

Community Mapping in Eldorado Park & Kliptown

Karibu! Community Health

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Before Khanya College started its health pilot project in Eldorado Park and Kliptown, it needed to understand these two communities more. Khanya used the community mapping method which consists of working with local residents and organisations to understand the communities; and to draw a map of the local facilities and initiatives. This included physically walking the streets of Eldorado Park and Kliptown to discover the community and its complexities.

For 10 days, from 5 April to 4 May 2023, six (6) Khanya organisers physically went to Kliptown and Eldorado Park to do community mapping starting at 57 Beacon Road in Kliptown. The team covered Kliptown in two days, which is much smaller than Eldorado Park. Kliptown was difficult to navigate because it is an informal settlement with many dumping sites, and no street names and house numbers. The streets are divided by flowing sewage, poor sanitation and generally poor service delivery. There are 'green' toilets, and the place is overcrowded. Beacon Street was very busy with many small businesses and unemployed people, especially youth roaming the streets.

People were very curious when they saw us with our boards and checklists. Some thought we were with the SA government and asked if we were there to distribute food parcels and wanted to register themselves. Despite reports, the experience in Kliptown was good and people were friendly.

The physical mapping and walking in Eldorado Park took eight (8) days to complete. Eldorado Park consists of 9 extensions and Klipspruit West. Compared to Kliptown, Eldorado Park is more middle class and has many bonded houses, flats, and tarred roads with street names and house numbers. However, all the organisers were afraid of the high crime rates in that area. Some community members also warned us to be careful.

Mapping was an exciting eye-opener about service delivery and how two townships next to each other, separated by a single road, are so different. Kliptown has no clinics, no schools, no electricity, proper sanitation or schools. People go to Eldorado Park to access schools, clinics, the library and other facilities. Walter Sisulu Square is in a bad state and is a hotspot for crime. During the mapping, we found 65 spaza shops, 23 taverns, 26 schools, 3 libraries, 5 clinics and other facilities.

Some Findings

As part of the Community Health Project, from 5 April to 4 May 2023, 6 organisers from Khanya College went to map out Eldorado Park and Kliptown, in the South of Johannesburg. The mapping was aimed to ground the project and gain information

about the community and their social conditions. Eldorado Park, was a 'Coloured' township under apartheid but today it consists of people who speak different languages and live together.

Kliptown which was formed in 1891 and hosts one of the important historical monuments where the Freedom Charter was drafted. The historical Walter Sisulu Square has deteriorated, after drawing tourists it is now abandoned. Similarly, Charlotte Maxeke's house in Kliptown is an eyesore. Maxeke was one of the early anti-apartheid activists.

During the mapping we saw many people, especially youth just standing around aimlessly, an indication of the high unemployment. The International Centre for Climate Change and Development (2020) claims that unemployment in Kliptown is at 60-70% in 2020, much higher than Eldorado Park's 30%.

Both Eldorado Park and Kliptown experience a high use of drugs and alcohol, amongst youth and the elders. The Community Police Forum (CPF) said drug overdose was high. Drugs are sold in parks, where children play. The drug abuse is linked to high unemployment. The levels of crime and gangsterism is also high. The residents in Eldorado Park have reported hearing gunshots at night. recreational facilities for youth are inadequate. Kliptown does not have any parks and no libraries. Instead, there are 23 taverns (7 in Kliptown, 9 in Eldorado Park and 7 in Klipspruit West). There are 39 churches and only 3 sports fields. The community participate in the CPF to help combat crime and violence but it seems not much has changed.

Eldorado Park and especially Kliptown have major service delivery issues. In Kliptown housing is a key issue, and most areas have no electricity, and no proper sanitation,

However, despite the difficulties, like most townships in South Africa, many organisations are doing incredible work in responding to the social and economic challenges the community faces. This includes working with children, youth, and women – from after-care to reading and writing skills and combating violence against women and children. At the Khanya College stakeholder meeting it was clear that people are not waiting for the government, but with almost no funding are working and holding together their communities.

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