

“ALBERTON STATION” HOUSEHOLD ENUMERATION REPORT

CITY OF EKURHULENI, GAUTENG

NOVEMBER 2009



**Community Organisation Resource Centre
Informal Settlement Network
Federation of the Urban Poor
“Alberton Station” Community Leaders**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Preface
2. Acknowledgement
3. Introduction
4. Methodology of the Enumeration
5. Key Findings
6. Results Analysis
7. Graphs and Tables

PREFACE

The informal settlement of Alberton Station lies on either side of the platform of the old train station in Alberton, in Ward 37 of the Ekurhuleni metropolitan municipality. According to Johannes Haas, an original resident of the settlement, the community was established around 1983. He, along with three other people were hawking at the train station, then still in operation, and they began sleeping there at night with cardboard and plastic.

By 1995, others had begun coming into the area and the settlement began to develop. Many were domestic workers and gardeners who worked in the houses in the formal town of Alberton. The majority of these people originated from rural areas throughout the country.

In 2009, the community leadership of Alberton Station first approached the Community Organisation Resource Centre (CORC) for support around an eviction attempt being pursued by Intersite, a company contracted by Spoornet. Spoornet owns the land on which the settlement lies, and its ultimate stated goal is revamp the train station.

CORC is a non-governmental organization with its main offices in Cape Town but operating in all provinces. It supports communities that are prepared and willing to organize and help themselves around their own resources and capacities. CORC's interventions are designed to enable communities to learn from one another and to create solidarity and unity in order to be able to broker deals with formal institutions, especially the state.

The Alberton Station informal settlement community of 265 households was surveyed with the exercise described within this document. This was an organised and collaborative work by community members themselves, involving local leadership and volunteers from CORC, the Informal Settlement Network (ISN) and the Federation of the Urban Poor (FEDUP).

The community itself engaged actively in the enumeration process in order to gather information to use in negotiations with local government officials in response to the eviction threat that they still face today.

The main purpose of the enumeration exercise is to mobilize the people around their needs and to promote their participation in the development process. Additionally, the goal is to help the community to own some of the basic elements for the decision-making around their relocation or other sheltering solutions, stimulating a more balanced dialogue with key stakeholders.

This report summarises the data and key findings collected during the enumeration exercise.

The questionnaire of the survey collected data on a number of variables of which all are represented in this report. The appendix contains further information on the forms used.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this report and the data collection, capturing and of enumeration in this settlement has been a voluntary effort of several people from slum-dwelling communities throughout the country

Mentioning everyone by name would be impossible. However, we acknowledge the contributions of ISN, FEDUP, CORC and Shack / Slum Dwellers International (SDI) who assisted in the data collection, as well as others who helped in putting this report together.

INTRODUCTION

On the 19th and 20th November 2009, a team comprised of Alberton Station community members, the ISN, FEDUP and CORC carried out a household enumeration of the entire community.

While the enumeration activity was continuing, there was a visit by slum dweller federation members from 14 countries in the SDI alliance, as well as the Mayoral Council Speaker of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (EMM), Patricia Kumalo. She was accompanied by other EMM officials. The officials, after seeing the conditions in the settlement about a month before, had promised to deliver 24 chemical toilets. To date, there has been no progress with regards to this commitment.

Some meetings were held with the community prior to enumeration to assess whether a survey would be useful and how it would be carried out. Prior to the data collection activity on 19 and 20 November, a half-day enumeration workshop was conducted in the community so as to technically equip the volunteers about the data collection methodology and ethics. Support and facilitation of the workshop was provided by members of the ISN, FEDUP and CORC.

History of Alberton Station informal settlement

We interviewed Mr. Haas at his RDP house in Thinasonke where, along with some other families from “Alberton Station”, Natalspruit and Thokoza, he was moved in 2006. Thinasonke is about 13 km away from the town of Alberton. He and three other people, had started hawking at the “Station” in the early 1980’s and, because they were unemployed and had no place to stay, would sleep there at night with cardboards and plastics.

Life at Alberton Station was not easy in these early days. They were regularly harassed by a Mr. Berg and his security company who used to beat them up and burn their goods. They would then go and beg for blankets from one company, Handlers, to replace their destroyed goods. These were the blankets that were used to cover furniture that was delivered to Handlers. From time to time their goods would be confiscated and destroyed by Berg and his security officers. Arrests followed.

Around 1995, some other people started coming into the area and settling in Alberton Station. Most of these people were domestic workers and gardeners who worked in the nearby houses and had come from the rural areas. Some of them were workers who had been retrenched from the firms around Alberton and needed some place to stay while they looked for other jobs.

Some used the railway trucks that were parked near the station as their accommodation while some others used plastics as their homes.

Mr. Haas says that he had got temporary work in one of the nearby companies, RC, and he asked the company for tents for accommodating people, which he distributed to needy families. Another community leader started collecting R30 from the community for chemical toilets.

Each time the people organised their shacks, these would be destroyed. It is alleged that someone from the nearby Murray & Roberts company had thrown some object through the window facing the settlement (probably a petrol bomb) that burned down their shacks.

People lost their valuables that included I.D. documents, birth certificates, etc. Some people do not have I.D.s as a result of their shacks being burnt from time to time.

Around 2005, a few of the families were moved to Thinasonke where there were only toilets built and they still lived in shacks. Houses were later built and they have been staying there for 3 years.

Mr. Haas informed us that a number of families had remained behind in Alberton Station because they did not have the necessary documents to qualify for RDP houses. A few of the families are made up of foreign nationals who have lived in the area for years.

He also indicated that a lot of people who had been moved to Thinasonke are now returning back to Alberton Station and they are selling their houses because they cannot afford to stay at Thinasonke. Thinasonke is perceived to be in the middle of nowhere, on the outskirts of Brackendowns suburb.

Distance from potential places of employment and the general lack of any prospect of employment in the nearby suburb of Brackendowns (barring domestic work), has compelled many to go back to where they came from.

Although it may seem as if people do not want the houses that are given to them, these houses are actually perceived the community's chances for lives of dignity and work.

METHODOLOGY OF THE ENUMERATION

The ISN, FEDUP and CORC held meetings with the community in November 2009 to make all the plans for the enumeration in order to get a buy-in by the community on the need and objectives of enumeration.

The methodology used in conducting the enumeration is that which has been adopted within the network of Shack-Dwellers International, which always involves in this exercise the community in order to ensure that they own the process and results.

Prior to the data collection activity, a half-day enumeration workshop was conducted in the community so as to technically equip the volunteers about the data collection methodology and ethics.

Support and facilitation of the workshop was provided by members of the ISN, FEDUP and CORC.

A Questionnaire was developed to administer data collection and it was structured as follows:

Household Details	- Name & Surname - ID Number - Gender - Age of the owner - Number of people in household by age - Household composition
Employment, Income & expenses	- # Employed / unemployed - Type of employment - Employment distribution - Type of Grant: ex. Pension, Child support - Main expenses per month
Nature of house (Structure)	- Type of Structure - Area of Structure (size) - Number of rooms
Eligibility for Housing Subsidy	- Subsidy approved or not

Disaster & Relocation History

- Waiting list

Health & Sanitation

- Experience of Fire Disaster, Flooding
- Eviction/forced relocation
- History of stay
- Type of toilets
- Collection of refuse
- Type of service received at local Clinic
- Number of sick people in each household at the moment of the survey

Every household of the 265 household units in the community of “Alberton Station” was surveyed. All the households were willing to give the required information of the questionnaire.

KEY FINDINGS

The summarised key characteristics and basic statistics of the “Alberton Station” community as surveyed on the 19th and 20th November 2009 are as follows:

Settlement profile

Settlement's Name	Alberton Station
Age of the settlement	26 years
Status on the time of the survey on the date of drafting this report	No change. The 24 chemical toilets that were promised have not been delivered. There is only one tap
Structures	Shacks and some disused railway buildings
Population	1024 people
Number of families	Of the 265 households, there are 31 households with more than 1 family living under the same roof and this brings the total number of families to 298 families.
Household units numbered	265
Not enumerated	None
Ownership of land	Spoornet
No. of Individual toilet blocks	There are only 7 pit toilets otherwise most people use the bush to relieve themselves
No. of community toilet blocks	None

Ratio of toilets to total number of people	N/A
Most urgent needs	Toilets, water taps, recreational facilities, birth certificates, I.D.s, development of land

RESULTS ANALYSIS

Number of households by gender

In the enumeration survey conducted in November 2009 at “Alberton Station” informal settlement in Ward 37 of the City of Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province, it was established that the community is comprised of 265 households. Male heads of household are dominant in the area with 203 against 62 female heads.

Only heads of household are classified by gender and the rest of the population is not listed by gender. This therefore does not give us the overall breakdown of the total population by gender.

Age of owners

The average age of owners (heads of households) is 34 years. The oldest resident is Ms Nozipho Ntongane, however, her age cannot be officially confirmed because she did not have an I.D. document. The youngest household head is Ms Siphokazi Tshokela (18).

Number of people living in a house

Of the number of people living in one shack, the highest is 5 people in 5 of the 265 shacks.

Population and age ranges

The total population number at “Alberton Station” is 1024 people.

Of these, 447 are under the age of 18 years (0 – 17 years).

The number of youth in the range of 18 – 35 years is 156. The number of adults (18 – 64+ age range), inclusive of the youth, is 577.

School attendance

An abnormally low number of children attending school is 79 in all. When considering the fact that there are 447 children under the age of 18, it means that the majority of children are roaming around in the streets of Alberton, probably involved in crime, substance and drug abuse.

Employment

268 people are in some kind of employment, they are either employed on a part-time basis (46 people), full-time (204 people) or self-employed (18). About 280 people (adults) are unemployed, excluding children. 268 people out of 577 people of working age (18 – 64+ age range) represents less than 50% of the employed people in the settlement.

It is important to note that there is lack of skills in the “Alberton Station” informal settlement as only 24 people indicated their skills, ranging from construction work, building, welding, panel-beating and brick-laying.

It is important to note that one lady indicated her skill as Pre-nursing, which is semi-professional skill and she may be very much employable.

Social grants

An insignificant number of only 50 children receive child support grants. This figure represents about 11.2% of children eligible for grants. It may be that a large number of children do not have birth certificates and this may be the contributory factor to this state of affairs.

Also, Old Age and Disability Grants, none of the community members indicated that they were receiving any of these social grants.

Other income

299 people have got some kind of unspecified income. Many people did not, however, wish to indicate their income levels for purposes of housing subsidy eligibility.

Transport

The majority of people (145) in the settlement do not use taxis or buses but they walk.

Monthly expenses

On average, households spend about R880.00 per month on main expenses like food, electricity, transport, etc.

Number of people without I.D. documents

A few of the people (26) in the settlement indicated that they do not have I.D. documents, they include foreign nationals who either have passports or are unable to produce any kind of identity document.

Nature of the houses

On average, the size of the shacks is no more than 17.11². 20 people indicated that they were renting other people's shacks and 1 had purchased the shack he lives in.

Eligibility for Housing Subsidy

82 people indicated that they were on the waiting list for houses. The longest staying person in the settlement has been there for 15 years.

Disasters

There have been 109 fire disasters in the settlements. There have also been 586 flooding disasters and this is due to the fact that every year during the rainy seasons there have been floods.

Migration

The length of stay at "Alberton Station" differs with the longest staying person having been there for 15 years. The people have come from different places that include rural areas, townships, other provinces as well as other countries like Zimbabwe and Lesotho.

Health and Sanitation

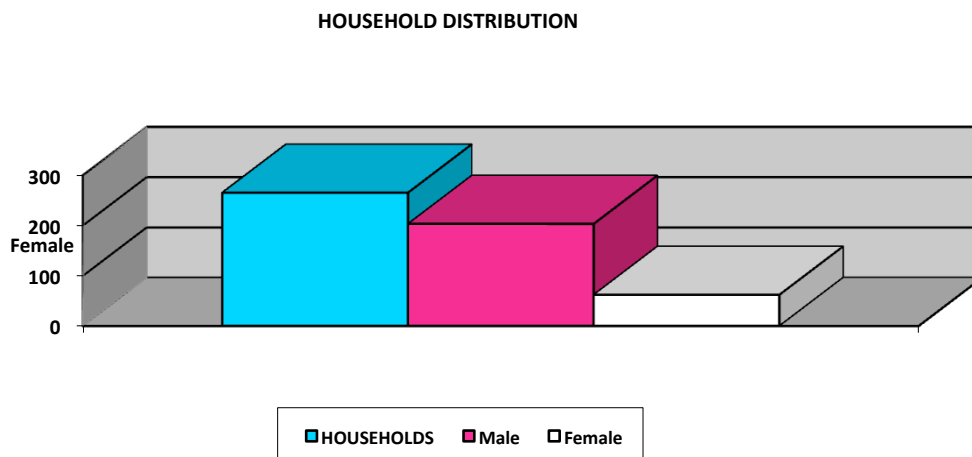
There are no toilets in the settlement and most residents use the bush to relieve themselves. There are only 7 pit toilets.

Only 21 people were indicated to be sick of unspecified sicknesses/illnesses. This shows some reluctance by people to disclose their health status. In conditions like those at "Alberton Station" it is not possible to have such a low number of sick people.

GRAPHS AND TABLES

TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	265	100%
Male	203	76.60%
Female	62	23.40%

Table 1: Households heads by gender



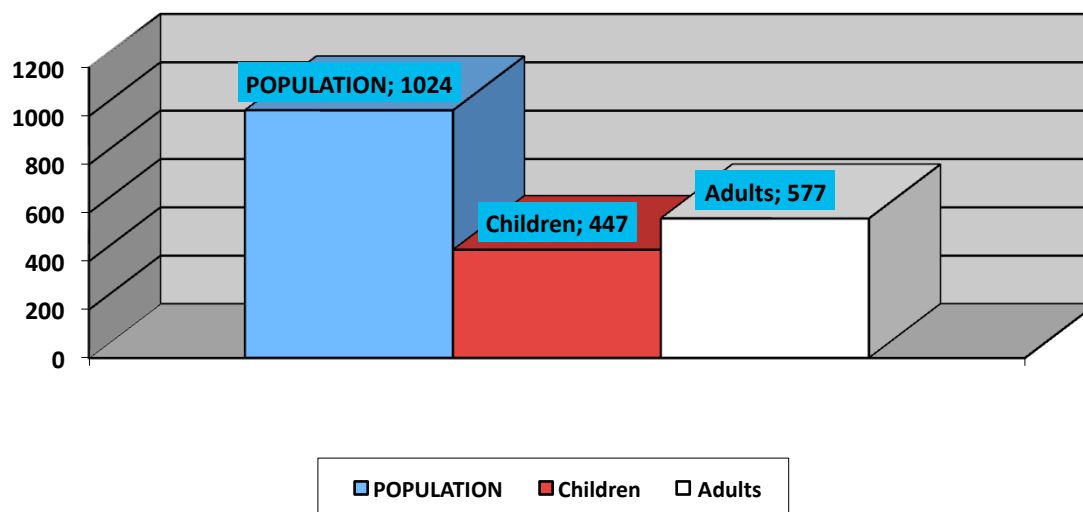
Graph 1: Households by gender

As shown above, the household is dominated by males who make up 76.60% of the household heads. Females account for 23.40%.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

TOTAL POPULATION	1024	100%
Children under 18 yrs	447	43.65%
Adults (18 – 65+ years) including youth	577	56.35%

Table 2: Population Distribution



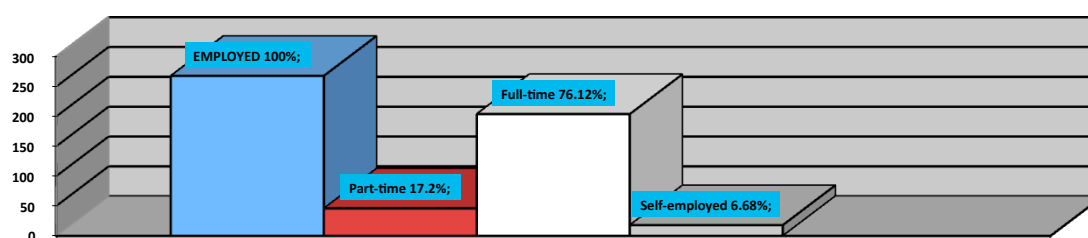
Graph 2: Population Distribution

In population distribution, adults (18 – 64+ age range) have slightly higher population figures (56.35%) than children who are under 18 years. The number of youth (18 – 35 years range) of 156 is not represented in the Graph above because the questionnaire did not have this variable.

EMPLOYMENT ANALYSIS

Total employed	268	100%
Part-time	46	17.2%
Full-time	204	76.12%
Self-employed	18	6.68%

Table 3: Employment Analysis



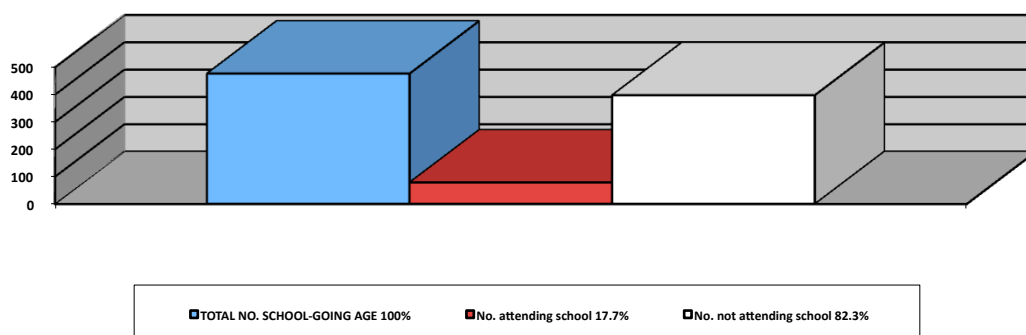
Graph 3: Employment Analysis

Slightly above 76% of the employed people are full-time but that does not mean that there is less unemployment. If you consider that only 268 of the 577 adults are employed, this figure represents less than 50% of the adult population and about 3.82% of the total population.

ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Total No. of children of compulsory school-going age	477	100%
--	-----	------

No. attending school	79	17.7%
No. not attending school	398	82.3%



The above table and graph show a shocking low figure of 17.7% of children attending school and an abnormally high number (82.3%) of children not attending school.