



**Synthesis Report:**

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

by Jenny Parsley & David Everatt

*The*  
**ATLANTIC**  
*Philanthropies*



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## This document

This part of the report very briefly summarises findings, but really is a vehicle for drawing together a range of recommendations made by different authors in either their case studies or the synthesis chapters.

A couple of points about language. Firstly, a number of chapters and case studies debate the issue of whether xenophobia was at play, or 'Afrophobia' or 'negrophobia' or some other formulation. In this document, xenophobia is used throughout for the sake of simplicity – and because, in most cases, the authors of different case studies agreed that what they found were xenophobic acts and attitudes, however unacceptable this has been among political leaders and officials.

Secondly, the word 'foreigner' appears in many parts of the book. Again, many authors spend time unpacking the differences between migrants, refugees, asylum seekers; and the fact that the focus of the violence was black African migrants – from inside and outside South Africa – but not white/Asian/ other foreigners. Again, the word is used for the sake of simplicity; readers interested in unpacking these issues should follow up in different case studies and synthesis chapters where the terms are discussed.

## The research process

In 2009, The Atlantic Philanthropies commissioned Strategy & Tactics (S&T) to assess the response of South African civil society to the xenophobic violence and the implications for the future of civil society. S&T worked in partnership with the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (itself a partnership of the University of Johannesburg, the University of the Witwatersrand and Gauteng Provincial Government), the Centre for Sociological Research at the University of Johannesburg, Prof Sally Peberdy from the University of the Western Cape and Mazibuko Jara of the Amandla Forum, and the

Centre for Civil Society at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Dr Karuti Kanyinga of South Consulting also joined the team.

The papers looked at the responses of specific sectors such as faith-based organisations, trade unions, the African National Congress (ANC), Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the corporate sector. Case studies also focus on specific spatial areas where violence was intense – sites in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape – and places where it was averted, such as Khutsong. Another provided a meta-review of existing media reviews of the xenophobic violence, while a background paper drew on some 20 focus groups that had been staged (for a different project and client) immediately before and after the May 2008 violence, during which participants spoke of their mounting anger prior to the May violence, and then (in the second phase of groups) reflected back on it – often with deep menace.

The case studies were then used (in addition to other research, published materials and so on) to write a series of synthetic chapters, which provide an overview of what happened, suggest why it happened, and what is needed to strengthen civil society specifically and make South African society generally more inclusive and equitable. Migrant voices were deliberately sought and can be heard throughout the book, but are also gathered in a chapter reflecting on *migrant civil society* and how it experienced the response of South African civil society. Comparative chapters investigated violence in the Great Lakes region and the post-election violence in Kenya. These chapters will later be published in book form.<sup>1</sup>

## The causes of the violence

Explanations about the causes of the violence include historical factors resulting from South Africa's exploitative and racist apartheid past, ongoing poverty and structural inequality, internal and international patterns of migration, immigration policies and deep-seated xenophobic attitudes. These factors combined with political instability, electricity blackouts, rising consumer prices and a low national mood to form a toxic cocktail which fuelled unprecedented national rage targeted at African migrants and fellow South Africans.

## An incomplete transition

O'Donnell & Schmitter's work *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*<sup>2</sup> identified three steps in the transitional process: liberalisation, democratisation, and socialisation. In the first, a range of rights and liberties are extended to the populace previously denied them, as occurred in South Africa. In the second, citizenship, participation and representation for all in the political process is extended. However, in the third phase – socialisation – social and economic equality are the goal. And here South Africa has failed.

<sup>1</sup> Nyar, A. 2010. 'What Happened?' *A Narrative of the May 2008 Xenophobic Violence*; Amisi, B., Bond, P., Ngwane, T. 2010. *Xenophobia and civil Society: Why Did It Happen?* University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society; Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2010. *Taking Control: Civil Society Responses to the Violence of May 2008*; Amisi, B. 2010. *Migrant Voices*; Smith, J. 2010. *Xenophobia and the Great Lakes*.

<sup>2</sup> O'Donnell, G., Schmitter, P. and Whitehead, L. (1998): *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*.

Despite remarkable achievements in some areas, despite social grants and free basic services, despite development programmes in virtually every sector, despite Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE), government has signally failed to address inequality. Poverty levels have slowly but steadily decreased over time.<sup>3</sup> But South Africa is in the top three most unequal countries on earth, and Johannesburg is among the most unequal cities on earth, joined by Pretoria.

The private sector has glaringly failed to change from business as usual. There is a growing national consensus that a second transition is required. Nationally, business as usual cannot continue. The political rules have been re-written, the administrative and judicial systems have been re-wired if not fully transformed, but at the social and economic levels – the third phase of transition, according to O'Donnell & Schmitter – South Africa has failed to move to a point where we can truly regard ourselves as post-transitional, as having arrived at the place envisioned by those struggling for freedom from white rule. The period since 1994 has been punctuated by sporadic calls for 'an RDP of the soul', or moral regeneration, based on an acceptance that psycho-social damage has been done to all – in different ways and to different degrees, certainly. But if all South Africans are to be liberated from their past, all South Africans need a new moral compass, just as the economic order needs to be fundamentally restructured and the social order re-imagined.

Without this third, delayed phase of transition, South Africa remains in limbo – post-apartheid but not yet the non-racial, non-sexist democracy envisioned in the Constitution; still a transitional society, yet without sign-posts telling citizens when they will have arrived at post-transitional 'real' South Africa. And while that obtains, the fertile breeding ground remains in place for xenophobia, as it does for rape, for violent crime, for racism and for the other social ills by which we are increasingly identified in the world.

This book offers a series of recommendations – some easily implemented, others less so – for seeking to reinvigorate civil society and to attack xenophobia. But underlying those recommendations is a basic reality that business as usual – economic, social, political – cannot continue. The book details the impact of poverty and in particular inequality – economic, spatial, social – that provides the space in which xenophobia (and so many other phobias) take root. Xenophobia, we repeatedly argue, is a symptom of a deeper malaise. And what all of this points to is that a rupture with the 1994-2010 period is now required. If the cause is to be tackled, rather than the symptom treated, then the transition – the socio-economic transition – needs to be completed.

## Historical factors

The research found that the apartheid legacy of institutionalised violence as a means of communicating grievances and achieving political leverage remains embedded within the national psyche.<sup>4</sup> Despite the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, it was also suggested that a root cause of xenophobia lies in having addressed apartheid human rights violations without

<sup>3</sup> See Everatt D. 'The undeserving poor: poverty, politics and provision in the poorest nodes of South Africa' (*Politikon*, 36/1, July 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Nyar, A. 2010. *What Happened? A Narrative of the May 2008 Xenophobic Violence*, p.4.

compensation and justice, and a generally scarred national psyche (affecting people of all races).<sup>5</sup> The historical culture of violence combined with ineffective policing has resulted in continued impunity for perpetrators, exacerbated by prioritising reconciliation over justice.<sup>6</sup> Other theorists see xenophobia as a consequence of apartheid isolation and South Africa's long exclusion from the international community generally and Africa in particular.<sup>7</sup>

### *Poverty and structural inequality*

According to Baruti Amisi, Patrick Bond and Trevor Ngwane (2010), 'the economics of xenophobia and its structural underpinnings in resource inequality remain unaddressed... which create enabling conditions for discrimination, prejudice and violence against those perceived to be "foreigners"<sup>8</sup>. South Africa has a long history of organised migrant labour dating back to the mid-1800s with workers coming to the mining and agricultural sectors. When the dynamic changed from migration meeting the labour demands of capital to 'desperation-based migration' the official reaction shifted. According to Mondli Hlatshwayo (2009), 'the crisis of globalisation and the decline in employment makes it difficult for these workers who are coming from struggling economies on the periphery to find jobs in South Africa. This intensifies competitions for jobs and opportunities in South Africa.'<sup>9</sup> Within this context, the labour market takes advantage of inexpensive and easily exploitable migrant labour.<sup>10</sup> In the Western Cape and other areas, xenophobia is often articulated by township business associations who actively organise against black African owned (usually Somali) businesses operating in townships.<sup>11</sup> Fifteen years after the first democratic election the promises of a better life for all have not been met. The scapegoating theory suggests that foreigners become scapegoats because they are seen as a reason for the failure to deliver housing, employment and services.<sup>12</sup>

### *Internal and international patterns of migration*

Since the demise of apartheid and the lifting of influx control legislation, South Africans have been on the move. Widespread rural poverty has resulted in mass internal migration as people move to the cities in search of jobs, health care and better prospects. Urban spaces have thus been transformed with the arrival of both African nationals and internal migrants.

<sup>5</sup> Amisi, B., Bond, P., Cele, N., Hinely, R., ka Manzi, F., Mwelase, W., Naidoo, O., Ngwane, T. and S. Shwarer. 2009. *Xenophobia and Civil Society: Durban's Structured Social Divisions*.

<sup>6</sup> SAHRC, 2010. *Report on the SAHRC Investigation into Issues of Law, Justice and Impunity arising out of the 2008 Public Violence against Non-Nationals*.

<sup>7</sup> In Amisi, B., Bond, P., Ngwane, T. 2010. *Xenophobia and civil society: Why did it happen?* University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid p.5.

<sup>9</sup> Hlwatshayo, M. 2009. *COSATU's Responses to Xenophobia*; Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2009. *Progressive humanitarian and social mobilisation in a neo-apartheid Cape Town: a report on civil society and the May 2008 xenophobic violence in Cape Town* p.12.

<sup>10</sup> Bond, P./ et al. 2010 *'Xenophobia and civil society: Why did it happen?'*

<sup>11</sup> Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2009. *Progressive humanitarian and social mobilisation in a neo-apartheid Cape Town: a report on civil society and the May 2008 xenophobic violence in Cape Town*.

<sup>12</sup> Drawing on the work of Bronwyn Harris in Amisi, B., Bond, P., Ngwane, T. 2010. *Xenophobia and civil society: Why did it happen?* University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society p.19.



Despite these changes, urban apartheid geographies have remained largely intact, linked with the rapid increase in housing prices in the post-apartheid period and a government housing delivery programme unable to meet the demand. This has resulted in the massive influx of people into shack areas around the cities. Tensions are generated as people compete for land, employment and business opportunities in spaces with tenuous material, political and social infrastructure.<sup>13</sup>

Trevor Ngwane's (2009) case study on Bottlebrush vividly described the living conditions in informal settlements:

*The place is teeming with people and when you stand on one side of the hill, you can see and hear people busy in their shacks across the stream giving an eerie claustrophobic sensation as if everything is happening inside a fishbowl. This feeling is accentuated over the weekend when everyone is home, then you can hear the noise of the place, people talking, radios blaring, children shouting, dogs barking and the odd car driving through the extremely narrow, precarious, concrete roads. Rough looking young men sit in street corners or in shebeens (drinking houses) that are strategically located at key points in the settlement. Groomed, confident young women walk in pairs along the streets chatting away. There is the inevitable drunk zigzagging in the street. Older women go about their washing in the few water taps placed at unexpected points in the street, often not a real tap but a thin plastic pipe sticking out of the ground and kept closed by bending it against itself and tying it with a piece of string.<sup>14</sup>*

Around a third of the populations of each of the municipalities in this study are internal migrants.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Immigration policies and systemic exclusion of migrants***

South Africa has signed a number of international policy instruments protecting the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, which have been incorporated into national legislation. It is however common practice to discriminate against and exploit refugees. The rights of migrant workers and irregular unskilled migrants are not clarified or upheld, despite Constitutional protections guaranteeing rights are for 'everyone'.<sup>16</sup> This is fuelled by corruption in dealings between the state and foreign nationals.<sup>17</sup>

Researchers argue that violence against African migrants to South Africa has been consistent across the apartheid and post-apartheid divide. Structural exclusion prevents immigrants from exercising

<sup>13</sup> Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2010. Taking Control: Civil Society Responses to the Violence of May 2008

<sup>14</sup> Ngwane, T. 2009. Case Study: Chatsworth, Bayview and Bottlebrush p.38.

<sup>15</sup> Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2010. Taking Control: Civil Society Responses to the Violence of May 2008

<sup>16</sup> Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. *op cit*

<sup>17</sup> SAMP. 2008. The Perfect Storm: The Realities of Xenophobia in Contemporary South Africa, Migration Policy Series No 50 p.6.

their rights despite their length of residence in South Africa.<sup>18</sup> South Africa's approach of local integration is negatively affected by exclusion and xenophobia. Amisi writes, "migrants' initiatives for self-integration and consequently living together are undermined by unscrupulous officials from both the government and NGOs' spheres."<sup>19</sup> A woman asylum seeker spoke at a workshop that formed part of the research process:

*I have been in South Africa for 13 years now. My last born is 12 years old. During xenophobia children were asking, 'where can we go now?' We left the Congo because of safety but what can we do? ... Children have been traumatised. The impact on children is devastating. The same issues that refugees ran from are taking place in South Africa. What can we do to give hope to the younger generation as the future leaders of war torn countries?<sup>20</sup>*

According to Friedman, 'government actions played a major role in convincing grassroots South Africans that immigrants were a threat to them and that the chief cause of the violence was therefore not that citizens did not take seriously the government's approach to African visitors, but that they took it far too seriously.'<sup>21</sup>

### ***Xenophobic attitudes and violence***

Xenophobic attitudes being expressed violently have been evident since the early 1990s with foreign nationals being attacked, thrown from trains, having their shops burnt and looted, and migrants being the easy targets of violent criminal attacks and exploitation and corruption at the hands of government officials. Few perpetrators have been prosecuted. Strong negative attitudes seem to be held irrespective of gender, education, socio-economic status or any other variable.<sup>22</sup>

The combination of immigrant rightlessness, structural exclusion and deeply held prejudice, resulted in organised action being taken against individuals seen as threatening the social and economic fabric of South Africa. Amisi, Bond and Ngwane argue that this form of 'social activism' took place within a system set up by wealthy South Africans to *superexploit* migrant labour from both South Africa and the wider region.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Misago; Landau, and Monson, *op cit*.

<sup>19</sup> Amisi, B. 2010. *Migrant Voices* p.2.

<sup>20</sup> Durban workshop, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Friedman, S., 2009. *One centre of Power*, Report to Atlantic Philanthropies, December.

<sup>22</sup> SAMP. 2008. *The Perfect Storm: The Realities of Xenophobia in Contemporary South Africa*, Migration Policy Series No 50.

<sup>23</sup> Amisi, B., Bond, P., Ngwane, T. 2010. *Xenophobia and civil Society: Why did it happen?* University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society.

Everatt argued:

*Participants [in focus groups] felt that unemployment was a cause of crime and 'foreigners' were taking jobs away from South Africans; and that violent crime was brought to South Africa by 'foreigners'. The linkages were clear – crime/foreigners, or poor service delivery/foreigners get RDP houses; or corrupt officials/foreigners bribe them; or unemployment/foreigners accept lower wages; and so on. For every negative, the link to foreigners was made by participants in the groups.<sup>24</sup>*

## ***Community organising and violence***

Internal community power struggles, under-resourced police and infrastructure not conducive to effective policing has led to a generalised absence of law enforcement in informal settlements. Bond, Amisi and Ngwane note the limits to working-class leadership and that even the most explicit socialist and internationalist of South Africa's new social movements have not uniformly instilled more progressive values at community level.<sup>25</sup>

Local leaders, however, also played a vital role in curtailing violence in certain areas. The research found that in Khutsong leaders did not want to lose focus on the demarcation struggle to get Khutsong incorporated into Gauteng province. 'They [local leaders] felt that xenophobic actions would undermine their cause ... the leaders explicitly avoided drawing a rigid distinction between insider and outsider in terms of nationality.'<sup>26</sup>

## ***The context: May 2008***

2008 was moment of national pessimism. The global financial and economic environment deteriorated sharply. The domestic economy was deeply affected by the world economic crisis and its subsequent impact on trade, investment and employment. It was a year characterised by political uncertainty, rising interest rates, increases in the oil prices, rising costs of food and transport, regular electricity blackouts combined with rising electricity tariffs.<sup>27</sup> 2008 was the final year of the Mbeki election mandate that promised 'a better life for all'.

## ***Recommendations to address the causes of the attacks***

The attacks inspired a number of research projects to analyse various aspects of the crisis and the subsequent response. While most of the findings *acknowledge* poverty and inequality as causes of

<sup>24</sup> Everatt, D. 2009. "That violence was just the beginning..." Views on 'foreigners' and the May 2008 xenophobic violence as expressed in focus groups staged at the time, Atlantic Philanthropies research.

<sup>25</sup> Amisi, B., Bond, P., Ngwane, T. 2010. *Xenophobia and civil Society: Why did it happen?* University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society.

<sup>26</sup> Kirshner, J and Phokela, C. 2009. *Khutsong and the xenophobic violence*, Report to Atlantic Philanthropies.

<sup>27</sup> See Everatt, D. 2009. "That violence was just the beginning..." Views on 'foreigners' and the May 2008 xenophobic violence as expressed in focus groups staged at the time, Atlantic Philanthropies research.

the violence, few make meaningful recommendations to *address* them beyond general problem statements. Profound socio-economic transformation is essential to stability. For this reason, researchers in this project recommend that civil society advocate for the state to address the long-term structural problems through the following:

1. South Africa has undergone a political transition, but a second, deep-seated economic and moral transition is required.
2. A unifying local/ national/regional approach to rising (and durably high) unemployment, based upon a 'right to work' and sufficient public work resources, directed to projects needed by poor people and the communities;
3. A dramatic shift of state investment resources into housing/services, for capital/infrastructure and ongoing operating/maintenance subsidies. There is a need for the authorities to intervene in renting out shacks. There is a need to collaborate with civil society and local governments to develop transitional and long-term housing options for homeless asylum seekers and refugees;
4. A rising level of disposable income for low-income people – e.g. through a Basic Income Grant - to accommodate the intensified desperation in the informal sector. Government to extend grants to refugees and asylum seekers;
5. A commitment to dramatic increases in publicly subsidised employment and to channelling investment resources into low-income areas, to mitigate the economic desperation that so often generates crime;
6. Changes to South African state regulations that liberalise border restrictions (e.g. the Zimbabwean temporary work visa), and a very strong stance against such corruption, plus a dramatic increase in staff to accommodate the Department's rising clientele base;
7. A much greater South African state commitment to the promotion of cultural diversity and the 'melting pot' of regional citizenries within South Africa;
8. A shift of South African foreign policy – driven by regional solidaristic initiatives in civil society and away from strategies which exacerbated political-economic and geopolitical tensions in Southern and Central Africa;
9. Awareness raising: education and leadership are crucial at all levels of government and throughout all government departments.

### *How civil society responded*

Despite a lack of preparedness, civil society responded rapidly to the violence. In areas where the violence had not yet spread, such as Cape Town and Durban, civil society organisations began urgent meetings in anticipation that the violence could spread to communities further afield. When the violence struck, civil society organisations accessed and channelled resources, provided food, shelter and other material assistance. Civil society mobilized hundreds of people as volunteers. It pressurised government to intervene. Jara and Peberdy argue that in the early days of the crisis 'civil

society essentially replaced the absent, incapable and dysfunctional state.<sup>28</sup> Civil society was found to be closer to the needs of the people and having the flexibility to respond in an emergency.<sup>29</sup>

Many of the civil society organisations working on the response had never worked together before. The civil society response was diverse and plural in nature. It included NGOs, social movements, community-based organisations (CBOs), civics, schools, women's groups, peace and justice organisations, academics, students, Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith-based organisations (FBOs), refugee and migrant organisations, school governing bodies, community policing forums, professional associations and trade unions. These diverse groupings were brought together under several umbrellas which served different purposes, from humanitarian aid to political activism. These organisations also put pressure on political parties and constitutional institutions to intervene.

In the displacement camps, NGOs continued to play an important role in service provision, psychological support, legal assistance, education and advocacy. Once displaced people were moved from police stations to camps, civil society organisations lobbied to ensure minimum standards of care. Civil society mounted legal challenges, including an attempt to prevent closure of the camps in light of inadequate preparation for reintegration into communities. The legal action was successful, but was not followed by the state.

Civil society organisations were less involved in the reintegration aspect as many had returned to their core business at this time. Some organisations, such as the Nelson Mandela Foundation and the Black Sash, have continued hosting community dialogues to assist in creating platforms for discussion and mediation. The case studies found that the civil society response was an effective short-term humanitarian intervention. After the immediacy of the crisis passed, the momentum created by the crisis was lost.

## *Coalitions*<sup>30</sup>

Prior to the outbreak of violence, various coalitions of organisations working with migrants and refugees existed. There was, however, no functioning coalition of formal NGOs or of social movements broadly.

The outbreak of xenophobic violence allowed existing coalitions and partnerships to strengthen and led to the development of committees and new coalitions to direct and manage the response of civil society to the violence. The following coalitions were established: the Durban Action Against Xenophobia (DAAX), the Coalition Against Xenophobia, Racism, Ethnicism and Poverty (CAXREP), the Coalition Against Xenophobia in Johannesburg, and the Social Justice Coalition (SJC) in Cape Town.

The most enduring civil society coalition to emerge from the violence was the SJC, initiated by the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC). Since it was formed it has held community meetings, established branches, organised public meetings and begun to formulate demands around the Constitution and

<sup>28</sup> Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2010. *Taking Control: Civil Society Responses to the Violence of May 2008* p.4.

<sup>29</sup> Nyar, A. 2010. *What Happened? A Narrative of the May 2008 Xenophobic Violence*.

<sup>30</sup> This section summarises from Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2010. *Taking Control: Civil Society Responses to the Violence of May 2008*.

access to information. However, the efforts of the SJC have not gained sufficient social and political momentum and it seems to have lost its initial impetus.

While the forums and coalitions were crucial to the effectiveness of the response of civil society organisations and government, they were also the sites of tension and division. They unified diverse organisations in pursuit of common goals. Divisions reflected differences in power, access to material resources, capacity and experience. In Cape Town, some organisations were concerned at the TAC's dominant role. Jara and Peberdy acknowledge these concerns but highlight that 'to over-emphasise concerns expressed by some civil society organisations would be to miss key lessons provided by TAC's effective role. *Chief amongst these is the importance of sustained mobilisation of ordinary people.*<sup>31</sup>

Civil society partners tended to concur on the need to respond to the humanitarian crisis. Decisions regarding more politicised actions like advocacy, demonstrations and legal action were more often contentious. Coalitions or forums largely lacked a common progressive activist political focus. Organisations came from different histories, experiences and agendas which led to advocating for different strategies and approaches, particularly with regards to working with government and the media.

The difficulties in establishing lasting coalitions were identified. First, the documented weakening of civil society since 1994. Second, there is a lack of leadership and organisations willing to act and challenge government with a progressive political agenda. Third, it seems that coalitions are sustainable around a single aim which organisations can work towards. Even then it can be difficult to arrive at common strategies and tactics. Fourth, for a coalition to be sustainable it needs resources. Fifth was the need for a clear code of conduct and agenda.

Coalitions that were formed at the time faltered; organisations retreated back to working on their 'core' business without reflecting on how to integrate the issues facing refugees and migrants into their programmes and goals. This included the organisations that played a pivotal role in the response.

### ***Mainstreaming refugee and migrant issues***

Few, if any, non-refugee organisations have subsequently formally integrated xenophobia and migrants and refugees into their day-to-day work. Those that do were already working with refugees and migrants before the attacks of May 2008.

Refugees and migrants have noted that their issues have been abandoned since the crisis subsided:

*“ If refugee issues were dealt with so much enthusiasm as the Albert Park crisis, the xenophobic violence could be avoided or at least reduced. In fact, we have seen articles in the newspapers almost every morning, we received visits all the time, and there were also soccer game and picnic on*

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p37.

*Sundays in the Park but today. Only God knows why this organisation has lost interest in refugee related issues and refugees' struggles for survival.<sup>32</sup>* //

## ***Migrant civil society***

Migrant organisations were limited in their response to the attacks, although social networks and informal support structures assisted displaced people. Organising migrants is a challenge as migrants, refugees and asylum seekers do not necessarily share the same needs, interests and demands. Suspicion, vulnerability and immediate needs curtail sustained organisation and solidarity. Many of the refugees and migrants in South Africa may come from competing political interests back home. Migrant workers and refugees and asylum seekers are often isolated from the organisations which can protect their and South Africans interests. The research found that xenophobia is the biggest challenge that poor migrants face.

Some migrant organisations have managed to run effective programmes such as Africa Unite in Cape Town.

## ***Emerging Themes and Recommendations***

Five themes emerged through the research and guide the general recommendations. The recommendations aim to strengthen civil society<sup>33</sup> to better address the causes and manifestations of xenophobia. The themes are:

1. Civil society and the state
2. Refugees, migrants and civil society
3. Organisations of the urban poor, social movements and political education in marginalised communities
4. Local strategies, national coalitions and transnational/interregional networks.
5. Access to funding and capacity building for civil society and migrant organisations

## ***Civil society and the state***

The research acknowledged that with regards receiving migrants, the onus is on the state to design, implement and actively pursue policies and programmes aimed at fostering tolerance, diversity, multiculturalism and regional and global citizenship. Recommendations on how civil society can engage with the state largely focused on the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Education, Disaster Management and the role of the police.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Amisi, B. 2010. *Migrant Voices* p.24.

<sup>33</sup> This is an inclusive understanding of civil society. The following section provides information on sector specific recommendations.

<sup>34</sup> Recommendations on engaging the state to address the structural causes of xenophobia are mentioned in section 2.

## The Department of Home Affairs and immigration policy

Civil society to engage the DHA to:

- › Decisively deal with corruption
- › Review and liberalise immigration policy to increase accessibility to working class and unskilled migrants
- › Consider the provision of arrival packs and integration support for asylum seekers
- › Increase DHA human and financial resources
- › Training for police and DHA officials on the rights of migrants
- › Increase accessibility to the DHA through mobile centres or access to refugee services through DHA offices in communities
- › Increase time frames for temporary permits to reduce administrative burdens on the DHA and applicants
- › Overcome technical difficulties in managing and consolidating DHA databases to assist in managing migrant applicants who have moved within the country and facilitate implementation of mobile DHA centres.

It was suggested that civil society assist the DHA to better provide services to migrants. An example cited was an NGO which sought funds to provide benches to migrants waiting in the queues.

## Department of Education

Civil society to engage the Department of Education to:

- › Implement human rights education
- › Train educators in human rights
- › Facilitate access to school for migrant children
- › Include skills development and entrepreneurship to facilitate self reliance in a context of mass unemployment.

## The police and access to justice

Civil society to engage the police to:

- › Respond promptly to xenophobia related cases
- › Develop an early warning system to detect when violence is being instigated
- › Facilitate access to protection and justice for migrants by encouraging migrants to report crimes
- › Ensure prosecution of perpetrators and protection of witnesses
- › Address violence in communities through the Security Cluster.



## Disaster Management

Civil society to engage Disaster Management to:

- › Ensure adequate preparation for crises of this nature
- › Work with civil society organisations to build on the positive aspects of the response and ensure better coordination and transparency
- › Work with civil society to overcome mistrust and hostility where it surfaced
- › Ensure prompt response.

## Local government

Civil society to engage local government to:

- › Call mass meetings in the community to create dialogue and public awareness
- › Learn from experiences of past political and ethnic conflict such as the 1948 violence between African and Indian communities in Durban
- › Organise days of action to keep the issue on the agenda
- › Improve relationships between local residents and officials.

## Department of Labour

Civil society to engage the Department of Labour to:

- › Prosecute employers exploiting vulnerable migrants
- › Sign and ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families.

## The Department of Human Settlements

Civil society to engage the Department of Human Settlements to:

- › Develop a functional urban policy that addresses conditions in shack settlements.
- › Assist vulnerable tenants such as migrants from exploitation by unscrupulous landlords.

Other recommendations include engaging with government to overcome obstacles migrants face that increase their vulnerability. These include difficulties in opening bank accounts. Workshop participants recommended ongoing lobbying of decision makers at all levels.

## *Refugees, migrants in civil society*

The research found the need to integrate and mainstream issues facing migrants and refugees into organisational agendas. In addition, there is a need strengthen refugee and migrant organisations and refugee and migrant participation in organisations and forums. With the principle of migrant participation and consultation on issues and decisions affecting them, the following recommendations were made:

- › Acknowledge the different issues facing internal and international migrants as well as the heterogeneity within the groups. Organisations to prioritise migrant issues as distinct from issues

facing refugees and asylum seekers.

- ▶ Some migrants are better educated and resourced and thus able to be relatively successful in poorer settings. This resourcefulness could be harnessed to transfer skills to South Africans and through joint trade associations.
- ▶ Integrate refugees and migrants, and issues facing them, in organisations and forums such as the Humanitarian Assistance Network of South Africa (HANSA), social movements, faith-based organisations, community policing forums, local community meetings, trade unions and others.
- ▶ Strengthen migrant organisations through skills, capacity building and funding. Wealthy and educated migrant communities to be lobbied to support poorer migrant organisations.
- ▶ Migrant organisations to work towards transcending their differences to build a stronger lobby to address issues affecting them.
- ▶ Train South African organisations to further their understanding of migrant issues.
- ▶ Create language schools to assist in the integration of migrants in South African communities.
- ▶ Inform migrants about organisations working on issues affecting them, such as the Coalition on Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CORMSA) and their partners.
- ▶ Create awareness on interdependence through sharing stories of South Africans exiled during apartheid. Community newspapers to be used to promote positive stories.
- ▶ Organise campaigns and activities such as door-to-door campaigns, community dialogues, celebrity promotions, sports, music and cultural events

### ***Building organisations of the urban poor, social movements and political education in marginalised communities***

The research found that where community organisation was functional, with progressive leadership and where citizens and migrants worked together in community activities, xenophobic violence was prevented. Combating xenophobia thus requires strong community leadership, where organisations look for common interests and provide services to all who live in South Africa. In line with the theme above, the principle of community participation and decision-making is essential for programmes to succeed.

To address the fragmentation of the urban poor, the following recommendations were made:

- ▶ Relate the issues of xenophobia, migrants and refugees into community struggles for socio-economic justice.
- ▶ Challenge attitudinal aspects of xenophobia through political education.
- ▶ Initiate community programmes that bring structures together and create platforms for dialogue and channels to vent frustration and anger. The Nelson Mandela Foundation community dialogues are an example. Community organisations to participate in conferences on related issues.
- ▶ Programmes are needed to address trauma and promote healing and reconciliation.

- ▶ Address the culture of violence through non-violence as a principle and strategy for campaigns. Training trainers in Satyagraha was suggested.
- ▶ Strengthen community-based organisations and social movements.
- ▶ Encourage NGOs to locate their offices closer to or in informal settlements and poor urban neighbourhoods.
- ▶ Create linkages between organisations in communities and other progressive organisations. This can assist with information sharing, alliance building and political education.
- ▶ Undertake advocacy and lobbying to address issues fuelling xenophobia.
- ▶ Encourage positive pan-African identities.
- ▶ Promote self agency and local leadership, including youth leadership, to strengthen community's ability to respond to xenophobia through workshops on organising, human rights and other forms of political education.
- ▶ Initiate community activities, such as walks, arts, culture and sporting activities, to promote social cohesion.
- ▶ Revive the principles of non-racialism, non-sexism, non-homophobia and anti-discrimination that unified the anti-apartheid struggle.
- ▶ Organise and host activities in communities such as sharing life stories, soccer matches, peace talks, sporting and cultural events.
- ▶ Conduct more research into the perpetrators of the violence to better understand what the triggers and underlying issues were.

### *Local strategies, national coalitions and transnational/interregional networks*

What was noteworthy in the response to the attacks was the extent to which diverse organisations came together in that moment of crisis to address the humanitarian disaster. Despite tensions within coalitions around strategies and approaches, they played an important coordination and advocacy role. Some workshop participants suggested that coalitions are more effective in moments of crisis and that networks are more sustainable in the intervening periods.

Recommendations addressing strengthening and sustaining on coalitions, networks and international solidarity include:

- ▶ Establish networks modelled on the election monitoring network to analyse conflict areas and create an early warning mechanism.
- ▶ Institute models of planning and preparedness with all stakeholders including government, business and civil society.
- ▶ Build a movement against poverty, discrimination and xenophobia.
- ▶ Clarify the role of coalition partners to prevent duplication, minimise tensions, facilitate coordination and create meaningful platforms for engagement.

- › Define common strategies and objectives, secure resources and develop a code of conduct for coalition partners.
- › Train partners in coalition building drawing on historical and international experience.
- › Develop inclusive labour, housing and business networks focusing on common interests.
- › Lobby for the ratification and implementation of relevant international conventions.
- › Strengthen the HANSA initiative through developing assistance criteria, costing disasters and developing minimum standards.
- › Develop a database of organisations that responded to the violence.
- › Develop mechanisms for accountability and the ownership of plans and activities.
- › Maintain momentum through reiterating commitment to goals and objectives and recognising gains.

### *Access to funding and capacity building for civil society and migrant organisations*

Considering the importance of sustained community mobilisation to ensure that functional structures operate at community level, it is noteworthy that it is the very organisations that were most effective in preventing or reducing the violence that are often the least resourced. In a context where funders often prioritise humanitarian or service delivery support, the research findings argue for the need for resources to also go towards community mobilisation, advocacy, strengthening networks/ coalitions, peace building, conflict resolution and community-based organisations and social movements. This section identifies funding and capacity building as vital component to a sustained response through the following recommendations:

#### **Donors**

- › Fund migrant and asylum seeker-run organisations and coalitions such as Tutumike, the Coordinating Body of Refugee Communities and others.
- › Needs to be identified by refugee, migrant and community organisations to ensure relevance and avoid donor-driven agendas.
- › Increase the donor pool to include the state, religious organisations, the private sector, local and international foundations and donors to fund interventions to combat xenophobia. This needs to include support for organisations addressing migrant concerns as distinct from refugee and asylum seeker issues.
- › Support emerging smaller organisations such as CBOs in communities and migrant organisations to strengthen local community structures.
- › Support leverage programmes such as advocacy and communication to amplify impact by drawing other resources into communities and organisations.
- › Provide multi-year partnerships that include capacity building support for emerging organisations.

- › Fund knowledge and information sharing activities to boost capacity and networking.
- › Learn from other funders who have successfully funded community-based organisations and can attest to the effectiveness and sustainability of such an approach.<sup>35</sup>
- › Provide for a degree of flexibility in funding agreements to ensure organisations are able to respond to emergency situations.

### Civil society resource mobilisation and sharing

- › Pool resources to enhance impact of activities. This could include combined training sessions, joint activities and partnerships.
- › Seek funding from donors supporting peace building, conflict resolution and other related programmes.
- › Identify resources (human, infrastructure and other) within communities.
- › Better resourced organisations to assist smaller ones with funds, fundraising and networking.
- › Lobby for changes to the tax codes to incentivise corporate giving.

### Capacity Building

- › Train civil society organisations, social movements, community-based organisations and others in mediation, conflict resolution skills and rapid interventions to crises.
- › Strengthen leadership of social movements, community-based organisations and other organisations in civil society.
- › Strengthen organisational development and capacity building through training, mentoring and coaching on governance, financial management, human resource management, fundraising and so on.
- › Train organisations in relevant monitoring and evaluation techniques.
- › Ensure staff/volunteer motivation through programmes to address trauma and burn out.

## Sector-specific findings and recommendations

Case studies and sector-specific studies were conducted to look at the responses of sectors such as faith-based organisations, trade unions, the ANC, COSATU and the corporate sector. This section highlights the key findings and recommendations from the case studies and includes inputs received at the workshops.

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<sup>35</sup> For example, the Firelight Foundation, The Stephen Lewis Foundation and others have successfully funded community based organisations for a number of years.

## Faith-based organisations<sup>36</sup>

*Faith-based organisations (FBOs), Christian, Muslim and Jewish, their associated welfare organisations and congregations played an instrumental role in response to the violence. Faith-based organisations provided humanitarian aid. They were a trusted vehicle through which to channel and distribute donations. Some provided shelter to displaced people.*

In all of the major cities, the response of the Christian churches was ad hoc and fragmented. In contrast, the response of the Muslim community was coordinated and represented by the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC). The Jewish intervention was led by the Jewish Board of Deputies and included Habonim Dror and the Progressive Jewish Congregation. In Cape Town an inter-denominational committee was established encompassing Christian churches, members of the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) and various Jewish organisations, including the Jewish Board of Deputies. FBOs also participated in the various committees, task teams and forums that were set up.

Some faith-based organisations were involved in supporting migrants prior to the attacks and these scaled up their interventions during the crisis. Faith-based organisations provided spiritual support to displaced people in various shelters and camps. Despite this impressive humanitarian response, FBOs did not seem to provide the strong public moral leadership that they could have in challenging the intolerance and violence, notwithstanding their central role in the humanitarian response.

### Recommendations:

- › Faith-based organisations need to discuss their role in post-apartheid South Africa, including dialogue on reviving liberation theology vs. a welfare role.
- › Integrate migrants into faith-based structures and address their needs through programmes.
- › Explore ways that faith-based organisations can play a preventative and early warning role through their proximity to communities.
- › Ensure contingency plans in place should attacks occur again. Contingency plans to include security for those displaced to faith-based shelters.
- › Establish more effective coordination mechanisms.
- › Clarify roles and plan for the provision of spiritual support and worship in the camps should future events occur.
- › Compile a database of faith-based organisations which responded to the crisis.
- › Deepen understanding as to why some churches got involved and others did not.
- › Define faith-based organisations' role in addressing trauma, healing and reconciliation in affected communities.

<sup>36</sup> This section draws on the city-specific case studies as well as the focused case study of Phakathi, S. 2009. *The Response of Churches to the Violence of 2008*, case study report for Atlantic Philanthropies and Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2010. *Taking Control: Civil Society Responses to the Violence of May 2008*.

- › Explore the role for faith-based organisations in victim/offender mediation in light of the limited success in prosecutions.
- › Clarify the role of churches and FBOs in the reintegration of displaced people.
- › Undertake preventative actions at community level.
- › Conduct further research to understand the role of township and community-based churches such as the ZCC, the Shembe church and migrant churches.
- › Use the National Interfaith Leaders Council to provide leadership and coordination on faith-based interventions to combat xenophobia.

### *Corporate sector*<sup>37</sup>

Business responded to the violence through their corporate social responsibility initiatives. The response was to support humanitarian assistance. The case study found that business viewed the crisis as the responsibility of government and thus corporate intervention was limited.

Recommendations include:

- › Transparency on the corporate sector role and contribution.
- › Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the corporate sector.
- › Address inequality and exploitation in the workplace which fuels xenophobic tensions.
- › Create space for dialogue in the workplace.
- › Engage the state on migrant policy.
- › Reflect on its response, e.g. Business Unity South Africa, and ensure contingency plans are developed to ensure a more meaningful response should a similar crisis occur in the future.
- › Develop benchmarks and standards against which to measure corporate responses. This could include the provision of technical expertise, infrastructure, equipment and so on.
- › Clarify the role of corporate participation in coalitions.
- › Identify channels for corporate contributions.
- › Clarify the role of corporate structures such as BUSA in combating xenophobia.
- › Implement the NEDLAC declaration and plan of action.
- › Support events to combat xenophobia such as sporting events and cultural programmes.
- › Need for more political education/intellectual engagement on structural inequalities and their consequences.

<sup>37</sup> See Nyar, A. 2009. 'Business as Usual': Understanding the response of the corporate sector to xenophobic violence.

### ANC<sup>38</sup>

Nationally and locally, the ANC and the SACP were largely absent from the civil society response. The ANC was seen by some as taking a denialist stance by portraying the attacks as criminal opportunism rather than xenophobia. The persistent weakening of its structures over the past 15 years made it difficult for the ANC to mobilise against xenophobia. Those leading the attacks were the core constituency of the ANC. But there were a number of instances in Alexandra, Masiphumelele and Khutsong where the ANC played an active and leading role in dissuading communities from the xenophobic violence.

As the ruling party, the ANC has largely supported the migration policies of the state. The ANC has not challenged the exclusionary and xenophobic actions of the Department of Home Affairs, the police and other state agencies dealing with migrants. In addition, there is no evidence of an ANC programme to educate its members against xenophobia. Friedman notes that the ANC response was no more a counterweight to action against immigrants than that of the government.

#### Recommendations to the ANC include:

- › Undertake programmes to educate members against xenophobia.
- › Intervene where ANC counsellors fuel or instigate xenophobia.
- › Condemn xenophobia and use public platforms and policy reviews to change xenophobic attitudes and practices.
- › Review policies that promote xenophobia.
- › Condemn practices such as exploitation and corruption that fuel xenophobia and impunity in communities.

### COSATU<sup>39</sup>

COSATU has a long history of organising workers, including migrant workers, particularly in the mining sector. The global recession resulted in job losses and worsening conditions of work leaving a large section of its constituency vulnerable and under the impression that migrants are responsible for low wages. COSATU played a more active and activist role than the ANC and the SACP in response to the xenophobic outbreak. COSATU was present and active in the civil society responses in Cape Town, Durban, East London and Johannesburg. It did not play a prominent activist role, but various affiliates undertook important interventions. COSATU officials attributed the low levels of violence in the workplace to their intervention.

Until September 2009 COSATU did not have a strategy for organising migrant workers. The 2009 September Congress resolution represented a departure from past COSATU positions on migrant workers. It identifies capitalist globalisation as the systemic root of xenophobia. It commits COSATU to organise migrant workers and calls for migrant workers to be covered by labour law. Prior to

<sup>38</sup> Friedman, S. 2009. *One Centre of Power: The ANC and the Violence of May 2008* and Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2010. *Taking Control: Civil Society Responses to the Violence of May 2008*.

<sup>39</sup> This section is informed by Hlwatshayo, M. 2009. *COSATU's Responses to Xenophobia*; Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2010. *Taking Control: Civil Society Responses to the Violence of May 2008*.



the xenophobic attacks and the September 2009 resolution, COSATU did not see migrants as an important component of the working class struggle that need to be organised in their own right.

**Recommendations to COSATU include:**

- › Implement NEDLAC declaration and plan of action
- › Implement the 2009 COSATU Congress resolution through a coordinated strategy
- › Draw on international experience and solidarity
- › Learn lessons learned from local affiliates working in the retail, transport and mining sectors with experience in organising migrant workers.
- › Acknowledge the importance of the social agency of migrants
- › Create spaces of dialogue with and participation of migrants
- › Organise migrant workers into COSATU structures
- › Conduct more research on the gender aspects of migrant workers
- › Address differences in approach between the leadership and the shop floor
- › Revive COSATU's community activism to provide leadership, experience and political education at community level
- › Utilise existing legal precedents to publicise and deepen the rights of migrant workers.
- › Implement a sustained education programme on xenophobia
- › Participate in coalitions and networks regardless of political and historical differences
- › Monitor affiliates to ensure that resolutions are implemented.

### Social movements<sup>40</sup>

Continued socio-economic distress in South Africa's cities and a crisis of governance at local levels combined with neo-liberal urban policies have led to the development of social movements oriented around housing and service delivery in some cities. While the majority of social movements saw xenophobia as counter to working class solidarity, social movements played a contradictory role, with some organisations promoting xenophobia. Social movements used their organisational machinery and authority and experience to organise and provide leadership to the community during the crisis.

Social movements were effective because of their presence on the ground and their organisational capital provided by sustained participatory politics addressing community needs and issues. Mass participatory politics empowers people with information, political tools, self-organisation and effective spaces for their participation in decision-making and implementation. This is important preventative work that was undertaken by social movements. Many social movements integrated anti-xenophobia campaigns into their activities and sustained anti xenophobia campaigns after the attacks.

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<sup>40</sup> See Ngwane, T. and N. Vilikazi. 2009. *Social Movement Responses to the Xenophobia: A Case Study of the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, the Anti-Privatization Forum & the Coalition Against Xenophobia* and Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2010. *Taking Control: Civil Society Responses to the Violence of May 2008*.

Recommendations to social movements include:

- › Need for ongoing political education and international solidarity. This should include anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-homophobic political education.
- › Need for activism, meaningful messages and effective strategies and tactics.
- › Develop an informed ideological outlook that includes an understanding of structural issues and sources of oppression.
- › Participate in networks and build sustainable coalitions with shared values.
- › Create political spaces to outlet frustrations.
- › Participate in action to prevent violence and protect communities e.g. night patrols.
- › Define a vision of society based on sharing and compassion.
- › Integrate refugees and migrants into social movement organisations and programmes, combining struggles for water, electricity, housing and service delivery with the struggle against xenophobia.
- › Train in coalition building.

NGO sector<sup>41</sup>

The research categorised organisations that responded to the attacks as follows:

*NGOs working with refugees and migrants:* Most of these are South African run and provide services to refugees and asylum seekers rather than to migrants.

*Other formal NGOs:* most of these organisations work on issues of human rights and democracy, providing services and advocating for the rights of South African citizens.

*Welfare organisations:* these are often allied to religious organisations. Most work with South African citizens, but some do not specify.

*Organisations representing refugees, asylum seekers and migrants:* these operate mostly within cities. The organisations vary with some based on nationality whilst others are coalitions of organisations representing refugees. The research found that migrants from the region have not formed organisations in the same way as refugees and asylum seekers.

Jara and Peberdy found that formal NGOs' dominant response was humanitarian in nature. Formal NGOs also played a pivotal advocacy and human rights role, particularly monitoring and ensuring minimum standards were established and maintained in the displacement camps. Limited attempts were made to develop more politicised responses challenging the causes of the violence, and the treatment of displaced people and promoting the rights of foreigners. These included: demonstrations, pickets, sit-ins and vigils and anti-xenophobia T-shirts and posters were printed and distributed. Government was regularly challenged and criticised by some NGOs and civil society organisations, wrote analytical and opinion pieces for the press. Some NGOs participated in "reintegration" ceremonies intended to challenge xenophobic attitudes.

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<sup>41</sup> Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2010. Taking Control: Civil Society Responses to the Violence of May 2008.

As an indictment on the NGO sector, Jara and Peberdy write, 'if progressive organisations are not integrating non-nationals in their work why should South Africans? Challenging xenophobia requires organisations to look for common interests and to provide services to all who live in South Africa, regardless of nationality and look for spaces where South Africans and foreigners can work together for the good of all.'<sup>42</sup>

The following recommendations were made with regard to the NGO sector:

- › Integrate the issues facing refugees and migrants onto their agendas and programmes.
- › Link xenophobia to socio-economic justice struggles.
- › Include migrants and refugees in organisations.
- › Provide ongoing psychological trauma/counselling to those affected by the attacks, including NGO workers.
- › Participate and organise networks, coalitions and forums doing preventative, planning and other interventions to combat xenophobia.
- › Lobby for hate crime/hate speech legislation
- › Define ongoing research agenda.

#### Community based organisations<sup>43</sup>

CBOs played contradictory roles in the outbreak of xenophobic violence of 2008. While some played a progressive role trying to challenge xenophobia and actively tried to make communities safe for people to return to, others were active in encouraging acts of xenophobic violence. The case studies confirm that where community-based organisation is strong with a progressive leadership and where citizens and non-citizens participated together in community-based activities, for instance in Khutsong, xenophobic violence was prevented. However, in many communities CBOs are weak or non-existent and leadership is lacking. It is in these communities that violence appeared to be most likely to erupt.<sup>44</sup> Political leadership played contradictory roles. In some communities local counsellors were involved in inciting violence, whereas in others they were actively part of quelling it. The role of business associations was noted with South African business associations attempting to limit the business activities of foreign-owned businesses.

<sup>42</sup> Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2010. Taking Control: Civil Society Responses to the Violence of May 2008 p.25.

<sup>43</sup> The research looked at community responses in the following areas: Alexandra, Ramaphosa and Khutsong in Gauteng, Bottlebrush and Chatsworth in KwaZulu-Natal and Masiphumelele in the Western Cape in Dube, N. 2009. 'Many shades of the truth' *The Ramaphosa case study*; Jara, M. and Peberdy, S. 2009. *Progressive humanitarian and social mobilisation in a neo-apartheid Cape Town: a report on civil society and the May 2008 xenophobic violence in Cape Town*; Kirshner, J. Phokela, C. 2009. *Khutsong and xenophobic violence: Exploring the case of the dog that didn't bark*; Ngwane, T. 2009. *Xenophobia in Bottlebrush: An investigation into the reasons behind the attacks on African immigrants in an informal settlement in Durban*; Ngwane, T. and N. Vilikazi. 2009. *Social Movement Responses to the Xenophobia: A Case Study of the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, the Anti-Privatization Forum & the Coalition Against Xenophobia*.

<sup>44</sup> Also found in Misago, J.P., Landau, L. and T. Monson. 2009. *Towards Tolerance, Law and Dignity: Addressing Violence against Foreign Nationals in South Africa*, International Organisation for Migration, Johannesburg; Forced Migration Studies Programme (FMSP). 2009. *Humanitarian Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in South Africa: Lessons Learned Following Attacks on Foreign Nationals in May 2008*, FMSP: University of the Witwatersrand.

The following recommendations were made to strengthen community-based responses:

- › Develop progressive leadership, including women leaders.
- › Implement sustained education and awareness programmes. These could be community meetings, cultural programmes, sporting events.
- › Address the long-term impacts of trauma and violence on communities.
- › Implement continued programmes to address racial tension and reconciliation within South Africa. Little has been done since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- › Create an inclusive understanding of community membership.
- › Implement the government national action plan against racism, xenophobia and related intolerance at community level.
- › Learn from campaigns against racism and xenophobia in other parts of the world.
- › Integrate migrants into community policing forums and other community structures.
- › Assist with the prosecution of perpetrators.
- › Engage government on issues such as service delivery and housing backlogs.
- › Train community organisations on conflict management and prevention. Organisations like the SACC could run training.
- › Measures are needed to respond to displacement broadly whether it be from fires, floods etc.
- › Engage the youth, particularly unemployed youth in productive activities in the community.

### The Media<sup>45</sup>

Recommendations include:

- › Monitor and expose xenophobia in the media.
- › Intensify research on the effects of the media on perceptions of and attitudes towards migrants.
- › Advocate and lobby mainstream media to transform their approach to reporting migrant issues.
- › Strengthen civil society information exchange networks as an alternative to mainstream media.
- › Educate the public through the media.
- › Build media capacities in civil society.
- › Research is required on broadcast and photographic images and how individuals respond to and translate such messages.
- › Study the context in which journalists work.
- › Train the media to undertake responsible and informed reporting.
- › Advocate for better representation in the news room.

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<sup>45</sup> Smith, M. 2009. *The Right To Respond: A Meta-Review of the Role of the South African Media's Coverage of Xenophobia and the Xenophobic Violence Prior to and Including May 2008.*

- ▶ Promote multiculturalism through mainstream and non-fiction programmes.
- ▶ Engage with community media.
- ▶ Utilise the media as part of early warning systems.
- ▶ Acknowledge improved coverage when it happens.
- ▶ Lobby local radio stations to reach audiences not engaging with print media.

## Conclusion

Since May 2008 xenophobic attacks have continued, albeit sporadically and on a smaller scale. The material conditions and attitudes which give rise to xenophobic conflict remain.

This research found the key weakness in civil society's response was the focus on humanitarian interventions disassociated from the socio-economic and political causes.

This project highlighted the depth of xenophobia, the lack of social cohesion and tolerance of diversity and the levels of frustration within some communities. The attacks highlighted the organisational and leadership vacuums, particularly of progressive voices and structures, in some of South Africa's poorest communities. The response also demonstrated that generally there is a lack of integration between citizens, migrants and refugees even though they may live and work side by side. Similarly, civil society organisations tend to be focused on meeting either the needs of citizens or the needs of refugees.

The response did however suggest optimistic signs of a measured revival of civil society structures and activism. Prior to the attacks, there was evidence of increased community mobilisation to address socio-economic and other issues. The response to the attacks provided tangible evidence of the potential for civil society structures to mobilise rapidly and effectively. The temporary coalitions that formed demonstrated the ability to overcome difference and work towards common objectives. The coalitions strengthened existing partnerships and forged new ones.

The violence generated reflection within the faith-based community, COSATU structures, NGOs and others on their role in addressing xenophobia and its underlying causes. Resourced civil society structures are not always working in communities where the needs are the greatest and community-based organisations in those communities lack human and financial resources. What the attacks reveal underscores the need to reorient civil society priorities, to build leadership and organisation within poorer communities and to ensure that donors and other partners see the value of supporting this reorientation.

Researchers and workshop participants in this process anticipated that the likelihood of such attacks recurring is highly likely without a radical and committed, multi-pronged and multi-stakeholder response.





