

Profiling Protea South, Soweto

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Protea South, a part of Soweto, is an area where crime is a norm along with a high rate of unemployment, teenage pregnancy, and substance abuse. Amongst the negativity and socio-economic issues lies a high rate of sports and health participation. There are two gym centres within the area and there are two soccer fields where young and old people partake in sports daily. There is also an office of the Community Policing Forum (CPF) where community members can take their grievances with the hope of finding solutions on how to resolve and move forward.

There is a struggle against crime in Protea South, the CPF comrades ensure that they investigate and find the culprits then punish them. It might seem like it is not working but it does have a positive impact, as it shows that the members within the community are taking the responsibility and ensuring that crime rates decrease.

There it is a belief that there is a lot of talent in the informal settlements (elokshin). There are soccer clubs in different sections where training is conducted daily. This helps keep the young boys off the streets and rather engaged to stay fit and mentally strong. The area has a gym near the CPF offices where both young and old go to work out on a daily basis.

In addition to that, this strikes a balance within the community. There is a high chance that the good that is being done by others will have an impact and inspire more to engage and participate in the good that is being done in the community. Much of the substance abuse and teenage pregnancy in informal settlements is usually caused by the lack of facilities although in the case of Protea South there are facilities. The number one driving factor is peer pressure, 'FOMO' (fear of missing out) and possibly lack of discipline.

One might ask so how can these issues be solved or decreased?

One community member mentioned that to respond to the issues the government should implement after-school programs which can take place in the community hall, also teach our youth skills that can help them get jobs as many are unemployed and do not possess any skills to speak of.

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