

Kliptown Community Facing an Array of Challenges

By Kelvinicia Malan

01 June 2025

In the community of Kliptown, many young people are unemployed. They roam the streets every day, searching for opportunities. The older generation is struggling, living hand to mouth. Some sell snacks like 'amakikip', fat cakes, and polony in the mornings to schoolchildren just to afford a meal for the night.

Young people, especially those over 20, gather daily outside Boxer Stores to check if their Social Relief of Distress grant of R370 has been deposited. With toddlers on their backs, they hope to buy food for themselves and their children. Others stand outside Boxer and KitKat stores, offering to carry shoppers' bags for R10 or R20. Some wake up early, dressed in their blue overalls, searching for jobs, hoping to bring home a loaf of bread to feed their families.

In other parts of the community, such as Mandela Square, frustration over poor service delivery has led some to take drastic measures. Without proper medical care for their wives and children at local clinics, they turn to selling drugs or engaging in crime. In their own way, they see this as a way to participate in the economy and provide for their families.

The elderly struggle the most. They rely on their monthly social grants, but the rising cost of living makes survival difficult. Many elderly people care for their unemployed adult children and grandchildren, stretching their limited resources.

One community member, an elderly woman named Martha, expressed her hardship: "As a pensioner, even buying a loaf of bread is a challenge. That one loaf isn't enough for the seven of us in my household, and the only income we have is my social grant."

In an effort to cope, some residents have started growing their own vegetables to eat with pap. But even this is uncertain, as neighbours sometimes steal from gardens at night. When asked, they simply say, "I only have enough for my children tomorrow." Unemployment has made sharing difficult—everyone is just trying to feed their own family.

The high cost of living has made survival the only priority, and the social grant is not enough to keep up. Neoliberalism has stripped people of the spirit of Ubuntu. Though there is political freedom, economic freedom is still out of reach for many, especially for Black South Africans.

This article was submitted on 27 May 2025. You may republish this article, so long as you credit the authors and Karibu! Online (www.Karibu.org.za), and do not change the text. Please include a link back to the original article.