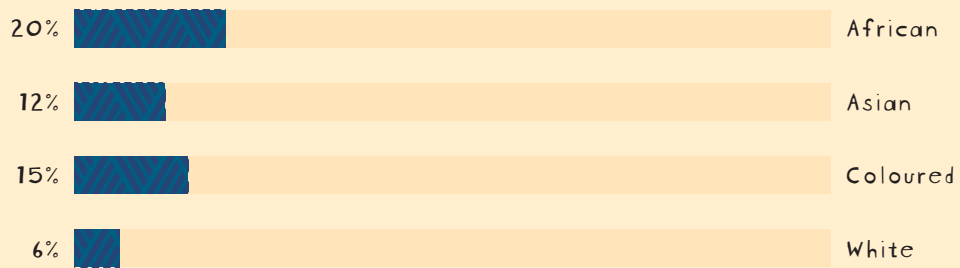
Unemployment

The survey asked those people who said they were unemployed:

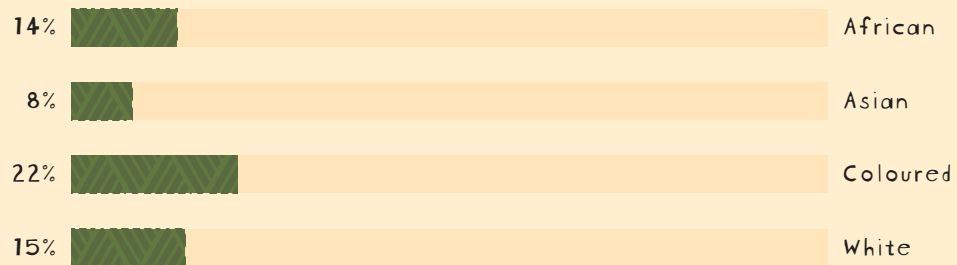
- how long they have been unemployed
- when they had their last job
- what strategies they are using to find work, and
- what they believe stops them from finding work

The answers to these questions show that there are differences between men and women, and between the different population groups, when it comes to unemployment.

Slightly more women than men have been unemployed for less than three years, but quite a lot more men than women have been unemployed for between 3 and 5 years. About the same percentages of women and men have never been employed.



Unemployed for less than 3 years.



Unemployed for 6-10 years.

Among African and Asian unemployed people, about 20% have been unemployed for up to three years. Only 6% of White unemployed people fall into this category. White unemployed people are more likely to have been without work for longer periods of time. About 15% have been unemployed for between 6 and 10 years, and the same percentage for more than 11 years. The biggest single group of unemployed Coloured people are those who have been out of work for 6 to 10 years.



What do people do to find work?

Unemployed people were asked what strategies they use to try to find work. The results were interesting.

The largest single percentage - more than 30% - hear about jobs from family and friends. This is more than twice as large as the percentage whose main strategy is to read newspaper advertisements. Less than 10% use Department of Labour Job Centres as their main strategy.

Just over 10% wait on the roadside for people to offer them work. About one-fifth of the unemployed say they use no particular strategy.

There are big differences between the population groups when it comes to work-seeking strategies. Hearing about jobs through family and friends is particularly important for African people. This is more than twice the percentage of Coloured people who use this strategy. Only 5% of White people say that they use this strategy.

It seems, therefore, that social networks are very important in helping people to look for work.



Problems in finding work

Many problems stand in the way of people finding work. Overall, people believe that the biggest problem is that there are just not enough jobs. The table below shows what they say about the difficulty of getting work.

Blockages	Total	Men	Women
Not enough jobs available:	55%	58%	54%
Need more skills training:	46%	47%	46%
Need higher qualifications:	46%	46%	47%
Not enough experience:	40%	40%	41%
Don't have the resources to respond to information about jobs:	37%	40%	35%
Live too far from job opportunities:	37%	40%	34%
Have to take care of household:	23%	21%	25%

Problems making it difficult for people to find work.

The table shows clearly that more than half of the people answering this question believe that there are not enough jobs available. Perhaps surprisingly, the percentage of women who cannot find work because of household responsibilities is not very much bigger than that of men.

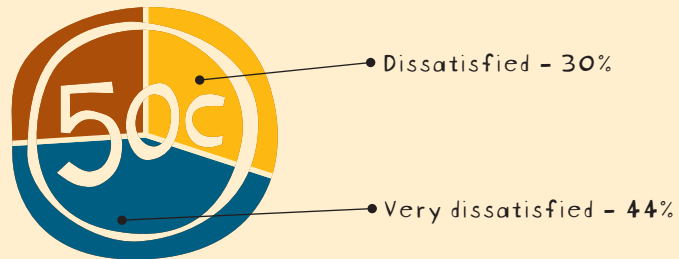
There are differences between the views of the population groups. About 40% of unemployed African people say that living far from work opportunities is a major problem. Only 2% of Whites and 4% of Asians say this. It is a problem for over 33% of unemployed Coloured people.

People in all groups say that they need more skills training and higher qualifications.



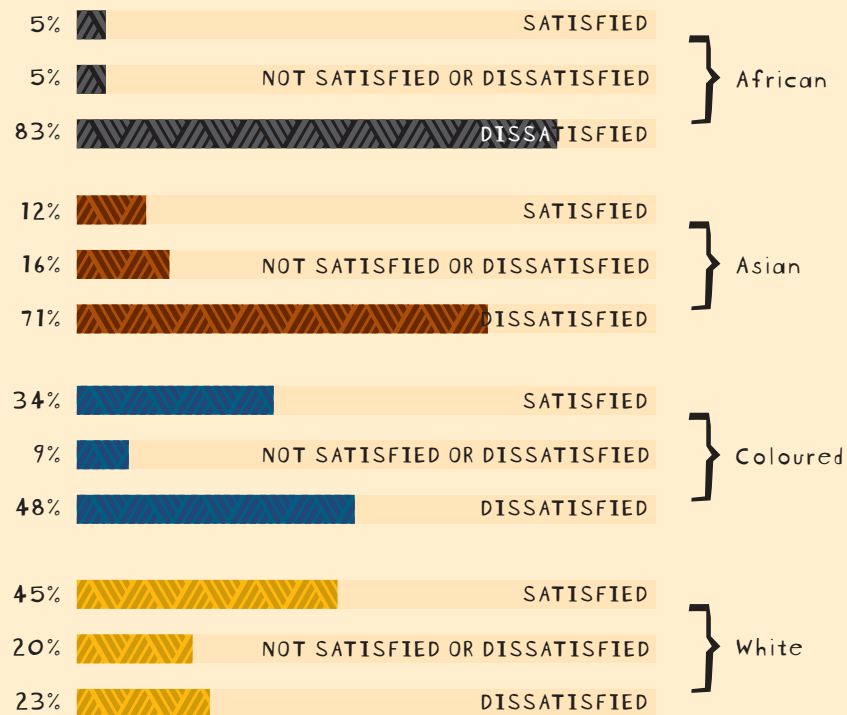
Are people happy with the amount of money that they earn?

Not surprisingly, most people are not satisfied with their incomes. About three-quarters of Buffalo City's people say that they are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.



Overall, about 11% of people said that they are satisfied with their incomes. Less than 1% are very satisfied.

Here is what the different population groups said about their incomes.



This chart shows that about half of Whites find their incomes satisfactory. More than 80% of African people and more than 70% of Asian people are not satisfied.

