

**ASSESSING THE ROLE OF STREET TRADERS' ORGANISATIONS  
IN EMPOWERING STREET TRADERS IN DURBAN-CBD**

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By

Chorivu MULUME-ODERWA

Supervisors: Dr. Oliver MTAPURI, PhD and Dr. Sylvia KAYE, PhD

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my big brother Adrian who showed me the way and for his tireless love, to my parents for their love and guidance, to my wife Petronella for being beside me through thick and thin and for her tireless highly appreciated contribution to this work, to my beloved late Grand-Ma Euphrasie for making of me the man I am today and finally to the late Charles M., my spiritual father, for his ever-present love and encouragements to believe in myself. There has been an appreciated challenge to work hard in this endeavour.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Whether in the rich Western countries, or the Southern Hemisphere developing countries, street trading is a socio-economic phenomenon which provides employment to millions of poor and marginalised communities, allowing them to survive despite socio-economic and political constraints. Well aware that their empowerment cannot come or be initiated except by themselves, they find in organising an empowerment will-power which triggers collective action toward influencing change of institutional practices and processes which often marginalise and put them under unnecessary pressure. In this environment, street traders' organisations' role tends to be limited to meeting the direct causes of their current concerns as crises arise and therefore leave in the oblivion deep causes which lead to their marginalisation. Weakened by their constituencies' economic situation, they often fall into fatalism and often become easy-targets and victims of non-inclusive municipal processes. By organising and building strong organisations they are likely to emancipate themselves from exploitative practices and processes and to claim a share in matters concerning their interests as equal stakeholders without any discrimination or exploitation but for the sake of empowering disadvantaged communities. Therefore the choice of this study was instructed by the feeling that empowered street traders' organisations in Durban-CBD can play a major role towards the integration of street traders in the city socio-economic framework.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACHIB	African Cooperative of Hawkers and Informal Business
ANC	African National Congress
CBD	Central Business District
<b>CEDAW</b>	<b>Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women</b>
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DFID	Department for International Development
DITSBO	Department Informal Trade and Small Business Opportunities
FIFA	International Federation of Foot-ball Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
IILS	International Institute for Labour Studies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITMB	Informal Trade Management Board
LED	Local Economic Development
MATO	Masibambisane Traders' Organisation
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirian Literacy Empowering Community Techniques
SACP	South African Communist Party
SANCO	South African National Civics Organisation
SASEWA	South African Self-Employed Women's Association
SATAWU	South African Transport and Allied Workers Union
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association
SEWU	Self-Employed Women's Union
SMME	Small, Micro and Medium Enterprise
SWC	Social Welfare Council
TAC	Traders Against Crime
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WCCA	World Class City for All Campaign
WLP	Women's Linking Project

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# **CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO STREET TRADING IN DDURBAN CBD**

## **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

The informal economy plays a key role in poverty alleviation in developed and developing countries. As part of the informal economy, street trading contributes greatly to providing survival means to otherwise marginalised households and to the cities' economic expansion in these countries (ILO and ILS, 2008:115; ILO, 2002:51-53 and Cape Town LED Unit, 2004:3). In South Africa, street trading contributes to the national GDP especially by creating jobs and an affordable purchase power to urban communities and generating income for thousands of poor people. However, despite this important role in local economies, street traders continue to be regrouped in marginalised organisations, which are often challenged in their empowering role by the local prohibitive and restrictive regulatory environment in which their members operate (ILO, 2002:49 and Pratt, 2006:42).

In South Africa, street traders' organisations have been challenged by the apartheid era and post-apartheid dispensation, which weakened these organisations and prevented them from thriving. In Durban they operated in a hostile environment, characterised by prohibition and then reluctant tolerance and acceptance of street traders' activities, despite the post-apartheid national legislation and macro-economic strategies that favoured street traders' activities (Diale, 2009:195). Due to a lack of institutional and organisational support and local government processes that were meddlesome, most of these organisations seem embryonic and are not effectively delivering on their potentially empowering role.

Merged businesses often operate at the socio-economic margins and these entities seem to lack homogeneity (ILO, 2002:49-50). Competing interests between members and between the businesses themselves undermine the amalgamation, while marginalisation and exclusion processes of the local government further weaken their success (Diale, 2009:195 and ILO, 2002:49). In this environment, gender-related processes also challenge these organisations' efficacy (ILO, 2002:53).

It is obvious that fragile organisations cannot effectively contribute to empowering their members. The empowerment process should capacitate members to actively participate in these organisations and subsequently facilitate that Durban street traders' businesses thrive. Moreover, this would contribute to integrating them into the mainstream socio-economic framework.

With regard to the above development, this study aims to assess the effectiveness and the efficiency of the role played by street traders' organisations in Durban-CBD and takes this opportunity to develop steps that will potentially contribute to this empowerment.

## **1.2. ASSUMPTIONS**

This study has been informed by the assumption that traders' organisations in Durban, with the rare exception of a few such as StreetNet International, the former Self Employed Women's Union (SEWU) and the like, are still at an embryonic stage. Therefore, they are not strong enough to influence policy change and take on a more participative role with respect to decision-making affecting street traders' activities. In addition, the local government compounds the problem by using top-down processes with regard to Durban street trading.

## **1.3. BACKGROUND**

### **13.1. A brief overview of street traders' organisations in Durban**

Confronted with the tough institutional working conditions - especially with regard to regulation - under which street traders in Durban operated during the apartheid era, they found it necessary to form organisations and unite their efforts in order to fight for their survival. Though little is known about street traders' organisations during this period, some of their lobbying activities to 'legitimise' street trading in Durban have been recorded (Skinner, 2008a:6).

The post-apartheid government is led by the African National Congress (ANC) party, which was democratically-elected. One of its chief objectives is to empower previously

disadvantaged communities, most of which are involved in the informal economy. This led to the emergence of street traders' organisations in South African cities, particularly in Durban.

Statistically, the number of street traders increased in this period however, the membership affiliation remained very limited. These numbers remained fluctuating (ILO, 2002:51), these fluctuations can be between a few tens for street committees and a few hundreds for bigger and better structured organisations.

The Durban street trading landscape has been dominated by two major organisations: firstly, the Self Employed Women's Union (SEWU) – which was modelled on the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India – launched in 1994; and secondly, the Informal Trade Management Board (ITMB), launched in Durban in 1995. The latter was created on the insistence of the Durban City Council, in a move to create one street traders' body with which it would negotiate instead of with a mismatch collection of ineffectual organisations. Both organisations have achieved significant results by lobbying the local government with regard to infrastructure provision. Further, StreetNet International was launched in Durban in 2002 as a membership-based organisation.

The above organisations, especially SEWU and StreetNet International, have developed constitutions and registered with the local authority. They have also built strong, accountable democratic institutions. However, SEWU was forced into liquidation in 2004 following some mismanagement issues (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:256). Similarly, the Siyagunda Association – a barber organisation launched in 2005 that regrouped mostly foreign barbers operating on the street pavements – also has a constitution, although it is still to complete the registration process with the local authority.

In addition to the above organisations, Durban street traders have also regrouped in fragmented and often geographically constituted organisations and street committees. These include the Masibambisane Traders Organisation (MATO); the Eye Traders' Association, which regroups traders without permits; Simunye; the South African Self-Employed

Women's Association (SASEWA); the Herb Market Association and other bodies which regroup mostly South African nationals.

Many of the street traders' bodies seem to be facing organisational and functional barriers, with only a few notable exceptions such as the Self Employed Women's Union (SEWU). Only a few have a constitution, an office and office-bearers and host regular elections or general meetings. This weakens these organisations as they cannot easily keep in touch with their members, who therefore are left exposed to top-down municipal administrative processes. This is mostly due to their lack of a common and strong organisational umbrella.

Conversely, the Self Employed Women's Union (SEWU) was very well organised and has managed to build strong ties with international organisations, especially those involved in street trading. However, by the time of its liquidation in 2004, it had managed to create branches in other South African provinces.

The street trading organisations are weakened by their lack of financial resources as well as institutional constraints. At the time of this study, StreetNet International was trying to regroup all street traders' associations operating in the Durban-CBD under its organisational umbrella, but the process is lengthy and appears to not be easily attainable as street traders' interests as well as challenges are diverse.

### **1.3.2. Street trading in the national institutional context**

The apartheid system negatively divided the South African socio-economic spectrum, especially through its racial discrimination system that excluded the majority of the population – the black people – but benefited the minority – the whites. This racial discrimination was enforced through the enactment of legislation that cut across all sectors of society and influenced the South African economic landscape, especially in relation to access to job opportunities as most black people were confined to living in abject poverty. To make a living, most of them resorted to working in the informal economy, especially as street traders, as this offered a viable means to survive. They did so with no access to financial capital or to



adequate means of production. These businesses were and continue to be operated as small survivalist enterprises that are run as family businesses or are typically owned by the family's sole breadwinner.

After the demise of the apartheid system in 1994, the new government developed a proactive, pro-poor and inclusive approach to development which aimed at empowering the previously disadvantaged communities (Diale, 2009:195). The new government drafted a constitution (1996) which set out a framework aimed at integrating the previously excluded communities in the national economy. Section 152 of the new constitution lays out the principles by which the local government must govern and highlights the promotion of social and economic development.

This move was augmented by the 1996 White Paper on Local Government. It encouraged local government to work with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and to improve the quality of their lives. The 1995 White Paper on National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Businesses in South Africa encouraged the national government to create an environment which would promote and assist the development of all categories of the informal economy (Lee, 2004:2).

As Diale noted, with the rise of employment in the informal sector from 19 percent in 1996 to 26 percent in 1999, SMMEs have received significant national attention and investment through the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). Through the National Small Business Act passed in 1996, it helped to establish many supportive structures (Diale, 2009:196).

Despite these developments, small enterprises operate in global, regional and local economic environments which may not be supportive of their growth prospects. Unable to deal with 'shocks' in the global economy they become even more vulnerable (Diale, 2009:195). Consequently, despite the importance and the need to support small and medium enterprises, the survivalist economy has been excluded from the prevailing support mechanisms for

SMMEs (Lee, 2004:6). Therefore, as Skinner (2000:10) points out, local government has been characterised by contradictions. For instance, in KwaZulu-Natal the KZN Draft Businesses Bill empowered local government to prohibit street trading more or less entirely, while in Durban it is subjected to tough regulations, police harassment and enforcement (Skinner 2000:11).

### **1.3.3. The evolution of Durban Local Government processes regarding street trading**

Skinner (2008a:5-14) notes five distinct phases street trading has experienced in the city of Durban. Firstly, there was a period of trader repression and harassment under the apartheid regime, which gradually gave way to tolerance. This period was characterised by the ban imposed on street trading under the guise that it was associated with crime and brought about a lack of safety on the streets. It was later severely controlled in terms of the Licensing Act, according to which only a few street traders with licenses were allowed to trade. The local government controlled and limited the issuing of the licenses (Skinner, 2008a:7). These by-laws were designed to limit street trading. For instance, the 'Move on' by-law was set up to prevent black people from working in urban areas in a bid to control their movement. The same by-laws were later relaxed as the government simply could not control the movement of black people since increased numbers of black people were coming into urban areas.

Secondly, the early to mid-1990 period was characterised by a deregulation and re-regulation of street trading at national level, which saw the introduction of the 1991 Businesses Act (No. 71 of 1991) which deregulated street trading activities by removing barriers. In Durban, the Department of Informal and Trade Small Business Opportunities (DITSBO) was established in order to manage the new developments as there were noticeable increases in street trading activities following the relaxation of regulations. Then the Businesses Act was amended in 1993 to allow local authorities to formulate street trading by-laws. In Durban, they kept the restrictive and prohibitive stance of the repressive apartheid system by restricting and prohibiting areas for street trading.

The third phase encompassed the publication of the 1995 White Paper on Small, Medium and Micro-enterprises (SMMEs) at the national level and the national constitution, which enhanced the integration of previously socio-economically excluded communities (Diale, 2009:195). Durban was innovative in that it developed the Warwick Junction Project, designed to integrate street traders into the city plans. This innovation was accompanied by a developmental plan that saw the Durban Metropolitan engaged in an infrastructural improvement programme that was to the benefit of street traders, as well as saw to the erection of a traditional medicine market and the provision of some other street trading facilities such as shelters and services facilities such as toilets, water and storage facilities. Renovations were also done on the fresh produce market buildings. The project absorbed millions of rand. However, no concrete suggestions or initiatives were undertaken to directly help the survivalist traders.

The fourth phase was in the late 1990s, which gave rise to an official attempt to institutionalise street trading in Durban with the draft of the Durban Informal Economy Policy. This took a more progressive stance towards street trading by recognising the economic value of the informal economy in job creation and in the generation of incomes for many poor households. It improved the management of informal economy activities with respect to registration, site allocation, charges for operating and via by-laws and the provision of support through making certain services and facilities available, including basic skills training, legal advice and assisting with accessing financial services.

The present phase started in 2001 and is, as Skinner (2008a:12-14) claims, a period of selective policy implementation and regression, which saw the launching and adoption of the informal economy/street trading policy in Durban. In 2002 street trading was being managed by one department, Informal Business Support. Then, in an attempt to compete with other South African cities for the 2010 World Cup events, the City Council took a somewhat unusual stance, introducing the 1996 hard-line by-laws and harassing street traders. This was in spite of the Informal Trade Policy suggestion of adopting a more developmental and co-ordinated approach to street trading, which would encompass the city by-laws being redrafted,

building the capacity of existing organisations and developing more democratically consultative processes. This period was also notable for the meddlesome activities of the Business Support Unit with respect to street trading affairs. They insisted street traders must abide by a standard constitution developed by its staff and issued a limited number of trading permits. These initiatives were seen by many to be attributed to the exertion of pressure from formal businesses, wary of the competition posed by street traders, despite isolated significant correlation between both businesses such as in the Warwick avenue.

#### **1.3.4. A profile of street traders in Durban-CBD**

Street trading in South Africa and in Durban has generally been shaped and influenced by a complex interplay of national and local government approaches. In this regard, the apartheid system has played a major negative role through its racially discriminatory policies, which have resulted in the exclusion of black people from mainstream socio-economic life. According to Lund et al. (2000:5), 'typical street-traders are poor and black and women'. Sixty percent of black people in South Africa are poor (blacks comprise 77 percent of the overall population) while only 1 percent of whites are categorised as poor (whites comprise 11 percent of the overall population). This institutionalised social exclusion was especially manifested in policies such as the Urban Areas Consolidation Act (Act 125 of 1945) and the Group Areas Act (Act 36 of 1962), both of which greatly contributed to confining black people to abject poverty and excluding them from accessing lucrative opportunities in the formal economy.

In terms of statistics, a census survey commissioned by the Durban authority in 1997 found that of the approximately 10 000 street traders operating in the Durban-CBD, the majority (59 percent) were women. A later figure from the Durban's Department of Informal Trade and Small Businesses Opportunities (DITSBO) estimates that only about 4500 street traders have permits to operate in the CBD and about 60 percent of these permit-holders are women. While 78 percent sold goods – 7 out of 10 sold foodstuffs (fruits, vegetables, meat, mielie-meal and poultry) – 21 percent provided services or sold clothing articles and less than 1 percent sold traditional medicines (ILO, 2002:53).

Street trading in Durban involves gender-related issues with regard to labour division in that it is mostly women that partake in these low-income activities (Rogerson, 1996:10). Consequently, 'male traders are more likely to have larger scale operations and deal in non-food items' (Moser, Rogerson and Sethuraman, cited in Skinner, 2000:2). The majority of these women are the sole breadwinners in their households. Women street traders tend to be older than their male counterparts and generally lack a basic education, whereas male street traders typically have reached matric level. Therefore, most women operate at the margins of the socio-economic spectrum and their businesses can be defined as being survivalist in nature. They are more exposed than men in terms of adverse regulations and goods removal and they find it difficult to reconstitute their working capital thus could potentially lose their businesses and only means of survival.

Street traders in Durban do not form a homogenous group. To make matters worse, the number of foreign street traders is increasing rapidly and these traders seem to have better knowledge, skills and education than nationals (Skinner, 1999:38). This situation can be a time-bomb justification to xenophobic-related problems as national street traders can develop the resentment of being invaded by foreign traders.

#### **1.4. STUDY RATIONALE AND OVERALL OBJECTIVES**

Irrespective of the above shift in the institutional framework both at national and local levels, Durban city by-laws continue to be prohibitive and restrictive and incorporate top-down processes that do not build an inclusive environment in which street traders can participate in decision-making, especially in matters related to the development of their businesses. Thus, the study aimed to assess the effectiveness of the role played by street traders' organisations in empowering street traders in the Durban-CBD and to contribute knowledge that would facilitate improving street traders' participation in the decision-making processes that affect their businesses. Ultimately, by proposing a conceptual framework aimed at empowering SMMEs, the study's objective was to contribute towards the improvement of Durban-based street traders' organisations' capacities to help their constituencies reach sustainability and self-reliance.

### **1.5. THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted in the Durban Central Business District (CBD) and focused on street vendors, retailers and services providers such as hair cutters and sellers of perishable foodstuffs. These are small-scale businesses which can be defined as survivalist enterprises and operate along the streets of Durban-CBD. The study will cover the post-apartheid period up until the present.

### **1.6. AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study has followed explorative qualitative methods and methodologies throughout data collection and data analysis by using semi-structured in-depth questioning, secondary data and observation. The sampling methods used to determine the sample were guided by the study's aims so as to avoid biases. The sample was limited to 23 participants and was divided into three categories, chosen randomly so as to gather information from those parties involved in street trading: street traders, organisations' representatives and officials. Ethical imperatives were taken into consideration by making sure interviewees consented to participating in the research process and without being exposed to any risk, i.e., by keeping their identities secret.

### **1.7. RESEARCH STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Organising street trading in the informal economy is a phenomenon not very easily tackled: there is no 'homogenous group', nor is it caused by a common catalysing element or phenomenon with which to work. When studying the role played by street traders' organisations in the South African context, one cannot ignore the huge impact the apartheid system had on determining the socio-economic fabric of society, particularly as most street traders took to selling on the streets out of necessity due to the racially discriminatory systems that limited their employment opportunities.

Exclusion from the formal job market meant that they found themselves with limited alternatives to achieve sustainable livelihoods. They are plagued by poverty and, confronted with their need to survive, street trading offers an employment solution which not only allows

them to provide for their families, but also may allow them to climb the economic ladder. Seeing that some of their committees or organisations have been initiated under municipal recommendation and the fact there is undeniable competition between them, especially for space, the researcher asked himself the following questions: firstly, how effective has been the role of Durban-based street traders' organisations in empowering their constituencies? And secondly, how can these organisations play a more effective and efficient role in empowering their constituencies?

### **1.8. POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS**

It is clearly evident that street trading in Durban is a complex phenomenon as it encompasses a wide array of different activities and operators. Most data was collected through interviews using a language which the researcher is not well acquainted with (isiZulu), thus sometimes necessitating the use of interpreters – in data collection and analysis. There were also time constraints to collecting and compiling the data and the sample was limited. As such, the researcher cannot pretend to have explored all issues surrounding the challenges met by street traders' associations in their quest to empower Durban-based street traders. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised. Nevertheless, the use of qualitative methods has provided the researcher with a sufficient understanding of the problem, which can be used as a basis to addressing the issues.

### **1.9. CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH**

By raising gaps that prevail in existing street traders' organisations in Durban and the apparent reasons that hinder street traders from organising, this study undertook an awareness-raising process regarding the need to build empowered and capacitated street traders' organisations that can subsequently empower their constituencies. This study, unlike most other conducted, has proposing a framework of how to empower these organisations, attempted to answer the problem posed the need to capacitate them toward fulfilling their mission of empowering their members. Empowered street traders' organisations will be able to facilitate the inclusive socio-economic integration of street traders into the mainstream

economy. This building process can only be met through an inclusive and participative effort of street traders as they become committed to empower themselves.

### **1.10. RESEARCH STRUCTURE**

This research has been structured as a six chapter study. Besides a brief introduction to the research focus, the first chapter outlined the background to the study and covered the following three sections: the institutional background during and after apartheid; an overview of street traders' organisations and a profile about street traders in the Durban-CBD. This chapter has in addition outlined the study rationale, aims and overall objectives to show why the study was initiated as well as its' scope. It provided a brief research statement followed by the research questions around which the study was conducted. The chapter also covered the structure of the whole study.

The second chapter covers the relevant literature review in order to provide a conceptual understanding of the prevailing knowledge, issues and achievements in street trading in the Durban-CBD.

Chapter three covers the conceptual framework of the study, which guides the development of strategies on how to empower street traders in order to answer the research questions.

Chapter fourth outlines the research design, the methodology and methods chosen and the justification of using them. Further, it describes the sample and the methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter five presents the research data analysis and related findings. Lastly, the sixth chapter addresses the study summary, its implications, the general conclusion and the research recommendations. It highlights the roles that could be played by the various stakeholders involved in street trading with respect to empowering street traders in the Durban Central Business District.



## **CHAPTER TWO. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

Street trading offers a vital form of poverty alleviation worldwide as it is an important economic alternative for marginalised communities. As such, it has attracted much interest from researchers and relevant stakeholders, including international institutions and state departments. This study intends to investigate prevailing knowledge with regard to the informal economy in general and particularly street trading, especially with respect to the role played by street traders' organisations in empowering street traders in Durban-CBD.

This section will put emphasis on the following key issues: firstly, the prevailing knowledge about street trading and local economic development trends with regard to the informal economy, particularly street trading. Secondly, it looks at the issue of marginalisation processes in street trading and focuses on how street traders' organisations in Durban try to cope with their empowerment mission. Thirdly, it explores the characteristics and size of street traders' businesses. This is followed by an assessment of the role of street traders' organisations and the Durban local government policies and practices with regard to street trading are then explored. Existing support mechanisms for informal traders are also addressed. Finally, this study looks at street traders' organisations' role in the formal and informal economies as they seek to empower street traders.

The above structure highlights local, national and international trends as well as Durban-based street traders' organisations' attempts to empower street traders. Moreover, it has assessed the existing gaps which hinder street trading from thriving in Durban. This chapter ends with a partial conclusion and covers the contribution of the present study.

### **2.2. STREET TRADING AND LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

As street trading is an integral part of the informal economy, it plays an important part in local economic development. Though street traders, whether in international or local spheres, are defined as 'people operating at the margins and are mostly unregulated with marginal activities' (ILO, 2002:49), they play a significant role in terms of alleviating poverty. Part of

the blame for the current depressing state of informal traders can be attributed to the local government failure to facilitate the integration and expansion of their businesses activities.

### **2.2.1. Contribution of informal trade to local economic development**

Street trading has greatly contributed to meeting the essence of local economic development aims, namely to create jobs and new employment opportunities and increase income levels. The following are key aspects of street trading:

#### **❖ Job creation**

Street trading has a great share in job creation worldwide: a growing number of informal traders operate on the streets, sidewalks, in public parks and outside any enclosed premise or covered workspace (ILO, 2002:49). Though most street traders are self-employed, some provide jobs to unemployed or are employed themselves by businesses owners.

Though fluctuations in their numbers have been observed globally, depending on the seasons and socio-economic circumstances, they keep on growing (ILO, 2002:51). The Household Survey has estimated that the number of street vendors in South Africa noticeably increased nationwide, due to the relaxation of apartheid laws and the decrease in formal work opportunities. In 2000, it was recorded that there were 323 000 food vendors and 122 000 non-food vendors in South Africa (Labour Force Survey, 2000, cited in ILO, 2002:52) while in 1995 this survey estimated that only 2038 street vendors operated nationwide in South Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa, the informal economy in 2004 was estimated to account for up to 60 percent of the overall employment (Cape Town LED Unit, 2006).

In other countries, the estimated share of street vendors in non-agricultural employment is higher, ranging from less than two percent in Costa Rica in 1997 and nine percent in Guatemala, Mexico and Venezuela (ibid). In many cities or towns in the developing world, especially in Africa, street vendors constitute a significant share of total employment in the informal economy, while street vending units constitute a significant share of total informal enterprises (ILO, 2002:52; IMF-World Bank, 2006:6; Brown, 2006:4, 7 and Cape Town LED

Unit, 2006:3). However, despite the visibility of street traders on the streets and other places as above-mentioned, their numbers estimates are not clear (ILO, 2002:5).

#### ❖ **Income-generation of street traders**

In addition, the contribution of the informal economy to the local economy is very important. In 1999, the informal economy contributed an estimated 26 percent of the value added through trading – the highest in any sector. The value of street trading contribution to the GDP in some African and Asian countries reached between 50 and 90 percent (ILO, 2002:53 and Skinner, 2008:4). In South Africa in 2001, several surveys, including Budlender et al.'s 2001 estimated that the informal economy contributed between seven and twelve percent to the GDP (Bundlender adapted in Devey et al., 2006:16).

This income-generating process contributes not only to improving the lives of poor and marginalised people but also contributes to poverty alleviation and to improving the local economy. According to existing research, street trade has made a significant economic contribution in Durban (ILO, 2002:53). Mander<sup>1</sup> calculated that in 1998, more than R170 million was spent on raw and prescribed products in the Russell Street traditional medicine informal market (Skinner, 2008:4). This place, which is adjacent to the Early Morning Market, has, according to Saunders (2004:198), tremendous potential for burgeoning informal trade because it is accessible to public transport. It is serviced by 2000 minibuses, 270 000 daily taxi, train and bus departures and 460 000 daily pedestrians. The intensity of the pedestrian and vehicular traffic, as estimated by the Warwick Junction Project Manager, combined with the dynamism of the informal activity, presents unique renewal opportunities and an annual turnover of around R1 billion. Furthermore, informal trade's direct contribution to the local economy is supplemented by its being an important tourist attraction for the local cities.

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<sup>1</sup> Mander, M. 1998. **Marketing of Indigenous medicinal plants in South Africa: a case study of KwaZulu-Natal**. Rome: FAO

### ❖ **Provision of an affordable purchase power to poor urban communities**

Street traders as Brown (2006:9 and 11) notes, target places which have “a busy pedestrian feet flow”, where they offer a wide range of goods and services to passers-by. These encompass goods such as food and produce modern manufactured items such as cosmetics and clothing, or traditional herbs and medicine, and services such as watch mending, shoe cleaning and repairs, hair cutting and braiding, phone or internet access and many other services (Brown, 2006:8). The prices are affordable thus are easily accessible to the common poor walking in the cities or in a hurry to commute in or out of the cities.

### **2.2.2. Challenges**

Despite the acknowledged important economic value of the informal economy in general and particularly of street trading, marginalisation processes (Kudva, 2005:165) have been associated with its supposed nature - namely that the poor, by lack of any other survival means seek refuge in it as a last resort. Trends of spatial segregation and escalating violence, or exclusive policies are an everyday and common experience (Heintz and Pollin, 2005:50; Lee, 2004:4, Skinner, 2008:2,4 and ILO, 2002:50-51). Worldwide, street traders fear being arrested, prosecuted or having their goods confiscated. Processes of harassment, prohibition and restriction are rife in South Africa – especially in Durban – and a series of punitive laws in Uganda and in many other sub-Saharan countries, restrict street traders’ growth (Lee, 2004:4, 6; ILO, 2002:50-51).

Among the many challenges associated with street trading, it is worthwhile mentioning the often confusing administrative processes, regulations and corrupt practices. In most developing countries in South-East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, these are prevalent and are often coupled with gender-related biases and marginalisation processes which are detrimental to the poor’s livelihoods (Brown, 2006:10-11, 15 and Miraftab, 2005:157). Street trading is further challenged by the macro-economic context of globalisation, particularly in that it results in deregulation of economic barriers and privatisation, which contribute to increasing numbers of, on the one hand, poor people

because they have been retrenched and, on the other hand, of street traders as retrenched people find a viable employment solution in informal/street trading.

### **2.3. INFORMAL TRADE AND MARGINALISATION PROCESSES**

Much of the literature on marginality and exclusion focuses on economic processes, especially on the informal nature of economic activities of informal traders, and on social exclusion issues (i.e., gender and racial discrimination). Walker and Walker assert that exclusion is ‘a comprehensive formulation which refers to the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic systems... (Walker and Walker cited in Byrne, 1999:2). Being excluded can be caused by ‘changes’ in society which have consequences for some of the people in that society (Byrne, 1999:1). Alternatively, exclusion can be defined as being a multi-dimensional process combining various forms of exclusion such as participation in decision-making, access to employment and material resources (Madanipour et al., cited in Byrne, 1999:2).

#### **2.3.1. Gender and marginalisation in the informal trade**

Processes of sidelining women have been observed in the management of the informal trade - especially in street trading. Firstly, as a consequence of gender differentiation created around processes of labour flexibilization (Beneria and Floro, 2005:16) women are mostly confined to the marginalised and survivalist activities of the informal economy such as selling fruit and vegetables (Brown, 2006:185; Skinner, 2008:4 and Beneria and Floro, 2005:9). Chant and Pedwell (2008:11, 16) observed that social norms give rise to preferential treatment of men and the marginalisation of women. Similarly, Skinner (2000:1) found that in South Africa, women street traders are often limited to trading in the lowest income-generating activities while men, who are also more educated, are more frequently involved in more lucrative street trading activities. This affirms the gender issue of associating women with poverty and vulnerability especially in developing countries (Chen, 2005:41 and ILO and ILS, 2008:23).

The relationship between women and poverty is highlighted by the large number of women participating in the informal sector, especially in street trading, which generally presents a

larger source of employment opportunity for women than men in the developing world (Devey et al., 2006:11, 13 and ILO, 2002:54). In North Africa, 43 percent of women work in the informal economy; their counterparts in other regions of the developing world grow to about 60 percent. For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa, 84 percent of women work in the non-agricultural sector compared to 63 percent of men. In Latin America, women comprised 58 percent and men only 48 percent while in Asia, the ratios were roughly equal (ILO, 2002:54). In South Africa, women represent 60 percent of informal workers in the trade sector (ILO, 2002:53-54). The large number of women in low income-generating activities is also linked to their low educational level, as Lund et al. (2000:12, 13) found. According to their research, women in informal trade tend to be less skilled than men and their numbers increase according to their age, while the majority of male street traders tend to be younger.

Therefore, street trading activities encompass gender-related issues, such as the exploitation and structural disadvantages experienced by women (Chant and Pedwell, 2008:1, 3; ILO, 2002:51, 53-54; Brown, 2005:198). With a few notable exceptions – for instance in some West African countries like Benin, Ivory Coast and Ghana, where informal trade is considered as a woman's lucrative space activity – women are more likely than men to experience work-related risky situations such as crime, marginalisation and patriarchal exploitation processes with regard to services and urban trading space accessibility (Chant and Pedwell, 2008:7; ILO 2002:51 and Baatjes, 2003:181, 190). Further, trends of gender divisions and marginalisation – especially with regard to women being confined to marginal activities such as food trading and board-collecting while men get involved in more lucrative activities have been highlighted as women are equally exploited as sole breadwinners for their families (Lund et al., 2000:10, 13-14).

The socio-economic position of women street traders varies depending on geographical regions and prevailing societal norms. While in some areas their activities seem to be marginalised, as mentioned above, in other areas their activities seem to elevate their social status. For instance, in the West African matrilineal societies of Ghana and Ivory Coast, women street traders occupy an important place as food and vegetables sellers and even run

important import businesses during the slack season for tomato production (Brown, 2006: 185-186).

### **2.3.2. Socio-economic and political marginalisation in the informal trade**

Besides the particular gender divide trends observed in the above section, street trading seems to also be characterised by socio-political marginalisation issues. This marginalisation is especially associated with rhetoric about the size of their seemingly ‘little contribution to the national GDP’ (former President Thabo Mbeki, cited in Devey et al., 2006:4-5), which gives a clear indication of how the ANC government then viewed the informal economy – namely as a marginal second economy.

Economic, institutional and socio-political structural processes under the guise of dynamics of labour supply and demand (Beneria and Floro, 2005:12) have been associated with the informal economy, thus further contributing to its marginalisation<sup>2</sup>. In South Africa, racially-related discriminatory processes of the apartheid system confined black people to poverty, which subsequently increased the number of black people participating in the informal economy – especially in street trading. Informal employment was not a ‘choice’ but a ‘survival alternative’ (Lund et al., 2000:16). Socio-political marginalisation has also resulted in socio-economic shocks, such as the fact that women street traders have become the ‘sole breadwinners and supporters of large families’ (Mitullah, cited in Brown, 2006:185 and Lund et al., 2000:10).

Baatjes (2003:180-181) argues that marginalisation and exclusion of a large and growing sector of South Africans from meaningful participation in the social, cultural, political and economic activities of society has been accentuated by the lack of adults’ basic education. He sees a correlation between marginalisation and exclusion and their relationship to economic development, in which the state has an important role to play. Accordingly, as Baatjes notes moreover, in South Africa these processes resulted from apartheid policies which excluded black people from receiving education and skills development and exploited workers with

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<sup>2</sup> These processes, triggered by a regressive process of economic redistribution, have greatly contributed to the growing of labour market information (Beneria and Floro, 2005:12)

skills by ignoring their capacities so that they could be paid low wages. Therefore, illiteracy has played an important role in marginalising informal workers and street traders form an important component of this group.

In addition, as noted by Skinner (2000:15-16), structurally disadvantaged by the fact of being poor, most of Durban's black street traders are reluctant to participate in collective action and therefore stay out of any organisational body, thus cutting themselves off from having access to the benefits that associational membership can bring. Therefore, as Barrientos (2005:113-114) found, socio-economic marginalisation associated with the precarious activities of informal workers, including street traders, can result in a lack of or being excluded from any social protection system. On the other hand, socio-political marginalisation acts as a major barrier contributing to limiting the 'consultation process in Durban (Skinner, 2000:2).

#### **2.4. CHARACTERISTICS AND SIZE OF STREET TRADERS' BUSINESSES**

Street traders are often seen as the sole breadwinners of their families and as such, their activities are seen to be linked to poverty (Skinner, 2008a:1, 4; ILO, 2002:49). Their livelihoods are characterised by small-scale subsistence activities or businesses (Devey et al., 2006:4, 7; ILO, 2002:51, Brown, 2006:5 and Skinner 2008a:3). They are seen as insecure and vulnerable household businesses (Beneria and Floro, 2005:9 and ILO, 2002:52) with limited job prospects and provision capacity. In this regard, they are mostly self-employed businesses run either by their owner, an unpaid family member or, in the event of paying a wage to the latter, it is usually low (ILO, 2002:51). They are thus associated with 'passivity' or 'fatalism' (Kudva, 2005:166).

Street traders' activities are viewed as being precarious in terms of their size and contribution to income-generation for traders and their households (ILO, 2002 and Brown, 2006), despite the fact it is a major source of employment in many low-income-opportunity cities and has a significant impact on national or local economic statistics (Brown, 2006:13).



Street traders' businesses are characterised by their heterogeneity (ILO, 2002:49)<sup>3</sup> and<sup>4</sup>. According to the same ILO study, street vending is a large and diverse activity – from high-income vendors who sell luxury goods at flea markets to low-income vendors who sell a single product or a limited range of products (ibid.).

#### **2.4.1. Street traders' working conditions**

Street traders' activities are often viewed as a nuisance or obstruction to other formal businesses and the free flow of traffic and thus often have to face the full might of the municipality, through harassment, expulsion, removals or fining (ILO, 2002:49; Skinner, 2008:13 and Brown, 2006:3 and Shrestha, 2006: 166).

In terms of location, Brown (2006:3) notes that the concentration of street traders in city space is often the source of conflicts, as they are highly dependent on spaces that have high pedestrian flow, transport terminals, shopping streets and office locations, which are traditionally targeted by the formal businesses. Their viability is often a matter of access to 'passing feet' (Skinner, 2008:8). Often, street traders – especially vulnerable women – operate at the city margins in dirty and crime-prone spaces (ILO, 2002:49). They also operate in tough weather conditions such as rain, storms and strong heat (Brown, 2006:3) and are exposed to other adverse shocks such as low trade-offs with variable degrees (Beneria and Floro, 2005:19-20; Lee, 2004:3-4) which negatively affect their generation of investment capital increasing *de facto* problems of borrowing.

#### **2.4.2. Street traders' access to financial capital**

The precarious condition of street trading is often seen as a major blow in terms of access to micro-finance. Brown (2006:3) and Shrestha (2006:167) note that for most street traders, their stall content often constitutes their sole source of capital. According to ILO, micro-finance institutions have the potential to 'play a key role in facilitating access to financial services and

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<sup>3</sup> This ranges from roadside barbers, vendors of perishable items such as vegetables, fruit, meat, fish, snack-foods, cosmetic products, cooked food or non-perishable items ranging from locks and keys to detergents and clothing, to name just a few (ILO, 2002:49).

<sup>4</sup> In Durban, they also include vendors of traditional medicine or Izinyanga; workers who sell services such as shoe repairs and shoe shiners; car window cleaners; tailors specialising in mending and magicians (ibid).

to the mainstream resources and services' for the informal economy workers (ILO, cited in Chant and Pedwell, 2008:20). However, this alternative is only partially accessible to most street traders.

In terms of financial capital reconstruction, most studies on street trading found that the majority of women street traders depend on social networks such as family or friends for loans (Chant and Pedwell, 2008:20), while men tend to borrow from money lenders or at a lesser level from family and friends (ibid).

## **2.5. ROLE OF STREET TRADERS' ORGANISATIONS**

According to Lund and Skinner (1999:11), available research suggests that many informal traders are not affiliated to any organisation at all. Where trader organisations do exist, they focus on one or more of three concerns – financial services, lobbying and advocacy, particularly at a local level, and product specific issues. Therefore, most informal organisations can be said to be limited with regard to their scope.

Among the reasons which hinder street traders' membership affiliation, it is worthwhile to mention time constraints – as traders income-generation often depends on working hours - and household responsibilities – especially for women (Pratt, 2006:41, 43) as well as the limited trust in their potential leaders and even political affiliation.

### **2.5.1. Street traders' organisations profile and focus**

Street traders' affiliation, as seen above, is very limited. Lund's re-analysis of a 1998 survey organised in South Africa suggested that only 15 percent of street traders in Johannesburg while in Durban 12 percent of the men and 16 percent of the women street traders belonged to an organisation (Lund, adopted in Skinner, 2008:23). This low street traders' membership affiliation is not characteristic of the fact that there are large numbers of organisations operating in the street trading sector, as confirmed by Lund and Skinner's findings

(1999:11)<sup>5</sup>. Brown (2006:183) noted the variety of street traders' organisations in terms of their objectives and capacity to represent members in debates over urban space management; she also noted differences between them as related to their size and their mission.

In terms of collective action, as Brown (2006:183-184) reported, most small organisations are narrowly focused on a particular issue. While some fight the eviction of traders such as in Dar es Salaam and Kathmandu, larger associations such as the Ewhia Wood Carvers' Association in Kumasi are involved in advocacy for basic and credit access services. In Nepal, the Social Welfare Council (SWC) lobbying on behalf of traders achieved positive results. Brown has equally reported competition trends between organisations, with some exercising bias and allying themselves with political groups to achieve limited and self-serving results and simultaneously penalising and weakening the 'competition' – especially with regard to harassment.

In Dar es Salaam, Nnkya reported the incorporation of informal traders into city plans. The Association of Small Scale Businesses – acting as an umbrella organisation in Dar es Salaam – reportedly acts as a lobbyist and pressure group and is involved in the selection of public space for business activities (Nnkya, adapted in Skinner, 2008b:22).

In Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi, *War on Want*, a study conducted in 2005 in collaboration with the Workers Education Association Zambia (WEAZ), found that street traders' associations are established in specific markets or trading areas and deal with arising urgent issues such as harassment from the police and solve disputes and conflicts among vendors (Skinner, 2008b:24-26).

In West African countries, street traders' organisations are said to be comparatively well organised; they have initiated the creation of trade unions for informal traders and have advocated for traders to gain access to credit through rotating credits and savings, named ROSCAs (Skinner, 2008b:25).

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<sup>5</sup> Alila and Mitullah found that about 67% of street traders operating in Kenyan cities had no knowledge of associations addressing street trading issues (Lund and Skinner 1999:11).

Conversely, in South Africa particularly in Durban most informal traders' associations were found to be involved with bulk purchasing negotiations on behalf of their constituencies as well as in mass lobbying actions (Skinner, 2008a:8). The nature of their relationships with local governmental institutions, as Devenish and Skinner (2006:265) state, has been limited to 'collective bargaining, negotiations and lobbying'.

### **2.5.2. Empowering street traders' institutions**

The poor and difficult conditions under which informal traders operate make organising in the informal trade difficult (Pratt, 2006:45). Where organisations are better organised, such as in India where informal traders' organisations are organised as trade unions – mostly regrouping informal workers, street traders, domestic workers and non-agricultural workers – these tough working conditions have been challenged through advocacy and lobbying and through the provision of services and training to the benefit of their constituencies. As an example, informal organisations have pressed for informal traders to be issued identity cards by the law department, therefore contributing to the recognition of informal workers as workers (Chatterjee, 2005:105).

In terms of services provision, SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association) built a health centre to provide poor and marginalised informal workers and traders with adequate health care. SEWA also participated in the creation of new institutions by implementing protective structures or platforms designed to provide the workers with socio-economic protection such as the provision of access to micro-finance credits with the creation of a SEWA Bank; the building of childcare facilities and the implementation of a protective insurance institution called Vimo SEWA (Chatterjee, 2005:107).

In addition SEWA has organised informal workers into unions and organisations. The above-mentioned example of empowerment of informal workers has contributed to providing social security to informal workers and has empowered them in the face of their previous vulnerability (Chatterjee, 2005:108; Horn, 2004:213).

In the South African context, Devenish and Skinner (2006:255-257) note that little progress has been made in organising those in the informal economy. With regard to street trading, they noted the emergence of SEWU, a membership union modelled on SEWA. This organisation has focused on representing vulnerable informal women traders through advocacy. In Durban as well as the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga provinces, where SEWA has established its antennas, it has lobbied for street trading policy change and the provision of basic services such as toilets, water and childcare facilities for women traders. It has in addition lobbied and linked with other institutions with a view to increasing trader accessibility to working urban space (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:265-268).

### **2.5.3. Street traders' organisations' role in Durban**

Street trader's organisations in Durban are not homogenous, especially with regard to their level of formality and therefore to their agency for the benefit of their constituencies. While there are numerous street committees (Skinner, 2008a:12-13), which are often not well organised and have only been constituted on municipal services recommendations, the number of more formal organisations is very limited. Even among the latter, though having some level of accountability in terms of finances, they are not yet registered as recognised organisations.

- **Empowering role of Durban street traders' organisations**

Most Durban organisations – especially the less formal ones such as street committees – have played a limited role, which in most cases has been due to direct and limited actions initiated by more formal organisations. This agency process has been mostly led on three levels: advocacy, lobbying for better regulations, infrastructure and urban space use and negotiations for bulk purchase for the benefit of their constituencies (Skinner, 2000:7 and 2008:14 and Horn, 2001). This has led the municipality to launch a vast infrastructural investment campaign for the benefit of street traders, which has improved their working conditions through the improvement of services such as the provision of toilets, storage and childcare facilities and the construction of a traditional medicine or *muthi* market (ibid).

These organisations have aligned with other more organised street traders' organisations in the initiation of the Traders Against Crime Campaign which, according to Horn (2004), was due to make Durban streets safe for traders to ply their trade. This campaign has been 'extremely effective in protecting traders as well as their customers and passing pedestrians' (ibid.) against criminals as street traders often knew criminals and used to denounce them to police officers. However, this commendable campaign was cut short when the City Council began its crackdown campaign against street traders, rolling out a clean-out campaign aimed at presenting a world-class city before construction for the 2010 World Cup campaign (Horn, 2006 and Skinner, 2008a:13).

The above organisations have been vocal about adverse issues as they arose. SEWU, on the other hand, has attempted to address ongoing issues, such as socio-economic marginalisation of women street traders. Its impact has been significant. Realising the need to empower marginalised women street traders, it has focused on providing them with organisational and development skills through a vast training and educational campaign which has provided its constituency with skills in finance management to enable them to run their businesses, negotiating skills and skills in other male-dominated activities with a view to improving their access to better-paid job opportunities (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:268-271 and Horn, 2006).

In addition, SEWU has advocated for the creation of a unique department in charge of street trading management in Durban; the provision of street trading-related infrastructures such as the construction of shelters, toilets, stalls, storage, childcare facilities; credit and bank services to be made accessible to its members (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:265-267 and Horn, 2004:212) as well as the development of the Warwick Junction Project. Finally, SEWU has, in order to empower its constituency further, extended and built useful and valuable linkages on national and international levels with other organisations, especially those which share a common interest with it (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:262-264). Unfortunately, it was

liquidated in 2004 (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:254) despite the considerable role it played in empowering women street traders in South Africa and particularly in Durban.

After the liquidation of SEWU, other organisations took the helm of the struggle for street traders' rights. Among these organisations, StreetNet International (based in Durban), together with the Siyagunda Association and the Eye Traders' Association initiated the struggle against the Municipal Council, which had initiated a crackdown on street traders and viciously sought the eviction of refugee street traders. They instituted and won a lawsuit against the municipality (Horn, 2005).

Following its World-Class City campaign in preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the Durban Municipal Council planned to build an upmarket mall at the site of the Early Morning Market – The Warwick Mall. Subsequently, StreetNet, together with Siyagunda, the Eye Traders' Association and African Cooperative of Hawkers and Informal Business (ACHIB), launched a World Class City for All (WCCA) campaign to stop the destruction of the Early Morning Market and the draconian moves made by the City Council against street traders. However, ACHIB has been rather characterised by its instability, informality and lack of managerial transparent structures (Lund and Skinner, 1999:23). Negotiations were then initiated by these organisations, which submitted demands to the City Council asking for more transparency, for them to discontinue criminalising street traders and for more inclusive regulatory practices and processes (Horn, 2005).

All through 2009 there was a fierce protest regarding the proposed destruction of the Early Morning Market by the City Council. The World-Class City was at the forefront of the protests and, led by StreetNet and its partners, Siyagunda, the Eye Traders' Association, ACHIB, the Early Morning Market Association (which was supported by other stakeholders such as COSATU, SATAWU, SANCO, SACP etc.), it initiated a protest march to the City Hall despite the Municipal Manager's refusal to provide them with permission. They then presented a Memorandum about their grievances to a City Council representative on 16 July 2009 (Horn, 2009). Despite this apparent collaboration between street traders' organisations,

by 2005 StreetNet had still not registered any street traders' organisations affiliated under its umbrella (Horn, 2005).

From the local government perspective, the Durban City manager acknowledged during a meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2009 with stakeholders, that only the City Council which had approved the development plans was mandated to review this decision. However an inclusive delegation of all stakeholders including street traders' representative would visit a formal site designated for the relocation of street traders and would discuss the importance of keeping the Early Morning Market on its actual site. In addition, during a visit held on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2005, which included the Durban Deputy Mayor and street traders, the then MEC of Finance and Economic Development emphasised the importance of a continuous dialogue between parties. The upgrade of the Warwick Triangle was explained as intended to make it a viable, hygienic, safe and dignified trading zone both for formal and informal traders, where storage facilities would be upgraded (<http://www.streetnet.org.za>, as accessed on 16 October 2009).

#### **2.5.4. Approaches and LED strategies used by street traders' organisations**

A few informal traders' organisations such as SEWA in India, SEWU and StreetNet International in South Africa and the Ghana Trade Union Congress in Ghana have been influential in organising street and informal traders (Skinner, 2008:23-27) into trade unions. This is particularly prevalent in India and Ghana. Focusing on endogenous development through the democratic reinforcement of existing institutions and the creation of new ones, they have ensured the continuity of leadership among informal traders groups by enhancing their skills development (Chatterjee, 2005:111 and Pratt, 2006:45).

The above-mentioned organisations have emphasised using the following community-based local economic development strategies, as identified by Harrison et al. (2003:180-183), Bond (2002:9) and the South African Department of Local Government Development, among others.

- **SMME development and maintenance of services and infrastructure**



This community-based local economic development strategy focuses on ‘the promotion of small, medium and micro-enterprises and is regarded as a key to promote economic development in a manner that generates jobs and business opportunities for the poor’. Accordingly, these organisations lobbied for the creation of or have created new institutions beneficial to informal traders. This is the case with SEWA, which has created SEWA Bank, built childcare facilities and implemented the insurance institution, Vimo SEWA (Chatterjee, 2005:107), which has improved the access to services for informal traders in India. In South Africa’s city of Durban, SEWU has lobbied for the municipal provision of childcare facilities and services such as access to water, toilets, storage and sheltered trading facilities for street traders and for the construction of the *muthi* market (Skinner, 2008:9), all of which have improved business opportunities for street traders.

- **Plugging the leaks in the local economy**

This strategy, identified by Harrison et al. (2003:181) and Bond (2002:9) as ‘addressing the failure of money circulation’ has been used by the above-mentioned organisations, with the aim of improving the living conditions of informal traders by improving the quality of their working conditions, therefore improving their participation in the local economy.

- **Retention and expansion of existing businesses**

This strategy refers to the taking of municipal measures or policies to ensure firms or organisations within the area do not relocate but rather stay and expand. It has been lobbied for as it will provide better informal trade municipal policies which will ensure that informal traders have access to adequate urban space and will ultimately improve their working conditions. In Durban SEWU has been at the helm of the lobby for improved street trading by-laws, less harassing enforcement thereof and for one municipal department to concentrate on street trading issues (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:265-266).

- **Community economic development and human capital development**

Harrison et al. (2003:182) and Bond (2002:9) state that these two strategies are based on the concept of developing community self-reliance through human resource development and

skills enhancement and are aimed at improving poor people's self-sufficiency and control by improving their capabilities. Thus in South Africa, SEWU has played an important role in training skills development and education for the benefit of its constituents – exclusively women – in order to improve their access to traditionally male-dominated areas such as painting and welding (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:268-269).

In addition to the above LED strategies used by the mentioned informal organisations, the important role of developing linkages and partnerships to the benefit of informal and street traders' organisations played by SEWA, SEWU and StreetNet has also borne positive results as it has opened new experiences for traders (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:263-264).

## **2.6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT STREET TRADING POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

Local government policies and programmes or processes often negatively affect economic initiatives. In this regard, undemocratic practices of Durban local governments, as observed by Skinner (2008a:12), not only result in the meddling of local government in street trading management but also in the continuous harassment and criminalisation of street traders (Skinner 2008a:12; ILO, 2002:49 and Brown, 2006:15).

### **2.6.1. Local government institutions**

Different approaches have been used in addressing the informal trading (including street trading) phenomenon. In South Africa these approaches have included: the ban imposed on street trading in the Johannesburg inner city; the declaration of prohibited zones; the demarcation of sites in restricted trade zones in Cape Town and the tolerance and accommodation of a limited number of street traders in Durban though larger than in the other two cities (UNDP, 2007:26; Skinner, 2008a:7). In many developing countries, street trading is viewed as a nuisance or obstruction to the formal trading units and to the free flow of traffic (ILO, 2002:49). While some street traders might be tolerated in Western countries such as Mexico, where street vending is categorised in terms of vending in public markets, various rotating markets and concentrations of vendors in some residential areas, there are others where they are not tolerated (ILO, 2002:51).

The marginalisation of the informal trade – especially street trading – is likely to have been triggered by the failure to provide any support strategies for the survivalist economy category (Devey et al., 2006:1, 2). Despite the fact that the 1995 White Paper on SMMEs in South Africa categorised survivalist businesses among informal SMMEs, this category has been ignored by the Department of Trade and Industry in its allocation of funding to the informal economy (Rogerson, adapted in Devey et al., 2006:13-14). On the contrary, municipalities have been allowed to draft their own regulation policies and by-laws to regulate informal trade, especially of street trading (Skinner and Lund, 1999:15 and ILO, 2002:49).

The processes of local government institutions have therefore often resulted in the marginalisation of informal economy through its exclusion from city planning, especially in terms of urban space allocation (Kudva, 2005:163-168; ILO, 2002:49; Lee, 2004:3 and Skinner, 2000:2) on the assumption that it is was unlikely to generate growth.

This situation is often enhanced by contradictory processes that are adverse for informal traders' livelihoods. Thus, in many cases, despite the developmental commitment of local government to encourage community participation, channels of communication and negotiation are rarely well-maintained, while consultation seems to be on an *ad hoc* basis or worse, non-existent (Lee, 2004:7).

### **2.6.2. Local government responsibilities**

In South Africa and in some sub-Saharan countries, local authorities are charged with a leadership and coordination role which, according to Lee (2004:2), includes: providing for communities in a sustainable manner, promoting social and economic development and ensuring a safe environment. This marks a shift from the traditional role of service-provision. After the demise of the apartheid system, this shift has been characterised by the devolution to each municipality of a new mandate to 'govern, to provide services and to promote social and economic development through the development of distinctive innovative policies and programmes aimed at meeting the particular needs of its communities' (The South African

Constitution, 1996, act 108, section 153). The shift therefore emphasises policies and programmes aimed specifically at poverty alleviation and job creation through the development of programmes aimed at reversing ‘the striking inequalities generated in recent decades’ (Bond, 2002:7).

The new shift focuses on community-based economic development, with a view to working with low-income communities and their respective organisations. However, Bond (2002:8) asserts that the more orthodox local economic development of place-marketing strategy provides for that ‘the key to prosperity is attracting (primarily manufacturing) investment through concessions such as tax breaks, cheap land, reduced rates, direct financial rewards in return for locating in the area’. The new shift on community-based development evolves, Bond argues, around six ‘developmental’ LED strategies, which include: community-based development; linkages; human capital development; infrastructure and municipal services; leak-plugging in the local economy and retaining and expanding local economic activity. To these strategies it is worth adding a seventh strategy, which is industrial recruitment and place-marketing (Harrison et al., 2003:182).

The motive behind these strategies was to provide services and create business opportunities likely to create employment; encourage investors to invest and remain involved with the municipality; to increase money circulation in the municipality; to develop skills development for poor, marginalised communities; to increase community self-reliance by improving poor people’s capabilities and finally, to attract new industries (Harrison et al., 2003:180-183). Nel (1999:8-9), on the other hand, identifies two different approaches in the South African LED context, namely: authority-based (which can be compared to the place-marketing identified by Bond) and community-based, which parallels developmental the phenomena in other countries.

The local authority-based approach involves the unilateral application of LED programmes, however, in consultation with key stakeholders and sometimes with the host communities, especially with regard to boosting strategies such as place-marketing and property

development using top-down approaches, for instance in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg (Tomlison, Rogerson, adapted in Nel, 1999:8-9).

Nel (1999:9) found that the community-based or bottom-up initiatives develop from within a community under the leadership of a local NGO or community group and focus on community business and local employment strategies. In terms of localisation (ibid.), the authority-based approach approximates the experience of many cities in Northern countries and some in South Africa, while the community-based approach approximates the small towns or neighbourhood initiatives' experiences in Northern countries and the self-reliance strategies of communities in Southern countries.

The focus of the local government's LED strategies is, according to Harrison et al. (2003:176) to mobilise local skills and resources so as to tackle development challenges within the municipality. This entails the creation of policies that generate 'an enabling environment for LED demands and an effective system of co-operative governance committed to a transparent and empowering relationship with civil society' (Harrison et al., 2003:187). The key to achieving this was to focus on enhancing community participation and the integration of community development issues and LED strategies within the municipality's integration plans (Harrison et al., 2003:183-184).

However, as Harrison et al. (2003:187-188) subsequently note, municipalities are faced with a problem of lacking coordination among government departments as well as the development of adverse and uncoordinated policies likely to negatively affect LED initiatives. This seems to be the case in most African countries, where the informal economy is often associated with high levels of poverty and economic and social inequality (Lee, 2004:3, 4 and ILO, 2002:51). Disempowering processes such as ambiguities in regulation and in the definition of legal status and marginalisation trends associated with the survivalist, chaotic and heterogeneous character of informal trade activities result in a non-committal stance from local government, thus triggering the need for informal organisations to counter their inactivity.

According to Nel (1999:37), one of the key authority-based approaches adopted in Western, countries particularly in North America and Western Europe, is a focus on high technology industry and associated science and research parks with aggressive regional and local marketing as well as the industrial district approach, which is characterised by the growth of networks of small firms and industrially-oriented sub-regions. For instance, in Italy there is local government support and linked small firms have subsequently developed, facilitating the successful adoption of industrial and technological changes in local areas.

In the Southern hemisphere, according to Simon, emphasis has been put on locally-based strategies in order to cope with the various economic crises faced, particularly in Africa (Simon, cited in Nel, 1999:40). These strategies focus on the control decentralisation of LED beyond local government structures and allow for greater degrees of local participation and empowerment and foster local self-help and community self-reliance (ibid.). This approach has borne positive results in India (Vidya Sagar et al., adapted in Nel 1999:42).

Lee (2004:3), on the other hand, noted processes that excluded and restricted women because of over-regulation and criminalisation of trading, which compromised women's livelihoods and safety by confining them to peripheral locations where they were exposed to harassment, sexual exploitation, violence and exposure to HIV/AIDS. In addition, she noted unequal distribution of de-regulation in Durban, South Africa, where women have less economic power than men as men have been able to consolidate the benefits of increased access to markets, improvement in infrastructure, facilities and services, at the expense of more marginalised traders, i.e., women.

### **2.6.3. Local government economic development policies**

Local government has, in most cases, been found to be characterised by often outdated or, even dating back before independence, politically conservative approaches to street trading (Brown and Rakodi, 2006:205). These trends are mostly seen in planning policies which, according to Brown (2006:11), result in a polarised city, with the poor being increasingly segregated in low-income ghettos and excluded from the central city and civil realm. Thus,

modern developments such as highways, shopping malls or gated communities often result in the progressive erosion of urban public spaces available to the poor. In this regard, Skinner (2008:7) noted that the restriction and prohibition of street trading in large areas deprives traders of important livelihoods' space (Brown, 2006:11 and Lee, 2004:6).

The above can be considered in conjunction with a process of outsourcing of street trading urban space and practices to private actors in some South African cities such as Cape Town and the demarcation of trading spaces in cities such as Durban (Cape Town LED Unit 2004:12-13), both of which can deprive street traders of access to 'busy pedestrian flow' sites (Brown, 2006:12).

With respect to the important element of space accessibility, street traders in Durban have had to launch mass actions in order to lobby local authorities to limit restricting trading space and street traders. This was headed by the Self Employed Women's Union/SEWU (Skinner, 2008a:8). Kudva (2005:167) noted that the way in which local planning policies shaped sharply divided urban localities and the fact that the policies were contentious – they discriminated against non-South African citizens and did not seek to provide alternate income solutions to the many that would lose their only form of livelihood – resulted in protest and violence, collective organisation and governance. Unfortunately, in Durban, despite the fact that there were many collective actions, organising activities have virtually been left to SEWU and a few street traders' organisations such as StreetNet International (Skinner, 2008:8-10), which have advocated and lobbied for street traders' trading and urban space usage rights as well as fought to improve their working conditions.

Moreover, in South Africa, despite national macro-economic strategies developed by the post-apartheid government, such as the RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme, emphasis was locally put on larger market-driven peripheral capital and privatisation trends which emphasised partnerships between the municipal authorities and the private sector, to the benefit of the private sector (Baatjes, 2003:189-189). This led to processes of marginalisation and exclusion

of the working class and the vulnerable informal economy. This was particularly evident in the selective implementation of the informal economy policy from early 2000.

#### **2.6.4. Local government practices and street trading regulations**

- **Outsourcing/privatisation**

Informal trade is approached differently by the various cities. While street trading is mainly privatised or outsourced in Cape Town, where it operates in dedicated areas, in Durban it is mainly done on street pavements and in Johannesburg street traders are excluded from the inner city (Skinner, 2000:17-18). In addition, in Durban its management has been concentrated under one department, the DISTBO, while it is multi-departmentally managed in Cape Town and Johannesburg (Skinner, 2008:10-11 and Cape Town LED Unit, 2004:10-11, 14-17).

- **Street trading regulations**

With regard to informal trade regulation, Heintz and Pollin (2005:50) have observed declining trends in developing countries, as the informalisation rose. This decline has been triggered by growing neo-liberalist trends in developing countries, which have resulted in increases in job losses and reliance on the informal economy for employment and income-generating alternatives (Heintz and Pollin, 2005:50-52 and ILO and ILS, 2008:115-116, 118-121).

Despite the decline of regulation of informal trade in many developing countries, as above-mentioned, street trading businesses often are not registered and therefore are vulnerable to prevailing regulation pertaining to trading space (ILO, 2002:50, 51; Pratt, 2006:2006:37).

Drafting of municipal by-laws often exhibit and impose tough restriction and prohibition processes on street trading, especially in terms of urban space use (Brown, 2006:15; ILO, 2002:49 and UNDP, 2007:26-27). Public space usage – especially in urban areas such as Durban – therefore often results in conflictual situations between street traders and the local authorities (Skinner, 2008a:1 and Brown, 2006:3). In addition, the complexities of over-regulating informal trade have been observed in Maseru-Swaziland and Kumasi-Ghana, where traders were left without any knowledge of their duties or rights (Brown, 2006:189).



Skinner (2008b:14) notes accordingly that a number of cross-cutting politically-related or international events-related evictions exist in many African countries, including Zimbabwe, Ghana, and Zambia.

- **Street trading by-laws enforcement**

The enforcement of street trading municipal by-laws is, in most countries, accompanied by tough police processes being enacted against street traders (ILO, 2002:49). The enforcement of by-laws is, in most South African cities, often accompanied by institutionally authorised criminalising processes such as issuing fines, confiscating goods or worse, imprisoning the traders (UNDP, 2007:26 and Skinner, 2008:13-14).

Goods confiscation is highly contested by informal traders as well as their representative organisations, as it is not constitutional (Skinner, 2008a:14). This process is highly damaging, especially with regard to confiscated food items – such as perishable fruits or vegetables – which end up being disposed of by the enforcers when they deteriorate.

- **Legal status and provision for appeal**

One particular problem faced by informal traders, as raised by Pratt (2006:42), is the complexity of regulations, which contributes to street traders' uncertainty regarding business registration, trading rights and various other aspects of the law. The fact that they may be operating 'illegally' is likely to lead to traders being arrested and having their goods confiscated (ILO, 2002:49). When traders are victimised or feel they have been victimised by enforcement for non-compliance with the law, there is no provision for appeal and the courts serve as the only recourse to sort out such problems. This is the case whether in Durban, in Maseru in Lesotho or in Kathmandu in Nepal (Brown and Rakodi, 2006:201 and Skinner, 1999:19).

- **Permits and licences allocation**

Despite that informal traders – especially street traders – are defined as being unregistered businesses (Cape Town LED Unit, 2004:3, 17 and Pratt, 2005:38), in most cities, the

acquisition of a permit or licence is always accompanied by the payment of the permit fee; this trading permit or licence gives one the right to trade in a specific locality for a set period of time (Pratt, 2006:38; Lund and Skinner, 1999:18-19; Cape Town LED Unit, 2004:5-6 and 16). In Dar es Salaam, traders either purchase licences or, if they have not done so, pay a daily fee. The acquisition of a permit is often a daunting bureaucratic process, however, not acquiring a permit or licence results in paying considerably more for daily trading rights (Pratt, 2006:42, Brown 2006:197)). In Durban, in a move to better regulate street trading the authorities declared restricted trade and prohibited zones and allocated permits to only a few traders (Skinner, 2008a:13) contributing thus to limiting the numbers of authorised street traders while making the rest illegal street traders.

Obtaining legal permission to trade in an urban space is often accompanied by a variety of ambiguous processes. As Sets•bi (2006:138) recorded, in Maseru trading permit allocation is for a particular location – a stall, a table or floor space is unlike Durban guided by excessive centralisation and economic micro-management processes – while a permit to trade in Kumasi is not a guarantee of protection against harassment. In some places, such as Dar es Salaam and Kathmandu, urban space is contracted to traders' associations. In Ghana, traders often bribe officials to secure tenure instead of getting permits, while in some roads of Dar es Salaam; traders have to make arrangements with occupiers of adjacent properties or shop owners.

## **2.7. EXISTING SUPPORT MECHANISMS FOR INFORMAL TRADERS**

According to Pratt (2006:41), the World Bank identifies the following four groups of constraints faced by informal enterprises: infrastructure issues; resources issues such as the access to finance and banking, to training in accounting and business management skills; economic issues and others, which encompass, for example, the institutional environment.

In post-apartheid South Africa, though the White Paper on National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Business categorises the informal trade or economy

into four groups, it is quite unclear about how to support the survivalist category, under which street trading falls (Lund et al., 2000:48-49 and Lee, 2004:6).

### **2.7.1. Access to basic services**

The survivalist economy has received mixed support in South Africa. In terms of infrastructure issues, in the post-apartheid period Durban implemented a vast, multi-million rand investment to the benefit of street trading. This has translated into basic services provision such as storage facilities (Skinner, 2008a:10 and Brown and Rakodi, 2006:207). Similar support in other developing countries has been equally limited (Lee, 2004::4 and Chatterjee, 2005:105-108).

### **2.7.2. Access to resources**

- **Financial capital**

In South Africa, as mentioned above, financial support from government is mainly for large SMMEs (Diale, 2009:196-198) and survivalist SMMEs have to fend for themselves. Street traders are mostly self-employed or operate household-run small-scale businesses. In light of this, Pratt (2006:44) and Skinner (2008b:5-6) found that access to financial capital is often made through family linkages and connections. On the other hand, access to micro-finance bank loans is also limited as traders' businesses' viability is a matter of concern for commercial banks (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:271) which are reluctant to take on the risk of injecting money into unproductive businesses.

However, as Chant and Pedwell (2008:20-21) argue, the limitation of informal finance reinforces the importance of micro-finance institutions and banks, which seem to be successful in countries such as Uganda and India, particularly with respect to the women-oriented group lending schemes in Kampala's micro-finance institutions and bank-linked daily deposit collectors in India.

In Durban SEWU has, following the example of SEWA in India, linked with local banking institutions in order to facilitate access to credit for informal traders as well as other banking services such as being able to open an account at low cost. Access to credit was possible for

about 600 SEWU members, who accessed loan facilities through the Land Bank loan scheme and were able to open accounts for minimal charges at the Post Bank (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:271-272). In India, SEWA set up a SEWA Bank to provide its constituents with access to financial credits (Chatterjee, 2005:107).

- **Education and training skills**

Government support in education and training skills is very limited (Devey et al., 2006:13-14). In post-apartheid South Africa, access to support training is through SETA (Sector Education and Training Authorities) and the National Skills Fund. These schemes do not adequately service those working in the informal economy as they are funded through the skills levy by registered employers (Devey et al., 2006:14). Therefore, these schemes prioritise those who contribute. In Durban, only two cases of informal economy entities reportedly received assistance from SETA while in Johannesburg only 18 were awarded loans (Chandra and Rajaratnan and Skinner, cited in Devey et al., 2006:14).

In most developing countries, the ILO is very much involved in addressing gender and informal issues – especially with regard to empowering informal workers/traders. A good example is that of a joint initiative between the ILO region for Arab states and the Centre for Arab Women Training and Research which, according to Chant and Pedwell (2008:18-19), developed and implemented a productive approach to addressing rights, employment, social protection and training for areas within the informal economy.

In post-apartheid Durban, SEWU once again engaged in a vast training programme for its constituents. It received a 50% contribution from SEWU and 50% from the members for training and organised workshops were free of charge for the members (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:268).

- **Social protection**

With regard to social protection, survivalist traders' support is very limited, especially with respect to social networks (Brown, 2006:183). In post-apartheid South Africa, global trends of

economic liberalisation have resulted in economic restructuring – seeing to the cut-down of government social spending – which reinforced the marginalisation and exclusion of millions of disadvantaged illiterates and unskilled people (Baatjes, 2003:189-191).

Informal traders have therefore found themselves with no social protection, especially in terms of social security health insurance, life and disability insurance. According to Lee (2004:6), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) estimated that without social support, traders' activities are unsustainable. This was ratified by both Uganda and South Africa. With regard to health care in South Africa, Lund and Skinner (1999:38) note that it is provided free of charge to poor people by the government, which in most cases also provides disability grants. SEWU, however, has lobbied government departments to extend social security benefits such as maternity, sickness and loss of income to informal traders and to take responsibility for a national system of childcare (Skinner, 2008a:8, 15).

However, from the government perspective, support schemes have been provided for the benefit of small businesses (Diale, 2009:196). Through the Centre for Small Business Promotion a directive had been given to all provinces to form SMMEs Desks whose purpose would be to support small business people in all the provinces. Schemes such as the Local Business Service Centre (LBSC) would provide training, marketing and linkages, counselling and referrals and information gathering and dissemination support. In addition, through the Khula Enterprise Finance Limited, schemes such as the Retail Financial Intermediaries (RFIs) and the Khula Start, micro-credit facilities would be extended to disadvantaged communities, particularly women in the rural areas and informal sectors. It is not clear, however, whether these informal sectors included street traders, (Diale, 2009:196-198).

## **2.8. THE FORMAL AND THE INFORMAL ECONOMY**

The informal economy is often characterised as being a competitor to the formal economy, especially with regard to urban space usage (ILO, 2002:11) and as providing an alternative

solution to the pitfalls of the formal economy (Pratt, 2006:39). However, they both have similarities, linkages as well as dissimilarities.

### **2.8.1. Work in the informal and formal economy**

Working in the informal economy is, as Devey et al. (2003:87) reports, associated with an advantage of flexibility, especially with regard to tax, working conditions and working hours. However, this advantage is limited by the poor results associated with it, especially with respect to the level of satisfaction experienced with various elements of employment, including salary/wage dissatisfaction. On the other hand, education levels of those working in the formal economy are above those in the informal economy, thus the types of jobs performed in the formal economy offer better opportunities for skills development than in the informal economy (Devey, 2003:88-89).

Devey et al. (2006:7) observed a common trend internationally in that the number of people working in the informal economy, either as self-employed individuals in unregistered enterprises or as wage workers in unprotected jobs, has increased. In developing countries, informal employment comprises one half to three quarters of non-agricultural employment (ILO, 2002:17). In Latin America and Africa, Chen states that 83 percent and 93 percent of new jobs respectively are created in the informal economy in 2001 (Chen, adapted in Devey et al., 2006:7). With regard to South Africa, the informal economy is dominated by trade with just under half of all informal workers located in this sector – especially in the retail and wholesale trade (Charmes, cited in Devey et al., 2006:9). Subsequently, in sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa, estimates of informal employment amounted to 81 percent of which 84 percent comprise women and 63% men involved in non-agricultural employment (ILO, 2002:8).

Working in the informal economy in South Africa is, according to Kingdon and Knight (2001:3, 4), viewed by some as an end or means to wage employment: as an end because it is a source of employment for disadvantaged people and as a means because it is a transition for those waiting for better formal jobs.

According to ILO, there is a link – although not a complete overlap – between working in the informal economy and being poor, especially with regard to the lack of labour legislation or social protection and low wages (ILO, 2002:11-12). However, this link is not always a norm as the ILO asserts that in many countries male-owner operators earn more on average than low-skilled workers in the formal economy (ILO, 2002:12).

Unlike the informal economy, the formal economy gives a better guarantee of growth prospects and provision of secure representation and protection. The formal economy is also better able to access technology, understand and adopt competitive business strategies, lever government support and achieve some level of solidarity than the informal economy (Devey, 2003:88).

### **2.8.2. Linkages between the formal and informal economy**

Linkages between the formal and the informal economy have been observed as individual workers move between the formal and the informal economy (Castells and Portes, adapted in Devey, 2003:89), which can also lead to processes of exploitation because the formal economy tends to take advantage of the flexibility of the informal economy workers (Beneria and Floro, 2005:7, 13) in a bid to escape the unevenness nature of formal capitalist markets as well as taxes (Kudva, 2005:165). Therefore, as observed by Brown (2006:7), street trading can serve as a continuum within the street economy practised from home or in formal shops. Such is often the case in Tanzania, where spaza shops (tuck shops) are often run from home and rely on street frontage. Skinner (2008a:14) noted trends of informal traders obtaining their stocks from formal businesses, which could suggest that there is a strong relationship between informal and formal traders.

The informal economy is in addition often said to be unregulated or unregistered (ILO, 2002:11-12 and Cape Town LED Unit, 2004:3, 17). The fact that the regulatory burden of operating in the formal economy is too high and unjust (Devey, 2003:87), often leads poor urban informal workers to choose to remain in the informal economy in order to avoid taxes (de Soto as adapted in Pratt, 2006:38). However, as Brown argues, informal traders are not

exempt from paying taxes. These taxes are in most cases expressed in terms of daily trading rights or in terms of periodic trading permit payments, to which can be added a wide range of potential fines, sometimes even higher than what formal traders regularly pay (Brown, 2006:192).

### **2.8.3. Differences between the formal and the informal economy**

The informal economy, especially its informal trade component, is characterised by its lack of homogeneity with regard to its activities and size, its economic contribution and in terms of job and income-generation (ILO, 2002:11-14). The fact that street traders' businesses are generally unregistered and do not comply with national legislation such as taxation, increases their vulnerability. In addition, in terms of employment provision and in terms of their size (i.e., small-scale), they are further exposed (ILO, 2002:9, 12).

Moreover, the informal economy and particularly street trading are characterised by a strong gender-related divide to the disadvantage of women (ILO, 2002:51), with women more often being associated with being poor than men, irrespective of the country or region they are operating in. This holds true even in developed countries. In South Africa, where women informal traders are usually at the margins and have little resources at their disposal, as seen above, the gender disparities are high (Brown, 2006:185-186; Skinner, 2000:1 and ILO, 2002:53).

### **2.8.4. Challenges: Urban space competition between the formal and informal economy**

Securing a working urban space for informal traders is a vital matter (Brown, 2006:9, 12; Skinner, 2008:1 and Kudva, 2005:163-164). However, competing interests often arise between informal and formal traders, leading to marginalisation and exclusion processes often initiated by formal businesses (Skinner, 2008). These can result in the relocation of street traders, their being arrested or having their goods confiscated by local authorities (ILO, 2002:49 and Skinner, 2008:13) in most sub-Saharan countries (Pratt, 2006:38). Skinner (2008a:13-14) notes that Durban authorities have used the Peace officers in the Public Realm



Management Project/PRMP to harass street traders – especially those without permits – and to remove traders from the Durban-CBD under the guise of formal traders’ complaints.

## **2.9. CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

### **2.9.1. Summary of the Literature Review**

The study of prevailing knowledge about street trading and the role played by street traders’ organisations in empowering street traders in Durban has shed some light on the role and impact of involved stakeholders – within the international, local and municipal context. Despite its important contribution to local economic development due to job and income-generation and its contribution to national GDP informal trading, especially street trading is exposed to institutional and economic challenges characterised by a lack of access to resources and often adverse regulations. Marginalisation and exclusion processes, which tend to be encouraged by governmental institutions under the pretext that informal trade is an unproductive and unregulated survivalist economy, endanger the livelihoods of many structurally and economically disadvantaged people and most notably women street traders who in most cases remain among the most economically disadvantaged.

The support provided by national governmental structures to informal traders’ businesses or SMMEs has been selective and very limited, especially in terms of its reach. Though these structures are inclusive of the disadvantaged, they are not clear about the nature of support to be provided to the most vulnerable category of the informal economy, i.e., the survivalist SMMEs with regard to funding schemes. The provision of basic services on the other hand, has been limited, leaving this sector of the economy, which should be seen as a complement of the formal economy, lagging well behind the latter.

Despite this alarming situation, street traders’ organisations have not been able to present a strong protective umbrella to street traders. Outside of a few organisations that serve as good examples of local economic development structures in that they empower their constituencies, most are still presenting a weak and disorganised profile. These organisations need to build a

strong, non-discriminatory, accountable, trustworthy and united entity that coordinates the activities related to street traders' common interests.

### **2.9.2. Contribution of the present study**

The present study focuses on the reasons preventing the other organisations from organising efficiently and explores how they can become capacitated to better empower their constituencies. Most importantly, the present study attempts to build on the examples of the few existing strong organisations in order to explore tried-and-tested ways to facilitate the empowerment of street traders.

## **CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

Street trading is a circumstance, time and space-related social phenomenon which does not have to be approached in terms of a fixed general theory but as a conceptual framework influenced by space, history and time (Mouton, 1996:188, 198). Its meaning and evolution are shaped and associated with everyday life experiences and conceptual constructs which, Mouton (1996:198) states, produce three main stratification structures: class, status and power. The historical association of these dimensions which has resulted in the socio-economic and political exclusion of the majority of black South Africans has forced them to be involved in marginalised informal/street trading in order to survive.

In order to address this situation, an involvement of various actors towards the empowerment and the socio-economic integration of the marginalised communities or social groups imply their involvement in the search for sustainable solutions.

Therefore this chapter poses capacity-building as a framework which can help SMMEs such as street traders' organisations to empower their constituencies. It looks at how this empowering process can be rolled out. Due to time constraints above-expressed in limitations (see chapter one), the researcher has found for the purpose of this study, relevant to focus on utilising three main sources: Eade (1997), Eade and Williams (1995) and Chaskin et al. (2001).

### **3.2. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

The present study researcher has endeavoured to give conceptual definitions of concepts used in this study with the purpose of integrating them into the research problem with a clear

understanding of their meaning and scope. For this reason, key concepts as well as some which will be frequently used are defined below.

- **Empowerment**

Eade and Williams see this concept as meaning ‘a measure of people’s capacity to bring about change, whether this is modest or far-reaching in its impact’ and, when applied to the development work context it is essentially concerned with analysing and addressing the dynamic of oppression and thus confronting the ways in which people internalise their low social status (i.e., lack of self-esteem) and assisting groups and individuals to come to believe that they have a legitimate part to play in the decisions which affect their lives (Eade and Williams, 1995:12-13). Furthermore, Eade (1997:4) sees the process of empowerment as ‘gaining the strength, confidence and vision to work for positive changes in their lives, individually and together with others’.

- **Capacity-building**

According to the Community Development Resource Association (CDRA), there is no blueprint theory or definition about capacity-building and how best to implement it to work to relieve poverty, distress and suffering; it varies from one setting to another (Eade, 1997:1). It is shaped by the dynamic relationship between its formal purpose and its efforts. It is poverty-focused and is concerned with addressing imbalances in social, economic and political environments at various levels – from government, market, private sector, CBOs, NGOs and other institutions, right down to the community, household and personal level. As such, it is an essential element of sustainable people-centred development (Eade, 1997:1).

A capacity-building approach to development therefore involves identifying the constraints that women and men experience in realising their basic rights and it aims to find appropriate vehicles through which to strengthen their ability to overcome the causes of their exclusion and suffering. Thus it is a response to the multi-dimensional processes of change (Eade,

1997:24). With regard to the subject of this study - street trading organisations – it should be considered as the cornerstone of street traders’ empowerment process.

- **Participation**

Participation can be defined as an inclusive process which allows people to ‘participate positively in social change, in terms both of personal growth and public action’ (Eade 1997:4). In this study, participation implies that street traders take part in decision-making of matters related to their businesses on a free, democratic basis and to have the possibility to influence policy change.

- **Consultation**

In terms of the present research, this concept can be understood as a process through which people are ‘consulted on key issues and may provide vital feed-back to project managers’ (Eade and Williams, 1995:15). This process might influence the decision-making process.

- **Street traders’ organisations**

In this study, the concept refers to street traders’ organisations which operate as membership-based organisations that function through membership contributions. They might be registered or not, have a constitution or not. The most common feature of these organisations is that they operate on a voluntary basis. They might also work as strong organised groupings which regroup other smaller organisations.

- **Street trading**

Brown (2006:8) states that this concept has various descriptions and is often referred to as ‘vending’ or ‘petty trading’. Street trade is used to cover the phenomenal range of goods and services that can be bought on a city’s streets. These goods encompass goods such as food and produce, modern manufactured items such as cosmetics and clothing, traditional herbs and medicine and services such as watch-mending, shoe-cleaning or repair, hair-cutting, phone or

internet access and many others. Therefore, it might be a lucrative business for some traders while being a survivalist business for others.

- **People-centredness**

This concept can be defined as a community-oriented economic development approach which consists of designing interventions which are ‘always measured in terms of how they affect people’s lives, in ways which are meaningful to the people concerned [interests]’ (Eade, 1997: 4). In the research, this concept implies that municipal by-laws must be designed so as to integrate the excluded and disadvantaged in the development framework instead of being prohibitive and restrictive.

- **Powerlessness**

This concept is characterised by ‘a feeling of being powerless or being in a state of lacking power to control or to influence somebody or something’ (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed). It refers to ‘an individual’s perception that he/she does not have complete control of his/her behaviour’ (Mouton, 1996:116).

- **Assessment**

Assessment as a concept has various meanings and in terms of the present research can be defined, on the one hand, as ‘an opinion or judgement about somebody/something that has been thought about very carefully’ – which is synonymous with evaluation; on the other hand, it can be defined as ‘the act of judging or forming an opinion about somebody/something’ (Hornby: 2005, in the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed). In terms of this research, the concept will relate to the evaluation of the role played by street traders’ organisations in empowering street traders in Durban’s Central Business District, with a view to providing information that will enable such organisations to improve their efficiency.

### **3.3. BENEFITS AND FOCUS OF CAPACITY-BUILDING**

Capacity-building in a development context is linked to responding to the spatial and time constraints and socio-economic and political needs of a given individual or group of individuals in a given environment. Its focus is therefore on highlighting and addressing people's needs through respecting their diversity and rights (Eade, 1996:14-17). In other words, it focuses on addressing socio-economic and political imbalances that result in socio-economic and gender-related discrimination (ibid.).

Chaskin et al. (2001:7-8) note that the central focus for community capacity-building is the community's individuals or their organisations. Its main aim is the enhancement of local people's commitment, skills, resources and problem-solving abilities and it is often connected to either a particular programme or institution (Mayer, Aspen Institute, adopted in Chaskin et al., 2001:10) or the participation of individual community members in a process of relationship-building, community planning, decision-making and action (Gittel et al.; Eichler and Hoffman and Goodman et al., as adopted in Chaskin et al., 2001:10). Therefore, some of these approaches focus on organisations or individuals, while others focus on effective connections and shared values or processes of participation and engagement (Chaskin et al., 2001:11). Essentially, capacity-building is aimed at building abilities intended to trigger an agency for change. The agency may be led by an individual, community or a group action informed by a common interest.

With regard to organisations or groups of individuals, capacity-building intends to raise awareness of the group's current condition and the need to act together for change. Eade and Williams (1995:333) argue that acting on their common interest changes the group's individuals and equips them with strengths likely to effectively counter their vulnerability. By joining together in the defence of their right to shape processes affecting them, marginalised people can influence decision-making on their own terms. This necessitates that people and organisations are empowered only through active decisional steps and not through power structures (Eade, 1997:25).

### **3.4. CAPACITIES NEEDED FOR EMPOWERMENT**

People and organisations need a wide range of capacities and abilities. The capabilities approach as propounded by the economist and philosopher Amartya Sen emphasises the true purpose of development being to enhance people's quality of life, which is best achieved by giving them access to a wider spectrum of capabilities. These capabilities go beyond those commonly characterising development: (i) the expansion of goods and services and (ii) meeting basic needs (Sen, adapted in Eade, 1997:16). These capabilities comprise a 'civil and political rights dimension which correlates with equitable economic arrangements...[and] therefore emphasises civil and political freedom as an essential element of human development, not an optional extra' (the 1993 UNDP Human Development Report, adapted in Eade and Williams, 1995:35).

Therefore, these capabilities have to be oriented to address the rights of marginalised individuals or groups comprising women, poor communities and the illiterate in order to improve their participation in socio-economic and political life. Conversely, this kind of empowerment enhances the marginalised group's freedom of choice and their socio-economic integration. Thus, capacity-building, Eade (1997:24) notes, is 'a response to the multi-dimensional processes of change, not a set of discrete or pre-packaged technical interventions intended to bring about a pre-defined outcome'. Any kind of support provided to an organisation has to take into consideration its capacity needs, including intellectual, organisational, social, political, cultural, material, practical or financial, in order to achieve its goals. Therefore, the most appropriate intervention must reflect the diversity of the groups and organisations within a given setting (Eade, 1997:25).

### **3.5. A RELATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF CAPACITY-BUILDING**

As above-mentioned, community capacity-building is dynamic and multi-dimensional. Among its dimensions, it is important to mention some identified by Chaskin et al. (2001:14-19), such as the fundamental characteristics which comprise the sense of community, commitment and ability to solve problems; access to resources and its functions, which include, among others: planning, decision-making, governance, information dissemination, organising, advocacy and production of goods and services. These dimensions concern



community capacity per se. It is also important to mention the fourth dimension – strategies – that may promote community capacity, which encompass leadership, organisational development, organising and organisational collaboration. The capacity-building process will evolve around the above dimensions.

### **3.5.1. Characteristics of community capacity**

Chaskin et al. (2001:14) argue that ‘threshold levels of some of the following characteristics of community capacity are probably necessary if the community is to accomplish particular objectives’.

- **Sense of community**

This characteristic reflects a degree of connectedness among members and recognises the mutuality of circumstance, including a threshold level of collectively held values, norms and vision (Chaskin et al., 2001:14). This dimension relates to the shared commonality of interests and circumstances referred to by Eade and Williams (1995:333).

- **Commitment**

This characteristic refers to the responsibility that particular individuals, groups or organisations take for what happens in the community. It has two essential aspects: firstly, community members see themselves as stakeholders in the collective well-being of their neighbourhood or group and, secondly, these members must be willing to participate actively as stakeholders (Chaskin et al., 2001:15). In a sense, those involved develop a sense of ownership and belonging, which stimulates members’ action. This is referred to as a consciousness-raising or awareness-raising process (Eade, 1997:10).

- **Ability to solve problems**

Chaskin et al. (2001:16) explain this characteristic of community capacity as being the translation of commitment into action – which is an important component of virtually all definitions of community capacity. Problem-solving can be considered an important outcome of capacity-building, which implies the liberation of the organisation or the individual endowed with the new abilities from depending on any key individual in the organisation.

These abilities trigger agency intended to solve problems and their endowment implies the ability to adapt to or endure situations or circumstances resulting from community or social change (Chaskin et al., 2001:14).

- **Access to resources**

This characteristic of a community with capacity refers to the ability to make instrumental links with systems in the larger context (city and region) and to access and leverage various types of resources, located both inside and outside the neighbourhood or organisation (Chaskin et al., 2001:16). These resources include economic, human, physical and political resources but also the skills and knowledge of individuals (members) and can contribute to the community's capacity to address concerns and to support the healthy functioning of its members (Kretzmann and McKnight, adapted in Chaskin et al., 2001:16).

### **3.5.2. Levels of social agency**

Chaskin et al. (2001:19) see levels of social agency as points of entry for interventions such as training or leadership development, organisational development or community organising. These refer to the actors' levels of agency and trigger action for social change to the benefit of individuals or the organisation's members. These levels can engage simultaneously in order to reach efficient outcomes.

- **The individual level**

The above-mentioned authors see this level of social agency as concerning 'human capital and leadership', i.e., the skills, knowledge and resources of individual residents (members) and their participation in community-improving activities. Chaskin et al. (2001:19) argue that investments in increasing the human capital of individuals can have a significant influence on their ability to garner resources and improve their well-being. The existence of human capital in an organisation can be an individual or collective contribution that can catalyse leadership.

- **At the organisational level**

Community organisation capacity operates, Chaskin et al. (2001:1920) argue, through collective bodies such as CBOs, local branches of larger institutions and smaller, organised groups and is reflected in the ability of such groups to carry out their functions responsively, effectively and efficiently and through connecting to larger systems both within and beyond the community/organisation.

- **At the network level**

At this level, community capacity works through relationships among individuals, informal groups and formal organisations (Chaskin et al., 2001:20). Networks of positive social relations among individuals provide a context of trust and support that represents access to social capital resources – information, connections and money (ibid). These ties are particularly important to poor communities/organisations, which often become better able to negotiate transactions because they have greater access to timely information/greater control over information and a better chance to take advantage of opportunities as they arise (Burt, Knoke, Lauman, Galskiewicz and Marsden, adapted in Chaskin et al., 2001:21). Social agency might involve one or more of the above-mentioned levels, but these levels support each other in building community/organisations' capacity, especially in the construction of a collective agenda.

### **3.5.3. Functions of community capacity**

Chaskin et al. (2001:22) argue that this dimension concerns the particular work that community capacity enables a community to perform. It implies the intent to engage specific characteristics – as seen above through particular levels of social agency – to perform specialised functions such as planning and governance, the production of goods and services (jobs, training, housing etc.), informing, organising and mobilising for collective action. The same authors argue that these functions lead to two outcomes: an increase in sustainable community capacity overall and the achievement of other specific desired community conditions. This dimension may include normative functions – concerned with routine tasks of everyday life or directed towards more specialised functions – driven by extraordinary needs and circumstances. Therefore, as Chaskin et al. (2001:23) note, in poorer communities/organisations, the weakness (or even absence) of institutions that perform basic

everyday functions reveals a weak capacity and helping it to realise its objectives is likely to require more than advocacy – it will require investment in the capacity of the community/organisation to identify priorities and pursue a course of action. To meet this imperative need necessitates that social agency be initiated in correlation with the above-mentioned levels.

### **3.6. ORGANISING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING STRATEGIES**

Capacity-building is a dynamic and continuous process which, to be sustainable, needs to be patient and flexible and must emphasise a long-term investment in the people it is concerned with (Eade, 1997:29). Its aim should be to free people from dependency and vulnerability. Its strategies therefore focus on investing in people as well as in their organisations (Eade, 1997:30-32).

#### **3.6.1. Organising**

Chaskin et al. (2001:93) define organising as ‘the process of bringing people together to solve community problems and address collective goals’. Further, the above authors state that strong organisations ‘can provide needed goods and services to community residents or association members. They can be important vehicles for solving community/organisation problems and for helping community members find common ground and take action in the service of shared goals’. They play a range of roles, which include: production of needed goods and services; provision of access to resources and opportunities; leveraging and brokering external resources; fostering development of human capital; creating or reinforcing community identity and commitment and finally, supporting community advocacy and execution of power (ibid).

Social organisations, Eade and Williams (1995:334) note, ‘may be channels for action on varied issues’. They are, Chaskin et al. (2001:61) suggest, ‘key vehicles through which community capacity can be built’.

- **Strengthening existing organisations**

Chaskin et al. (2001:66) argue that strengthening organisations is a two-way process. Firstly, organisations must receive technical assistance and other forms of support for training and peer learning, small grants and gaining access to new relationships and financing resources. Secondly, common approaches – such as advocacy and other forms of pressure such as lobbying – that stimulate organisational change must be applied for those organisations less amenable to change.

### **3.6.2. Forms and organisational framework**

Eade (1997:109) argues that ‘whatever their form or purpose, organisations which represent poor people can be a means to:

- Offer mutual support and solidarity
- Enhance self-esteem and collective confidence
- Improve people’s ability to combat injustice, through collective action
- Be a forum for learning
- Provide discussion and analysis of common concerns
- Increase citizens’ participation in the political process
- Lobby on issues of direct interest
- Demand access to government and other powerful officials
- Negotiate with elites, official bodies, NGOs, and donors’.

Fowler et al. (Eade, 1997:110-111) present two models of an organisational framework. Model 1 divides the organisation into three key areas – Being, Doing and Relating – and emphasises ‘the importance of seeing an organisation in terms of what it does and who it relates to, not just in terms of its internal life’. On the other hand, model 2 prioritises the various attributes of a healthy organisation. Each model needs to work with the other for the whole to be fully functional: in other words, ‘form follows function’. According to these models, organisational capacity-building has to happen at three levels: internal organisation, programme performance (effectiveness and impact) and external relationships or linkages.

#### **A. Internal organisation**

This level refers to the organisation itself. The strength of the organisation is determined by its purpose, identity, vision, mission, strategy, values, systems and structures (whether democratic or not) and the state of its resources, material, financial and human. These attributes must be reinforced by a good leadership culture in the organisation in order to advance its constituents' interests and be accountable to members.

### **B. Programme performance**

This level refers to how the organisation meets its objectives in serving its members or the community. In other words, these relate to the functions or roles within the organisation.

### **C. External relations or linkages**

This level refers to how the organisation works with other actors, whether they have the same or common concern in the country, community or abroad as well as those outside the sector such as the government and the private sector, trade unions and potential leaders. This level refers to building networks and partnerships.

Eade (1997:113-114) notes the existence of major differences between membership organisations' and NGOs' representational roles, political identities and relationships with organisations' constituencies. The most important thing is to recognise the nature of the organisation before seeking to strengthen it and to analyse how it is accountable to its members or constituency. The current study emphasises membership organisations.

#### **3.6.3. Investing in people**

##### **❖ Education and training for skills development**

Eade (1997:77) sees education and training as important ways of putting a people-based capacity-building approach to development into practice. Basic education is a fundamental right. The lack of access to educational opportunities places a major constraint on people's life chances as well as on their capacity to participate in the social, economic and political processes affecting them (Eade, 1997:77). Non-formal, popular or social education, Eade

(1997:77) argues, is a means for marginalised people to develop their critical and organisational capacities and thereby contribute to transforming their societies.

Eade (1997:81-85) found that education training should focus on and aim to meet the following aspects:

- Assessing the needs, which implies the identification of specific programmes aimed at enhancing specific capacities of a given set of people.
- Identifying the agents, which implies identifying the participants targeted by an educational programme.
- Challenging power structures implies that social education must challenge existing power structures based on gender, wealth, age, family, religion and ethnic divisions which might negatively affect individuals' participation and their relation to each other (Kabeer, cited in Eade, 1997:82).
- Assessing achievement, which involves assessing attitudinal changes at a subjective level.
- Building confidence and practical skills.
- Educating in literacy and numeracy concerns addressing stigma related to the lack of education, especially for adults, through non-formal education (Eade and Williams, 1995:363-365 and Eade, 1997:84).
- Providing literacy agents refers to educating/training trainers in appropriate materials and providing follow-up programmes to ensure thorough training and in-service support.

In terms of training/education for the marginalised, the REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy Empowering Community Techniques) approach should be an important tool. This approach does not involve textbooks and rather focuses on each literacy circle developing their own materials, thereby enabling learners to take ownership of the issues being studied and subsequently to take local action and change their behaviour (Eade, 1997:85). Its benefits may range from self-realisation, public participation, community-level action and resource management to health awareness. To ensure participation of marginalised and often socially excluded groups, the learning groups must be structured to overcome the respective obstacles. For instance, adult women – who often work longer hours than men and therefore are

prevented from attending or have their participation limited by time or social constraints – would benefit from segregated, women-only sessions, which would provide a more constructive learning environment. These should be flexible and less time-consuming and be adapted to the availability of learners.

#### ❖ **Vocational and skills training**

Vocational and other forms of training are often designed to raise the incomes of poor people by enabling them to find work or set up enterprises of their own (Eade, 1997:99-100). Vocational training for women in spheres such as tailoring, weaving, embroidery and knitting or domestic activities such as laundering, hairdressing or cooking, which are considered ‘traditionally female activities’, might be considered to reinforce gender-related discrimination and biases. To upgrade women’s skills may include training them in male-dominated activities. This training, coupled with training in new technology, maintenance of new machines and appropriate business skills may help to improve production and expand business and job opportunities. In addition, skills in conflict-prevention and resolution, in group dynamic and organisational decision-making might help to improve mutual trust and therefore lead to effective organising (ibid).

#### ❖ **Training for rights and attitudinal change**

Training in legal and moral rights is often linked to struggles in particular groups such as homeless squatters, informal traders and other small businesses threatened with evictions (Eade, 1997:93-96). They should therefore be educated regarding their right to unionise, about regulations and constitutional rights pertaining to their activities and about their civil rights in order to prevent abuse.

Training for attitudinal change would, Eade argues (ibid.), address marginalisation issues such as gender inequalities. This training should provide an ‘awareness training which addresses



attitudes, perceptions and beliefs' (Williams et al., cited in Eade, 1997:94). If not addressed, the latter can create a structurally-related stigma which is disempowering for those affected.

#### ❖ **Enhancing economic capacity of SMMEs**

Despite the fact that small businesses and micro-enterprises are a major source of employment for poor people worldwide, Eade (1997:96-97) argues that they operate in an environment with low-capital, low-technology and labour-intensive enterprises in which there is a flood of cheap imports and competition from large businesses and, therefore, they struggle to survive. Among the identified constraints they face are the lack of access to credit facilities, training opportunities, legal protection and empowering regulations and market outlets or space; in addition, gender or caste-based divisions of labour strengthen socio-economic inequalities (ibid). They need to be empowered and provided with security in existing enterprises, be assisted with setting up new enterprises to take existing products into a new market and receive support to address gender-related issues in the business environment. Training in organisational support and micro-finance may be considered important tools.

#### ❖ **Credit and micro-finance access**

Access to credit and related services is often a major problem faced by small producers, artisans, informal businesses and women in general (Eade, 1997:101). This shortcoming can be met by improving credit access to informal actors – such as women and other street traders – through lending schemes such as the Grameen Bank lending scheme in Bangladesh, which provides a small amount of credit to women's micro-enterprises (ibid). Another possible scheme could be the use of self-run savings and credit schemes and forming links between the informal sector and informal banking system for the provision or design of micro-credit schemes negotiated at preferential rates.

In order to have a wide reach, these schemes should have a low interest rate and a flexible repayment time to allow the borrower to constitute sustainable capital. Accessing these kinds of schemes might allow small businesses to cover fluctuations in their profitability and enable

poor people to protect their livelihoods against ‘unforeseen’ losses and/or increase their overall security (Eade, 1997:102).

#### **3.6.4. Investing in organisations**

Association or organising is a fundamental human right. Eade and Williams (1995) argue that social organisation is a process whereby women, men and children come together to express and act upon their common interests. Their corporation makes them less vulnerable and enables them to effectively represent their views and defend their right to shape the processes affecting them. Therefore, organising might be a matter of survival – especially for small, self-managed economic enterprises such as those of informal traders (ibid). Without the capacity to mobilise, poor people have little influence on the social, economic and political processes affecting them and overcoming oppression ultimately depends on action taken by those whose interests are at stake so as to organise, gather support for their cause and defend their rights (Eade, 1997:106). Therefore, a capacity-building approach should focus on providing ‘good practical and managerial skills that enable organisations to function effectively and democratically for their constituencies’ (Eade, 1997:108).

- **Membership organisations**

Membership organisations are, Eade (1997:113) states, ‘generally based either on functions or identities or issues and interests. They exist to provide some benefit to their members or to support others’. They are characterised by the voluntary nature of their membership. With regard to their functions, they may represent members who have a grievance as well as negotiate for members’ collective rights. Besides these common roles, they also have to strengthen the organisation (by recruiting new members and building strong structures) and provide other benefits, such as training, to their constituencies.

In terms of structure, Eade (ibid.) notes that they ‘may be formal, with a legal constitution, elected officers, and formal assemblies and audited accounts’ or they ‘may not be legally constituted or recognised’. However ‘internal features generally include democracy based on regular consultative mechanisms such as assemblies or newsletters; open elections for officers

and representatives and some method of approving the accounts' (ibid). These, together with the quality of purpose, the vision, mission and other values – such as accountability and sustainability (especially in terms of skills development and leadership development) – strengthen the members' trust, which is vital to recruiting new members and building useful linkages.

In terms of strengthening their performances, membership organisations have to focus on ensuring leadership continuity as well as build their constituency's capacities through training and education. The latter should be realised as an ongoing process (Eade, 1997:114) and be executed according to time-frames that suit members' needs and availability. Eade (ibid) states that educational programmes can 'help to build up capable and confident middle and lower cadre representatives and so strengthen the internal democracy that is so vital to the health of membership organisations'. The focus of training should be on financial management, leadership and organisational skills – it is vital to know how to run meetings and workshops or communicate so as to negotiate effectively as well as plan, monitor and evaluate the organisation's activities. The organisation should, in addition, be committed to investing in its members by providing them with adequate skills as well as relevant information pertaining to their common interests. This should be done in structured but flexible workshops (Eade, 1997:115), as mentioned earlier.

- **Building leadership**

Leaders are, as Chaskin et al. (2001:28) state, 'a case component of a community's capacity. They facilitate and give direction to work of community organisations'. Despite representing their groups to external actors, their role in a community/organisation ranges from initiating activities, advocating for community interests to catalysing the formation of informal groups to address emerging problems or take advantage of opportunities (Chaskin et al., 2001:29). They also define objectives and monitor progress related to goals, provide and maintain group structure, facilitate group action and task performance and facilitate adoptive work (ibid). To fulfil these tasks, leaders need to have a wide range of capacities.

Strategies for building leadership may include: firstly, training, which is structured to convey information, build confidence or cultivate particular skills; and secondly, engagement, which brings people together to learn ‘on the job’ or ‘on the spot’ while working on activities that benefit the community/organisation (Chaskin et al., 2001:31). In addition, they argue that the former directly attempts to build the skills of individuals or groups of individuals, focusing on information dissemination, personal empowerment/self-esteem building, building skills useful for civic participation – such as writing, organising, public speaking etc. – as well as process related skills, such as running meetings, solving problems and how to work with a city’s bureaucracy; the latter, which can be divided into structured participation in policy processes (planning, governance and decision-making) and direct involvement in programme work, develops leadership through processes of ‘doing something’ rather than through formal training (ibid).

### **3.6.5. Investing in networks and partnerships**

Eade (1997:146) argues that there are two main reasons for networking: firstly, to share new ideas and information in order to learn from others with similar interests and secondly, to pool participants’ experiences and energy in order to enhance their collective and individual impact. Linking and networking are seen as being ‘development strategies’ rather than as tools ‘which enable people and organisations to learn from each other, exchange resources and become more independent as a result’ (ibid).

#### **➤ How to build a successful linking**

Three ingredients for a successful linking process have been identified by the Women’s Linking Project - WLP (Eade, 1997:147):

- Respectful partnership and equal access to resources: This draws on respecting other participants’ learning processes and cultures and the readiness to learn from each other and openly discuss one’s own values and difficulties. This implies sharing the resources available for the intended action, namely power, money and information.
- Mutual interests in linking: Linking is not necessarily a continuous process and only occurs when the need – stimulated by mutual interest – is recognised.

- **Management of linking:** A central agency such as an NGO may facilitate initial linkages, but every organisation keeps its independence. Therefore, linking is not fixed but flexible (Wit, adopted in Eade, 1997:147). Conversely, linking is not all-encompassing but can be part of a strategy to reach a particular goal or be part of a long-term strategy for information exchange.

The presence of a central agency is significant for the co-ordination of the collective action, especially with regard to advocacy and lobbying. This allows the organisations to strengthen their 'voice' as they unite in a common front in order to exert pressure on government or other political institutions regarding their rights or the meeting of other needs related to their activities and their survival.

According to Eade (1997:150), there are three main activities related to the process of linking:

➤ **Exchange visits**

Networking may start with no more than a visit between one group and another and can occur within the same country or in a foreign country. The advantage of such visits is that participants learn more from their peers than from an outside expert who comes to lecture them (ibid.). For a network to evolve, it is necessary that the members of involved groups invest their time and resources and build enough trust to work together. Both groups have to share similar objectives and be mutually committed to making good use of the visit, i.e. the visitors must be able to offer something to their hosts and vice versa (ibid).

Biases should be avoided when setting up participating teams. For instance, gender-related bias could be avoided by including women-only exchanges. Debriefing and follow-up is essential after exchanges have occurred and reports should be compiled for the organisation members as this empowers members to contribute their feedback and participation (ibid).

- **Workshops**

Workshops, Eade (1997:152) argues, enable people to work together on a common concern in a structured but informal and participatory setting. Often used in training or to assist in brainstorming a given topic, workshops have to be well-planned but flexible enough to respond to new concerns that may arise and therefore, they encourage the generation of new ideas. Workshops may bring together people from disparate backgrounds or levels of experience. They may be arranged by the organisation, its partners or networks.

The advantage that workshops offer is that, following the creative discussions which take place through the workshop sessions, new ideas or outcomes can be developed which were not part of the originally set objectives. As with exchange visits, it is imperative to report on proceedings, share the results with others and suggest future activities.

- **Conferences**

The capacity-building process of conferences is limited as conferences are generally exclusive and non-participative, unless delegates participate in the preparations (Eade, 1997:153). Insight is gained by observing the formal proceedings, especially on the management of such events.

### **3.7. CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

The above conceptual framework has extensively explained the critical situation of estranged or isolated SMMEs and the capital need for them to build strong organisations likely to constitute a meaningful counter-balance to challenging forces such as adverse regulating bodies. The failure to constitute these strong organisations hampers the capital role that should be played by marginalised organisations in empowering their membership. Therefore, the process of capacity-building not only empowers these SMMEs but their membership as well and makes them to become active actors towards a positive change likely to influence decision-making processes. In this regard street traders' organisations have that capital role of spearheading this change process for the benefit of their membership businesses.

To ensure the sustainability of an organisation, a wide range of activities that support the capacity-building approach to development is needed. These organisations must aim at reducing the vulnerability of their marginalised members by ‘optimising their chances to have a say in shaping critical decisions affecting their lives, through open and accountable structures’ (Eade, 1997:108, 188). Their functions must be directed at building members’ capacity through education, training, networking, awareness-raising, organisational development and improving their job and business opportunities (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:268, 271 and Horn, 2006).

## **CHAPTER FOUR. RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter emphasises a guideline behind the research, describes the measuring instruments used in data collection, the sampling design, the collection of data and its analysis methods. It ends by considering ethical research-related issues and with a short summary.

### **4.2. FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH STATEMENT**

Street trading is a phenomenon which, in South Africa, has been highly influenced by the apartheid legacy of discrimination, socio-economic exclusion and marginalisation of the majority of the country’s population – black people. With little alternatives, most of them get involved in informal trade, especially in street trading, as a survival means to generate an income. However, the environment created by local institutions – notably in Durban – serves to disempower and discourage street trading. Therefore, the effectiveness of the role played by street traders’ organisations in empowering street traders in Durban during the post-apartheid period remains a questionable issue. How therefore can street traders be empowered so that they play a more active role in decision-making with regard to matters that affect their businesses?

### **4.3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Durrheim (1999:29) sees research design as ‘a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research’. For Sellitz et al., ‘research designs are plans that guide the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure’ (Sellitz, Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook, cited in Durrheim, 1999:29). Comparing a research project to a journey, Mouton (1996:107) argues that ‘a research design is like a route planner’, essentially a set of guidelines and instructions on how to reach the goal that one sets for oneself in carrying out a research project.

With the above definitions in mind, the following steps have been considered in the research design of this project.

#### **4.3.1. Focus of the research**

This research project started by determining the focus of the inquiry – in this instance, street traders’ associations role in empowering street traders in Durban - CBD. The difficult prevailing socio-economic conditions under which street traders in general and particularly in Durban operate, prompted the researcher to understand the various roles played by the prime stakeholders (i.e. street traders’ organisations), which have the potential to contribute to street traders’ empowerment.

#### **4.3.2. Operability**

The current study has been defined as an empirical enquiry in which qualitative methods and techniques have been used. The operability of the study ‘refers to the creation of concrete measurement techniques or concrete steps or operations that will be used to measure specific concepts’ (Babbie, 1989:96-97) and focused on using the following qualitative instruments: firstly, semi-structured, in-depth interviews with interviewees (street traders, street traders’ associations and officials involved in the management of street trading in Durban CBD). Interviews were conducted in the field and the researcher made field notes. Secondly, direct observation was used to capture the interactions between the involved stakeholders in the field



in order to collect empirical data. The researcher also studied secondary source data, i.e. the available literature, in order to assimilate existing knowledge about the phenomenon.

The above-mentioned measures – which have been executed concomitantly – have allowed the researcher to measure and record behaviours and attitudes of involved actors as well as the various meanings and understandings they have about the street trading environment in the Durban-CBD. Interviews were conducted using a questionnaire-guide, which served as a reference for flexible ‘non-biased’ (Babbie, 1986:143-144) interviews aimed at ensuring the validity and reliability of the collected data.

The interview-guide comprised of open-ended questions divided into three sections: questions specifically designed for street traders; questions for the associations and finally, questions for officials, which specifically emphasised regulations, the enforcement thereof and the support offered to SMMEs. This allowed the researcher to explore the phenomenon of street trading from various angles and to collect a wide variety of data.

Interviews and observations were done daily and the researcher typically conducted between two and four interviews a day – depending on the respondents’ availability and the researcher/interviewer’s time constraints. About three weeks were spent on the field.

### **4.3.3. Research paradigm**

The current research used the exploratory-interpretative paradigm which, in qualitative studies, involves ‘the establishing of the “facts”, the gathering of new data and the determination of whether there are interesting patterns in the data’ (Mouton, 1996:205).

## **4.4. RESEARCH METHODS AND TECHNIQUES**

### **4.4.1. Sampling**

According to Durrheim (1999:44), sampling involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviours and/or social processes to observe. It has two major concerns, which are: representativity and the size of the sample.

### ❖ **Choice of sampling**

Theory recognises various types of sampling, including: theoretical sampling, proven theoretical relevance, open sampling, relational sampling and discriminate sampling (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:176). For the purpose of the current research, the researcher has chosen to use open sampling, which is associated with open coding. Strauss and Corbin (ibid) see open sampling as being guided by ‘openness rather than specificity. It can be done purposively or systematically, or occur fortuitously and includes on-site sampling’. The aim of this sampling technique is ‘to uncover as many potentially relevant categories as possible, along with their properties and dimensions’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:181). The selection of the interviewees and observational sites has therefore been indiscriminate and has used non-structured questions and observation.

### ❖ **Population sampling**

In terms of strategy, the current study was defined as a contextual study, in which phenomena have been studied because of their intrinsic and immediate contextual significance. This strategy generally uses a limited number of cases but provides in-depth data (Mouton, 1996:133). The present study uses qualitative methods to deliver rich data and has been limited in terms of the population sample.

The population – viewed by Roscoe as ‘a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristic that the researcher is interested in studying’ (Roscoe, cited in Mouton, 1996:134) or by Sellitz and Cook as ‘the aggregate of all the cases that conform to some designated set of specifications’ (cited in Mouton, 1996:34) – has been ‘constructed’ or ‘defined’ in three sections: street traders, street traders’ associations and finally, officials (Metro police and other involved municipal services). These three categories constituted the target population.

Furthermore, a sampling frame was constructed from the three categories of the target population. According to Mouton (1996:135), this sampling frame refers ‘to the set of all

cases from which the sample has to be selected'. For the purpose of the current study, associations have been included in the sampling frame. These associations or street committees comprise the following: Siyagunda Association (an association which mainly regroups African foreign street barbers); the Herb Traders Committee (which regroups traditional medicine traders at the *muthi* market); The Eye Traders' Association (which mainly regroups traders with no permits) and StreetNet International.

#### ❖ **Sampling size and representativity**

From the sampling frame chosen, a limited sample was drawn from each category and interviewed on the spot, i.e., at their work locations. This enabled the researcher to interrelate interviewing and observation and was especially useful when interviewing street traders.

##### ➤ **Sample A: Street traders**

As above-mentioned, the sample from this category has been interviewed at their working sites, namely: on the pavements, along the streets and passages, at the beach front, at Durban Station and at the market. The limited size of the sample organisations representatives was compensated for by the number of street traders interviewed to ensure the representativity of the general sample. The researcher interviewed two (2) street traders from each of the five organisations identified. The total number of street traders interviewed was 10. The identification of street traders non-affiliated to any membership was determined by openly asking to the interviewees whether they were affiliated or not as a prerequisite to identify those non-affiliated. The total number of street traders non-affiliated to any organisation was four.

##### ➤ **Sample B: Street traders' organisations**

Sample B concerns street traders' associations. The researcher chose which street traders' organisations and street committees to interview based on the ones that the street traders

belonged to. Though these associations are not homogeneously constructed, they are composed of street traders who sell or operate with similar products and/or services, ranging from selling vegetables, fruits, clothes and cosmetics to offering services such as shoe repairs etc. Generally, street traders' wares and services were differentiated by their geographical location: the traditional medicines or *muthi* market, the Beachfront, along the streets and pavements and at Durban Station. The visited and interviewed associations' representatives were found at their associations' addresses – at offices for those that had offices or just at their working spots.

Besides StreetNet International – which was singled out by the researcher for its particular role as a formal membership organisation or umbrella organisation for some street traders – a number of five organisations were chosen and represented by one representative per organisation. The total number was 6.

➤ **Sample C: Officials**

Interviews were also conducted with a limited number of officials involved in street trading. Among these were two (2) Metro police officers who were randomly chosen and interviewed at the Metro Police offices and the manager of the Durban Informal Support Unit who has been interviewed at this unit's office at the Warwick Junction Project.

#### **4.4.2. Data collection**

Data was collected using a twofold source approach: the first source of data collection was through field-research, which included in-depth, one-on-one interviews and observation and the second data source relied on previous research documents.

➤ **Interviews and observation**

The need to interrelate data is actually inherent in field methodology because a field study does not comprise using a single method to gather only one kind of information (Zelditch and Trow and Becker and Grer, cited in Fielding and Fielding, 1986:47).

This interrelation of interviews and observation is viewed by Fielding and Fielding (1986:51) as contributing to data having greater validity because ‘where interviews and observation occur together, some data are checked against observations’. In addition, ‘the interviewer needs to have a grasp of what lines and leads are relevant before he/she can achieve the subtle task of encouraging the interviewee to be expansive on the interesting things therefore observation is needed before questions can be framed and before people will be prepared to respond in depth’ (Fielding and Fielding, 1986:50).

The use of qualitative methods of data collection (observation and interviewing) are favoured by researchers working within the interpretive and constructionist paradigms because they permit rich and detailed observations of a few cases and allow the researcher to build up an understanding of phenomena through observing particular instances of the phenomena as they emerge in specific contexts (Durrheim, 1999:47).

#### ➤ **Interviews**

Interviews were conducted in the current study because they are an important data-gathering tool. Bless and Higson-Smith (2006:104) have argued that ‘an interview involves direct personal contact with the participant, who is asked to answer questions relating to the research’. Therefore, the current study used non-scheduled interviews. This type of interview ‘consists of asking respondents to comment on broadly defined issues. Those to be interviewed are free to expand on the topic as they see fit, to focus on particular aspects, to relate their own experiences and so on’ (Bless and Higson-Smith, 2006:105). In this type of interview, the interviewer limits himself/herself to giving clarification or further explanation, but does not direct or confront the interviewee with probing questions. Therefore, it is a method which allows the interviewee to express his/her full feelings and thoughts. This type of interview is commonly used, Bless and Higson-Smith state ‘in exploratory research where the research questions cannot be narrowly defined’. However, the researcher had to use an interpreter in order to avoid misinterpreting data as himself does not speak isiZulu fluently which would otherwise constitute a hindrance to the process of data collection and interpretation.

This study has emphasised the use of unstructured or semi-structured questions during the interviews, during which the interaction between the interviewer and respondents was guided by a general plan of inquiry or interview guide but not a specific set of questions to be asked using particular words or in a particular order (Babbie, 1999:270). Rather, the interviews were of a conversational nature and the interviewee did most of the talking, allowing the researcher to efficiently capture and encourage the respondents to raise relevant topics. As such, the researcher used open-ended questions during these unstructured or semi-structured interviews, which, according to Bless and Higson-Smith (2006:107-108) ‘leave the participants completely free to express their answers as they wish, as detailed and complex, as long or as short as they feel is appropriate, irrespective of any restrictions, guidelines or suggestions for given solutions’.

Thus, three sets of interview guides were set by the researcher: one for street traders, another for street traders’ organisations and finally, one for involved services such as the Metro police. These three sets, though they had some similarities, differed in order to allow the researcher to capture in-depth perceptions and information. Interviews were accompanied by field notes recording of data collected from the various interactions with the interviewed sample.

#### ➤ **Observation**

In addition to interviews, observation has played an important role in the collection of data. Among the many approaches of observation, which include complete participant, observation, participant-as-participant or complete observer (Babbie, 1989:264), the researcher has, for the purpose of the current study, chosen to use observation. This method, which Bless and Higson-Smith (2006:103) call simple observation or non-participant observation, ‘is the recording of events as observed by an outsider’ – in this instance, the researcher. Babbie (1999:266) argues that ‘the complete observer observes a social process without becoming a part of it in any way, i.e., the subjects might not realise they are being studied because of the researcher’s unobtrusiveness’. This method has therefore enabled the researcher to study

events and interactions between involved actors – for instance, street traders and the law enforcing agents or the Metro police – as they occurred and to subsequently take field notes. It has also allowed the researcher to study advocacy events such as common action initiated by various associations.

However, this method has weaknesses. For instance, it does not render a full appreciation of what is being studied and is as Babbie stressed out furthermore, transitory. It is also open to bias (Bless and Higson-Smith, 2006:104). These shortcomings have been rectified by associating observation with in-depth interviewing, as above-mentioned.

This observation method has therefore allowed the researcher to collect useful data on individual behaviours at the physical locality or sites where events occurred. This type of observation has been used by the researcher as he put emphasis on not directly being involved with sources in order to avoid participants from becoming reactive (Mouton, 1996:142).

#### ➤ **Use of secondary data collection sources**

The interviewer was aware that interviews and direct observation would not guarantee the reliability of the data collected. This shortcoming has been met by using second sources of data collection – which are expressed in terms of the literature review. Mouton (1999:157) asserts that ‘it is an important principle to supplement the more reactive methods such as direct observation with less reactive methods such as the use of documentary sources’. This is augmented by the fact that it is not easy to ensure anonymity, as observed by Douglas (adapted in Mouton, *ibid*), and as such, subjects tend to be unusually reluctant or unwilling to participate because they fear being invaded in their own matters.

The study of existing documents has given the researcher extended knowledge about the phenomenon of local and international street trading and has allowed for the detection of variations and pitfalls in the primary data. It has subsequently facilitated making comparisons with other settings in order to determine the level of reliability and validity of the primary

data. The efficacy of the different variables was also easier to check with regard to other actors in other settings.

#### **4.4.3. Data analysis and interpretation**

Bogdan and Biklen (1982:45) define qualitative data analysis as ‘working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others’. Qualitative techniques of data analysis, Durrheim (1999:47) argues, ‘begin by identifying themes in the data and relationships between these themes’. Durrheim states further that its aims are ‘to transform information (data) into an answer to the original research question’. It is therefore, Durrheim (ibid) states, ‘important to ensure that the type of data analysis employed matches the research paradigm and data and can answer the research question’.

The challenge of data analysis is how to codify data into meaningful themes and categories and to process or manipulate them in order to communicate their interpretation to others. This ‘interpretation’ process refers ‘to the stage in the research process where the researcher tries to bring it all together, either by relating the various individual findings to an existing theory or hypothesis, or by formulating a new hypothesis that would best account for the data’ (Mouton, 1996:161).

For the purpose of the current study, the researcher identified themes and categories which were further defined during the subsequent stages of analysis. These themes and categories were matched with the research paradigm in the context of the research question in order to draw sound conclusions and recommendations. Such an approach focused on Mouton’s (1996:168) guidelines, namely to:

- Understand rather than explain social actions and events within their particular settings and contexts;
- Remain true to the natural setting of the actors and the concepts they use to describe and understand themselves;



- Construct accounts and theories that retain the internal meaning and coherence of the social phenomenon rather than break it up into its constituent ‘components’; and
  - Create contextually valid accounts of social life rather than formally generalisable explanations.
- **Methods of data analysis and interpretation**

The researcher’s strategy, according to Mouton (1996:169), is usually of a contextual nature, which implies focusing on the individual case or small number of cases in its specific context of meanings and significance. Therefore, as Mouton (ibid.) notes, the analysis in these cases requires the reconstruction of inherently significant structures and understanding individuals by staying close to the subject. The overall coherence and meaning of the data is more important than the specific meanings of its parts. Therefore, as he argues, the methods to be used in qualitative data analyses have to be holistic, synthetic and interpretative.

In terms of data analysis methods, the researcher of the current study emphasised using inductive logic which, according to Babbie (1989:278), ‘look[s] for patterns of interaction and dissimilarities’. The inductive logic enabled the researcher to look for patterns of interaction and events common to the subject of study. These are considered ‘norms of behaviours’ (ibid). These behavioural patterns or norms have been checked off with regard to the research question and in terms of the different variables of the study. Essentially, the researcher was guided by the need for flexibility in analysing the collected data so as to capture the real meaning of events and various assertions.

Secondly, during this section of data analysis, the researcher emphasised using the questioning method in order to open up the data. This facilitated thinking about the categories’ properties and dimensions and further provided for the possibility of expanding the interviewing process (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:77). The basic questions guiding the interviews therefore were: who, when, where, how, how much and why (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:77). These questions made it easier to categorise and understand data meanings and

properties. This method is conducive to building new theories as the data's meaning unfolds. In addition, it can help the researcher to better understand the event.

Thirdly, the method of using comparisons was useful for the current data analysis of the study. The use of comparisons enabled the researcher to find similarities and dissimilarities, which were matched against the research question and hypotheses in order to construct theoretical conclusions. Using close-in comparison and far-out comparison enabled the researcher to understand the conditions under which the study of the phenomenon developed (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:88, 90-91).

In addition, the researcher used the method of 'moving the red flag', which consists of seeing beyond the obvious data meaning (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:92). The researcher was able to draw upon field experience in order to capture sensitivities in the data and as such was very sensitive to the interviewees' use of certain words and phrases. Participants sometimes drew the researcher's attention to terminology and as a result the researcher took these clarifications as a clue to further investigate issues (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:92).

Finally, in order to avoid bias shortcomings and other inquiry pitfalls related to close observation of the phenomenon, the researcher used personal introspection – which consisted of examining his own thoughts and feelings (Babbie, 1989:280) and 'taking the role of the other' (id.) in order to ask himself how he would have acted and felt in the place of the interviewee.

The above methods have enabled the researcher to link data and context, which, according to Fielding and Fielding (1986:49), 'is seen as a need to have data that can be assessed by the rules of contextual inference in order to clarify how our observations and interview extracts can be transformed so as to stand for a much larger but invisible set of materials'.

#### **4.5. Validity and reliability**

In their discussion about reliability and validity, Babbie and Mouton (2001:118-125) concluded that concepts utility justifies the meaning assigned to the concept used, because social science researchers need to agree or disagree on the methods used in measuring any variable. Likewise, Krueger (1988:41) argues that people are not always truthful and information can be intentional or unintentional. It is therefore possible that interviewees withhold valuable information, leading the researcher to conclude ‘truths’ with misinformation. However, Patton (1990) notes that qualitative research should meet the following criteria to address the issue of validity:

- The techniques and methods used to ensure the integrity, validity and accuracy of findings must be sound;
- The researcher’s experience, perspectives and qualifications must inform the study; and
- The paradigm orientation must guide the study.

The researcher took care not to direct the interviewees and rather let participants confidently express themselves on a given topic, and then matched the collected data from various sources to check whether there were similarities or dissimilarities in the data. In addition, he ensured that groups of interviewees were not targeted and did not interview neighbours. Before interviews, the researcher also frequently visited the sites of operation where the sample works in order to gather information through observation. This method, coupled with the study of secondary data, facilitated the gathering of valid information as the researcher addressed the phenomenon from various perspectives. This was done in line with the exploratory-interpretive paradigm chosen for this study. Despite the limited sample, the above qualitative criteria contributed to ensuring validity and reliability of the research process.

#### **4.6. Ethical considerations**

Ethical issues, Babbie and Mouton (2001:520) argue, involve compromises between interests and rights of different parties. The interviewed person has to give his/her consent by providing informed consent. As such, the interviewee needs to be assured that he/she will not be harmed and of the confidential nature of the data collection process and presenting of findings.

Before each interview, the targeted interviewee was briefed on the reason behind the study and asked to study the informed consent form before agreeing to be interviewed. This ensured that participation in the interview was on a voluntary basis. In addition, interviewees were assured that their identity would remain anonymous. The researcher made sure not to include the real interviewee identification in the report. This contributed to ensuring that interviewees approached the topics of the study without any fear of adverse consequences.

#### **4.7. CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

The study of the social issues behind and inherent to street trading processes guided the use of qualitative methods and techniques. These techniques and methods, set in an exploratory-interpretative paradigm, have, together with the instruments used in the operability of the research, enabled flexibility in approaching the topic of the study, therefore enabling the researcher to gather useful data and to successfully analyse it in relation to the study variables. However, accessing relevant secondary data was a daunting experience, marked by many constraints which the researcher had to overcome. Ultimately, the methods and methodology used in this study were effective in addressing the issue of the role street traders' organisations play in empowering street traders in Durban.

## **CHAPTER FIVE. DATA ANALYSIS**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses data analysis using qualitative non-obtrusive methods. A vast amount of data has been collected during the three weeks of fieldwork using the interviews guides. Here, it is essential to mention that the interview guides were not exhaustive as the qualitative method used focused on using in-dept interviews which allowed the exploration of the subject as data unfolded. That is why valuable data were collected on the field through this method which allowed flexibility from the rigid interview questionnaires. In order to better analyse this amount of data and come up with sound conclusions, these data have been broken into 'manageable categories' (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982:45).

Data collected through the use of interviews have been matched with the results of field observation as expressed in the research design and methods used. The focus of the chapter is to understand social actions and events within their settings and contexts by staying close to the subject (Mouton, 1996:169). The use of tables and figures in this chapter is not to make it a quantitative work; it serves to provide descriptive value as the researcher explores the issue under study.

The body of this chapter consists of data analysis and interpretation. This is followed by a partial conclusion.

## 5.2. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

### 5.2.1. Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

**Table 1. Gender distribution of street traders' sample**

<b>Sample</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>A</b>	Male	8	57.14
	Female	6	46.86
Sub-total		14	100
<b>B</b>	Male	3	50
	Female	3	50
Sub-total		6	100
<b>C</b>	Male	2	67
	Female	1	33
Sub-total		3	100
Total	Males	13	56.52
	Females	10	43.48
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>

The gender distribution of the sample seems to be equal in terms of respondent numbers but this is mainly due to the fact that some organisations such as Siyagunda and SASEWA are single-gender-dominated; Siyagunda Association is male-dominated while SASEWA (South African Self Employed Women's Association) is exclusively women-dominated. These statistics corroborate Hunter and Skinner's findings on migrant traders, which assert that in Durban, women are under-represented among foreign traders although they are over-represented among South African traders (Hunter and Skinner quoted in Skinner 2008b:5).

**Table 2. Age distribution of the respondents**

<b>Age range</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
21 - 30	5	21.74
31 - 40	3	13.04
41 - 50	4	17.39
51 - 60	5	21.74
61 +	6	26.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>

Though the above table shows a balanced age distribution between young and old people comprising the sample of street traders, gender impacts the statistical trends. These differences are better expressed in the following table, which correlates age and gender of the sample.

**Table 3. Age/gender distribution of the respondents**

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Numbers</b>		<b>Percentage</b>	
	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
21 - 30	3	1	13.04	4.34
31 - 40	3	2	13.04	8.68
41 - 50	1	3	4.34	13.04
51 - 60	1	2	4.34	8.68
61 +	2	5	8.68	21.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>			

Table 3 shows striking differences with regard to male and female street traders' ages. As the Table shows, men tend to be involved in street trading at a relatively younger age than women (Lund et al., 2000:12). This situation might be the result of socio-economic constraints which put a heavier load on women than men. Brown (2006:28-29) found that women are more exposed than men to household duties such as caring for their children as well as to poverty.

**Table 4. Racial/origin distribution of respondents**

<b>Race/Origin</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentage of Sample</b>
Africans	11	47.83

Indians	4	17.39
Coloureds	2	8.70
Whites	1	4.35
Others/Foreigners	5	21.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in Table 4 above, Africans refers to black South African respondents involved in street trading. Others/foreigners refers to foreigners – especially to refugee street traders or their respective organisations’ representatives. The sample of officials comprised only Africans.

The above Table shows that black people comprise the majority of respondents.

**Table 5. Respondents’ marital status by gender**

Status	Frequency		Percentage of Sample	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Married	4	2	21.43	14.29
Widowed	1	4	3.57	21.43
Divorced	1	2	-	10.71
Single	2	3	7.14	0
Living together	2	2	0	3.57
			10.71	7.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>		

The above figures show that a striking contrast exists between men and women’s marital status. On one hand, four male respondents were classified in the married category while 3 lived in a certain kind of companionship or arrangement, while only one was a widow and two are single parents; on the other hand, two women respondents were married, four were widows, two were divorced and another two were single parents while three lived in an arranged companionship. This confirms Lund et al. (2000:10) findings that the level of household responsibilities fall more often on women’s shoulders than on men’s. This above explanation can also be considered relevant with respect to the following table, which represents street traders’ livelihoods in relation to the gender distribution of the sample.

**Table 6. Street trader respondents’ source of income**



<b>Source of Income</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total Numbers</b>
Street trading as sole source of income	3	9	12
Presence of other sources of income	5	3	8
Trader as sole household breadwinner	3	8	11
Household has other breadwinners	5	4	9

These figures do not include the sample's officials, who are either office-bearers or police officers. The number of official comprised two males and one female. The other sources of income include activities such as selling in peripheral markets such as Mandeni, a regular security job, a cross-border business etc.

The previous table shows that 9 out of 12 of those respondents relied on street trading as a sole source of income were females, while three in the same category were males; of 8 respondents who had other sources of income, 5 were males while 3 were females; out of 11 respondents who were the sole household breadwinners, 8 were women while 3 were men and finally out of 9 those whose household's had other breadwinners, men comprised were 5 while women were 4. This reveals that women respondents were the most exposed to poverty while also bearing the brunt for household responsibilities. This confirms Skinner's (2008a:4) findings that most street traders in Durban are the sole breadwinners in their households.

**Table 7. Education level of respondents and their training skills**

<b>Category Level</b>	<b>Frequency by Gender</b>		<b>Percentage of Sample</b>	
	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
Under Std. 5	3	8	10.71	35.71
Std. 5-Std. 10	2	3	17.86	14.29
Additional training	2	1	7.14	3.57
Tertiary education (a)	1	0	7.14	3.57

Table 7 shows that male respondents were better educated than females. Men dominated in the sections between Standards 5 and 10, in tertiary education and additional training categories while women dominated in the under Standard 5 category. Once again this is explained by the figures produced by the Siyagunda Association representative and traders,

who seem to have received a good education, either in their original countries or in South Africa. Unfortunately they were not able to access the job market due to constraints related to their refugee status. Conversely, one woman respondent who had previously been a member of SEWU had undergone high quality training despite her limited educational level. This table does not include the officials' figures.

### **5.2.2. Structural organisation of visited street traders' organisations**

The structural organisation of visited street traders' organisations presents striking asymmetry. While some organisations do not seem to have any record of their membership – with regard to their numbers, their places of work or even their activities – others are quite aware of the need for record-keeping and hold regular meetings to update their records. These meetings are also intended to facilitate membership participation in discussions and other organisation-related activities. According to one respondent, the members' participation is a revealing indicator of the members' interest in organising:

*The participation of members to our meetings is very important. By their participation, we know that they are interested in building a strong organisation and are willing to take part in its activities. The only way we can check our membership adherence is to know exactly who they are and how many they are. That is why we need to keep an updated record of our organisation members. In addition, updating their record helps us to know who is contributing to the organisation functioning and who is not.*  
(Joseph, male, 28 years)

This view is shared by another respondent, who sees it as a stimulating factor of the organisation membership and crucial to its management. Accordingly, as revealed by the researcher's findings, only a few organisations – Siyagunda Association and SASEWA - have been able to produce an approximate number of their membership affiliation. The organisation members' participation process, as this respondent said, is:

*... A confidence-builder factor. Because the members can therefore see that their association is seriously run and is committed to keeping in touch with its membership. Far from seeing it as an easy way to extort money from them, our members have become more confident in us and*

*are more eager to participate in our meetings and to raise their views.*  
(Dlamini, male, 32 years)

However, for two street committees' representatives, keeping records of their members is seen as a waste of valuable time since their work is voluntary, i.e., unpaid. It is equally seen by them as being a waste of personal resources. As one of them said:

*The work we do for the committee is just a waste of time for us. We work on a voluntary basis and get nothing from the organisation to compensate the time we invest in its activities. While I should be working on my own business trying to make something for my family, I also have to be involved with the committee's daily management, why? You see, the committee only gets involved with street trading issues when there is a problem, therefore in the meantime I have to be busy with my own business.*

(Andre, male, 22 years)

This view confirms Devenish and Skinner's (2006:259) findings relating to the temporary nature and role of some street traders' organisations in Durban, which arise only when there is a crisis. This explains why many street traders operate out of any organising structure.

- **Presence of accountable managing structures and tools**

As said above, some representatives of Durban street traders' organisations have acknowledged the need for organisational structures. The respondents from the Siyagunda Association and SASEWA have both acknowledged that they are setting up structures within their organisations, though, at the time of the interviews, they were still being set up. Siyagunda Association, though having a constitution and a body of office-bearers, was yet to be fully registered; SASEWA, on the other hand, had been registered but was still waiting for its official launch. Nevertheless, SASEWA had already established temporary structures which bore their SEWU aims and had contributed greatly to organising the new association. A SASEWA representative said:

*The experience we gained from SEWU has been tremendous. We have estimated that such an organisation could not simply disappear. Therefore some of us have gathered and have decided to start an organisation which*

*would be like an improved copy of SEWU. That is why we have taken the SEWU constitution and adapted it to the new developments. We have changed some sections, removed and wrote others as needed. The present constitution is well written and adapted to today's situation.*

(Nobuntu, female, 41 years)

These structures and their organising mechanisms are seen by some organisations' representatives as irreplaceable mechanisms in the building of accountable organisations.

According to a respondent from the Siyagunda Association:

*Strong structures reinforced by the presence in an organisation of managing mechanisms such as the organisation constitution helps the organisation to be accountable to its members. Clear and transparent managing tools convince the membership that the organisation is well managed and is a serious actor committed to serving its members. Members are therefore confident knowing that their contributions and other organisation resources are protected from mismanagement and other functional hazards which might occur.*

(Jacques, male, 25 years)

This confirms the awareness raised by some organisations on the experience of SEWU related to mismanagement and other organisational issues, which led to the liquidation of SEWU in 2004 (Devenish and Skinner, 2006:256). This problem has accordingly been at the root of the lack of trust in many other organisations and street committees. As observed by one respondent:

*Members are often sceptical when it comes to the management of their contributions. They feel that they cannot trust anybody for the management of common funds. They say that entrusting people with community or organisation funds is just conducive to mismanagement problems and embezzlement.*

(Nhlanhla, male, 30 years)

Having management structures within an organisation is seen as an important achievement by the few organised associations that the researcher visited, but for others, management structures are considered, on the one hand, to be a useless and costly hindrance – especially in terms of being time-consuming to set up and maintain and in terms of the financial resources

required – and on the other hand, as an obstacle with regard to decision-making and channelling information to members. One street committee representative said:

*We do not have the resources to manage a management structure. This requires money and time and the results are just not relevant. A managing structure, is just another way of creating unnecessary expenses and obstacles as each will come with his or her position on various matters. This issue of street trading should not be a heavy administration issue but an occasional one – as urgent crises arise, our committee meets when we need to meet, not just for the sake of wasting other people's time and resources.*  
(Translated)

The above statement raises a question about the level and quality of membership participation, which should be democratic and encouraged. Participation should be seen as an indicator of how members value their organisation and its achievements and of how well managing structures are operative in dealing with the organisation's issues. However, for some organisations, membership participation is an important aspiration. The Siyagunda Association, for instance, regards membership participation as an everyday matter. As an organisation representative responded:

*We hold the Executive Committee meetings every two weeks and each member of the Executive Committee participates at the meetings, otherwise there must be a comprehensible reason for the absentee not to attend. Each area has its representative to the committee. If anyone wishes or has to be replaced, the replacement is done by the General Assembly if the required quorum is reached. Ordinary members attend the General Assembly, which is held after every three months, or when there is an Extraordinary Assembly to be held. Elections are done by the General Assembly after every two years.*  
(William, male, 27 years)

The regularity of meetings, attendance levels as well as the matters to be addressed in each meeting is a good indicator to the ordinary members of whether their committee is doing its job and is committed to representing their interests. Meetings are therefore a confidence-building mechanism as they inspire members to trust their representatives.

- **Channels of decision-making**

The Siyagunda Association finds that the channel of decision-making has to be democratic. This is especially seen during the Executive Committee meetings, at which each area's representatives attend. The area representatives correspond to the geographical divisions of the CBD, according to the locations or streets where traders operate. A respondent from this organisation said that:

*In terms of decision-making, each Executive Committee member comes with his or her proposition as they are informed beforehand of the meeting's objectives. Once propositions are communicated and examined by all attending members, decisions are made by vote. Decisions are then escalated to the ordinary members. With regard to decisions which have to be taken by the General Assembly, all members have an equal vote by the process of one person, one vote.*

(George, male, 33 years)

These participative and consultative channels of decision-making are an indicator of democratic processes in the organisation. The researcher was interested to find that virtually the same channels of decision-making existed at SASEWA. Asked about this process, the SASEWA respondent answered:

*At SASEWA, we value the democratic participation of our members in our programme. We encourage this participation as it helps to strengthen the organisation as members come with various valuable ideas. This is their organisation; they have the right to have a say in its management.*

(Noluthando, female, 25 years)

However, this dynamism is not the same in all visited organisations and street committees; three respondents expressed their discontent about the lack of collaboration and especially about the language barrier to communication in their own organisation. Asked about attending meetings, a respondent replied:

*These people take us for granted. There is a communication problem in this organisation and how can anyone participate if he or she does not understand the language used in the meetings? Everything is spoken in isiZulu, therefore, for me, attending is just a waste of time. Not everybody understands or speaks isiZulu. It is as if those who do not communicate in this language are not concerned by the meetings.*

(Kumar, male, 37 years)

This language barrier seems to affect the participation of scores of street traders in Durban – such as Indians, foreigners and coloureds – who do not speak or understand isiZulu. This language is actually the dominant communication language in the local African community and not mastering it becomes a social barrier between people who share the same concerns and business issues.

- **Lack of tangible results as a barrier to organising**

Organisations group people with similar goals and needs, with the aim being to achieve positive results that address these goals and needs. All street trader respondents unanimously found that when their respective organisations attained good results, it added significant value to their businesses and the inability to achieve these results simply meant they were wasting their time and resources. One respondent expressed this by saying:

*Attending meetings is good, as long as we can see change intended to improve our working conditions. Unfortunately, that is not what we see here in Durban. We seem to always gather around for the same issues, which are never resolved. We get promises almost every day but in the end nothing really changes. That is disturbing. If we have to organise, let it be at least to see things changing. But we are still harassed, we are still exposed to the same problems which become even worse as time passes by.*

(Translated: Ma Khumalo, female, 46 years)

It is indeed discouraging to attend meetings, only to realise that no progress has been made from the previous meeting. It is even worse when promises do not materialise. This state of affairs causes organisation members to lose hope in their organisation and to feel that their organisation is ineffective and not respectful of their time.

- **Assistance to organising**

Organising is not an easy process; at least 80 percent of the respondents acknowledged that a range of issues have hindered their organising process. Among the reasons expressed to be insurmountable problems met by these organisations was the lack of assistance. This is not the case with the Siyagunda Association and SESAWA. The representatives of the Siyagunda

Association and of SASEWA acknowledged that the assistance from StreetNet International was especially important in terms of strategising. According to the Siyagunda Association respondent:

*StreetNet International is very good. They have educated organisers as well as people who have good knowledge of social and legislative issues. They have provided us with much needed organisational assistance. They equally have a good willingness to help street traders organise themselves. They stand up whenever and wherever there is an issue concerning street traders. Even municipal officials are afraid of the efficiency of StreetNet International involvement.*

(Peter, male, 26 years)

For the organisations and street committees which do not know anything about the availability of this assistance or do not seek it, organising becomes a difficult task, as confirmed by Brown's (2006) findings. As acknowledged by one street committee member:

*Lack of technical assistance is a major hindrance to our organising process. Often we do not even know what to do and how to do it. We find it an insurmountable task. The fact we lack this assistance affects our organisational structure. Our membership thinks we are simply not committed to improving our committee working ways but it is often this hindrance which is a good reason for this shortcoming. We do not have many alternatives and time is not on our side.*

(Translated: Khumalo, male, 51 years)

This problem is an indicator of the lack of adequate human resources and of access to information in most traders' organisations. While some organisations acknowledged how StreetNet International has empowered them by providing technical assistance, others do not know where they can get this assistance, which is of prime importance to their organising process.

### **5.2.3. Street traders' views on local government practices and regulations in Durban**

Ninety percent of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the local government practices and regulations. Though some seemed to understand the need for regulations, they often found them harsh. This confirms Harrison et al.'s (2003:206) findings on how local



government initiatives and processes negatively affect economic initiatives such as street trading.

- **Lack of proper consultation**

Ninety percent of the sample agreed that there is a lack of proper consultation and inclusion processes with street traders, who are not included as equal stakeholders in the street trading process. According to one of these respondents:

*The municipality makes its decisions as it pleases and then gathers us just to inform us about the decisions taken. There is no pre-consultation. Whether we like it or not, we have to abide by the decisions taken; that is how they operate. For those people, it is as if we are not able to have a good insight in the matters at hand and thus unable to produce a valuable contribution.*

(Innocent, male, 38 years)

Another respondent argued that the lack of proper consultation is paramount when there is an issue about removing traders from their current operational locations. In this regard, the municipality makes decisions according to its plans. According to this respondent:

*The municipality did not call us to discuss its plans of removing us to another site. They simply came and gathered us and just told us that we had to be removed from our sites and led to another site. They said that they had to put their plans into practice. They gave us no time to inform our regular customers. We have lost a lot of customers in the process.*

(Translated: Abrahams, male, 29 years)

This confirms Skinner's (2008:13, 14) findings about the lack of consultation before removals in Durban. According to another respondent, this lack of consultation became paramount with the Early Morning Market, which was intended for demolition and to be replaced by an upmarket mall.

*Though we also want to see development, it is obvious that it does not have to come at our expense. The Municipality does not consult with us. They just plan their big projects without consulting with us despite the fact that we are also contributing to the municipal economy. We are just saying: no development without us. Nothing has to be*

*done for us without us. We are tired of those municipal top-down processes and practices. They treat us as if we were nothing or stupid.*  
(Zama, female, 35 years)

The above reveals discriminatory processes in the municipality's practices. Top-down processes under the guise of promoting the interests of the marginalised should not be encouraged as they keep the beneficiaries from developing any sense of belonging and ownership. The poor can contribute to the development process and they want to feel that they are part of the aforementioned. Therefore, consultation is crucial in development processes.

- **Local government dividing processes**

The majority of interviewees, 90 percent of the sample, argued that local government uses divisive processes when dealing with street trading. According to a respondent from StreetNet International, this practice started in 2006:

*The creation of street committees by municipal services was without using either democratic means or a proper consultation but rather by imposing on street traders what to do and how to do it. With this process, some committees have received as incentives the right to allocate sites to whoever they wanted after sharing better sites between themselves. These street committees were designed to represent street traders' interests in negotiating with the municipality but they were marred by corruption under the instigation of municipal services, which created undemocratic and powerful structures which were not interested in creating harmony among street traders nor defending their common interests.*  
(Helen, female, 42 years)

This confirms Skinner's (2008:12, 13) findings about the undemocratic creation of street traders' committees under the auspices of municipal services. This process revealed the municipality's meddling processes in the management of street traders' organisations. According to another respondent, this process has resulted in in-fighting between associations or street committees' members.

*Street committees are marred with in-fighting because of the quality of sites allocated to some, while the committee members have very good sites and often use their relatives so as to allocate more than one place to themselves.*  
(Precious, female, 24 years)

This divisive process did not end with the creation of street committees. Another example, which was still paramount at the time of this inquiry, was the issue surrounding the demolition of the Early Morning Market and its replacement by an upmarket mall. This has been escalating ever since 2007, and has seen, according to a respondent:

*... an unprecedented unity of street traders and market vendors against the municipal plan. We currently work with MATO and other organisations. Through MATO people, we get information about how the municipality brings people from Umlazi and other areas and makes them launch protest marches supportive of the municipality plans, claiming that those people are the Early Morning Market people who oppose our demands for proper consultation and participation. The municipality is just trying to divide us. MATO helps us to gather information about the infiltration by municipal services of other street traders' organisations and structures.*  
(Thulani, male, 52 years)

One divisive factor used by the municipality to entice some traders to be supportive of its plan is, according to 60 percent of the respondents, the promise to street traders of places in the intended upmarket market mall. However, they have become aware that this structure is intended to be privately managed. Therefore, as a respondent noticed:

*How can the municipality promise to give us places in a private mall? How are they going to determine who gets a place and who does not? We do not have resources to hire shops in a mall. Who is going to pay for those who are supposed to get places? We simply do not trust those people.*  
(Simelane, female, 46 years)

This assertion is confirmed by the experiences of street traders from Umlazi, who were enticed to move so that a mall could be built. As relayed by a SASEWA respondent, what they were promised never came to fruition:

*These people told us that they used to sell at Umlazi Mega City location. After it*

*was built, they were simply put out of business and had nowhere to work. They warned us that if we accepted to be removed, the same thing would happen to us as well as other street traders in the city.*  
(Spindile, female, 44 years)

In addition, as reported by a StreetNet International respondent, divisive processes are often used to turn traders with permits against those who have not been allocated permits. This process was seen by 70 percent of the respondents as being aimed at diverting street traders from the real common issues by turning them into each others' enemies. Resentment is stirred up as permit-holders argue that as non-permit-holders do not pay site rentals, they therefore are 'stealing' their customers and should not be allowed to operate.

- **Processes of discrimination against foreign street traders**

At least 20 percent of the respondents acknowledged that Durban municipal services involved in street trading use discriminatory processes. Among the victims of these discriminatory processes are women as well as refugees or foreign street traders. While the former are said to be confronted by discriminatory processes related to their gender, the latter are said to be victims of discriminatory xenophobic processes which prevent them from accessing trading sites. According to one street trader respondent:

*Foreigners who trade on the street used to be victims of discrimination exerted by municipal officers, especially when applying for trading permits and the allocation of sites. Saying foreigners have no rights, they refuse to give them permits or take away permits from those who have them. When removing street traders from their operating areas, it is always refugee traders who are the first to be targeted. We even had to launch marches in support of refugee traders who had been evicted from their trading sites without reason.*  
(Jason, male, 30 years)

This statement is supported by a court action initiated by StreetNet International (Horn, 2005) for refugees' rights to trade and to stop the harassment exerted by municipal services against them. It has also been confirmed by Lund, Nicholson and Skinner (2000:14-15), who explored marginalisation processes against foreign street traders.

- **Street trading regulations and enforcement processes**

Respondents' reactions regarding street trading regulations, especially with regard to municipal by-laws, are mixed. The reactions varied according to the size of the respective businesses. Accordingly, while three relatively big street business owners agreed on the fact that regulations were not that bad, five small business owners stated that regulations were very tough and their aspiration was that street traders' organisations would advocate for more policy changes. One point on which all interviewed street traders agree upon, however, is that the enforcement of regulation is very tough and that this is made worse by harsh, discriminatory and divisive processes. According to one respondent:

*The regulation is not very clear on how police officers should enforce the by-laws. They have too much power and they take advantage of the fact that they know we cannot appeal against their decisions. Any time they decide that we are infringing by-laws, they fine us and impound our goods without any recourse for us.*  
(Jason, male, 30 years)

However, these by-laws are considered prohibitive and restrictive and, as such, often put traders in a very difficult situation with regard to compliance. According to one trader respondent:

*It is difficult to comply with the by-laws. For instance, it is said in one of them that we must not exceed our site limits by raising extensions. Putting stuff on a small table or on the ground on a small area is considered to be extending the site's limits. In this case, the trader is likely to be fined and to have his goods impounded by the police without any explanation.*  
(Trevor, male, 35 years)

This confirms Skinner's (2000:8) findings on the restrictive and prohibitive nature of street trading by-laws in Durban. According to another respondent, police do not give traders any warning, even when they have 'broken' by-laws unknowingly or due to mitigating circumstances. One respondent said:

*Police officers are very fast when it comes to enforcing the by-laws. If the trader's*

*permit does not have the trader's assistant photo and if by chance the trader leaves the stall for a short time – maybe to go the bathrooms – the police do not hesitate to fine the trader for misusing his/her permit and to impound his/her goods. Even when you come back while they are still packing your goods onto their truck, they just take them away without negotiations. When the permit holder's photo does not match the person the police find on the site, they charge and confiscate the goods without any warning.*

(Henri, male, 38 years)

All respondents were unanimous in questioning the reasoning behind the confiscation of goods as, in many cases (such as with vegetables, fruits or other foodstuff) the impounded goods end up being destroyed by municipal services. This process has been experienced by 80 percent of the total respondents. One said:

*... This process is destructive and deprives us of our means of survival. These goods are our only resources for capital-building and our only survival means. When they get discarded by municipal services, it takes us time to rebuild our capital and even worse, some of us have gone out of business as result of the goods confiscation by the police.*

(John, male, 54 years)

This situation is worsened by the lack or shortage of adequate street trading-related infrastructures such as toilets, storage facilities and shelters. As 12 respondents reported, this shortage is often conducive to receiving fines and having goods confiscated. This has been confirmed by the researcher's observations: there is a clear shortage of the above-mentioned facilities in the Durban-CBD – especially on Smith Street and West Street, which are among the most popular street trading areas. These areas also have a heavy police presence to oversee street trading. According to one respondent:

*The shortage of bathrooms in the CBD is one of the major challenges faced by street traders. It can cause us to lose our business and to be fined as some of us do not have helpers to leave behind. Even a neighbour is not allowed to watch over the trader's goods if he or she runs to the bathrooms; police officers simply do not care. You must have a valid permit, meaning not expired and bearing the photo of your helper on the back. Otherwise you need to, before leaving, pack your stuff and therefore unpack once again when you come back. That is ridiculous.*

(Mduduzi, male, 22 years)

According to the researcher's observations, for some traders the nearest bathrooms are located between 400 and 600 metres away.

In addition, during adverse weather conditions such as heavy rain, street traders are not allowed to raise shelters other than those provided to protect their stuff and themselves. The provided shelters are very small and do not provide enough protection against the rain. According to one respondent:

*We must close the business and go home or wait for good weather conditions. In this case, waiting is like taking chances as it might take a whole day, three days or even more and hence it is a waste of the trader's trading valuable time.*

(Donald, male, 27 years)

Among the challenges met by street traders (and reported by 100 percent of the respondents) was the ever-increasing permit or licence fee. This fee, together with the fine for not having a permit or licence, is often increased by municipal services without proper consultation with street traders. The following respondent stated:

*The increase is for us a matter of concern as we do not earn much. Our income is very limited but municipal services charge us R200.00 or R300.00 as a fine fee besides what we pay for site rentals. There was a time when a site was free of charge, then R35.00 per month; after that they increased the fee to R480.00 per year. We need one fixed fee or in case of an increase, let them consult with us first.*

(Translated: Gugu, female, 42 years)

This site fee determines whether a trader operates on the pavement or under a provided shelter. According to a respondent from the beachfront, fees can reach as high as R450.00 for a six-month period for those without shelters and R820.00 for those operating under a shelter. This is quite a high fee considering the conditions street traders operate under and the precariousness of their businesses. As observed by one respondent:

*This is a business-killer for us. We also have to pay for the storage, at least R100.00 a month, in addition to what we are supposed to pay for potential fines – R200.00 at least. Considering our small incomes, it is very difficult for us to survive and for our*

*business to thrive.*  
(Lucky, male, 26 years)

However, as observed by an official, this fee is relevant and has to be updated. The municipality invests a lot in the services it provides to street traders. Therefore, they have to contribute.

Nevertheless, two interviewed police officers were sympathetic towards street traders with regard to the toughness of the by-laws and their enforcement. Speaking about the confiscation of goods, these police officers realised the need to review street by-laws in order to realign them with the current socio-economic and political context. One of them – a senior officer among those responsible for goods confiscation – reported the following:

*We are quite aware of the harshness of street trading regulations and agree with the need to reassess it according the current-era socio-political and economic development, i.e. the integration of economically disadvantaged people by making it people-centred, but as we are still waiting for its change, we have to enforce it with all possible might. We do not trust traders when they tell us that they only leave to go to the bathrooms. Whenever we see anything which does not go according to regulation, we charge them and have to confiscate their stuff. That is our job.*  
(Mr Vikash, male, 26 years)

The fact that enforcing officers can understand this tough situation is a good sign, suggesting that people-centred policies are in the offing. Promoting the interests of street traders while at the same time enforcing an apartheid-era policy is disempowering and a re-alignment of municipal and national practices and processes with the new socio-economic and political developments of participative integration of disadvantaged communities has therefore become imperative. Street traders' organisations can lobby the authorities for this re-alignment.

- **The impact of crime and crime-fighting action**

All of the interviewed sample population unanimously acknowledged the challenge posed to street trading by the ever-increasing crime in Durban-CBD. The TAC (Traders Against Crime) campaign, which successfully saw the collaboration between street traders and the police force in fighting crime, was disbanded when street traders realised that the police had



changed their focus to cracking down on street traders instead of criminals. According to a street trader respondent:

*Despite the achievements of that campaign we unfortunately had to stop our involvement as the police were no longer interested in fighting the criminals but were more interested in being tough on us. For us, the police have become useless; they do not patrol on the street. The only police officers we see from time to time are traffic police when they come to ask for traders' permits and to confiscate our stuff.*

(Brenda, female, 42 years)

This statement has been confirmed by the researcher, who, on a busy month-end day, spent hours talking to traders without seeing even a single police officer pass by. When they do patrol, they do so in compact groups and are visibly more interested in talking and asking for traders' permits than in paying attention to criminal activities occurring around them. Therefore, as another street trader respondent noted:

*Police officers do not protect us against criminals. We know criminals as we often see them operating. They do not even hesitate to operate when police officers are around: therefore people get robbed and stabbed and cars get broken into along the street right before the police's eyes. They do not intervene. This is killing our businesses as our customers are targeted by criminals and so are we.*

(Michael, male, 60 years)

Fighting against crime on the streets is a duty to which the police should be bound as their responsibility is to not only protect street traders and their stuff but also ordinary passers-by and shops. The police should collaborate with street traders in this fight against crime as street traders often know the criminals and therefore can contribute greatly to preventing them from committing their activities. To this end, one respondent, reacting to this lack of police protection, appealed to the relevant traders' organisations to intervene by launching a lobbying campaign intended to raise the police's awareness of the problem. As he said:

*Yesterday a passer-by was robbed on this pavement just 10 metres away from a police officer. When we called the police officer to assist him, he simply said that that was not his operation site. The robber fled away unharmed and*

*unopposed. This is getting out of control; I would like to see our organisations being more involved by pushing the police to take its responsibilities seriously. Maybe things can then improve.*

(Candice, female, 45 years)

Asked what street traders' organisations do or can do to protect street traders against crime, a respondent from the Eye Traders' Association replied:

*Since the Traders Against Crime campaign was abandoned, there is not much we have done or can do. Our members feel betrayed by the police force and no longer want to collaborate with the police on this matter. In addition, all organisations do not prioritise this problem the same way. As we lack co-ordination, this problem is likely to take time to be addressed accordingly.*

(Fortune, female, 46 years)

This was a good collaborative campaign which, in its time, produced valuable results. This was a positive case study of what the municipality could achieve by collaborating with street traders instead of harassing them.

### **5.3. INTER-ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

The researcher found that the state of street traders' inter-organisational relationships appears to be mixed. This might be one of the determinants or indicators of the quality or the effectiveness of internal structures and of the role played by street traders' organisations in the Durban-CBD.

For some street committees and organisations, these relationships are reduced to the point of merely carrying out actions that they are mandated to do, while for others, these relationships form an integral part of achieving their vision.

#### **5.3.1. The building of networks and partnerships**

For structured organisations such as SASEWA, the Siyagunda Association and The Eye Traders' Association, building networks and partnerships is a survival matter. According to a respondent from SASEWA:

*We rely on networking with other organisations such as the Siyagunda Association, The Eye Traders' Association, StreetNet International, ACHIB, COSATU, SANCO, MATO and SATAWU in order to build our strengths. Alone, it is not easy to survive in an adverse environment such as with the antagonism we used to faced from municipal services. Through these networks we access information easily and exchange experiences with other organisations. We have the experience acquired from SEWU – which had built strong partnerships with local as well as international organisations. Speaking with one voice is better than with unorganised voices. In addition, our members learn a lot from these experiences.*  
(Spindile, female, 44 years).

As an organisation composed almost exclusively of refugees from African countries, the Siyagunda Association representatives acknowledged the importance of these networks. As one respondent from this organisation states:

*When we started our organisation we were immediately confronted with an adverse environment. Dealing with municipal services was a very daunting task for us. Without the assistance we received from these networks, we would not have been able to function as an organisation, let alone start our small businesses in this city.*  
(Spindile, female, 44 years)

This statement was confirmed by the court action launched by other organisations (led by StreetNet International) in support of refugee barbers and traders expelled from their sites by municipal services (Horn, 2005). Subsequently, the creation of a strong partnership between the above-mentioned organisations, as a StreetNet International respondent reported:

*... Has allowed us to launch a powerful action in defending traders' rights, especially with regard to the Early Morning Market – which was to be demolished by the municipality. Unifying our voices, we faced the might of the local authority and demonstrated that power belongs to the people. We did not surrender to their intimidation but stood up with one voice. The case is still dragging on. The authorities have realised that they will have to get our agreement in order to carry on with these plans. Therefore, creating strong linkages has allowed us to effectively lobby municipal services and to influence change on the behalf of our constituencies.*  
(Steve, male, 55 years)

The creation of partnerships is empowering for organisations, especially when some are stronger than others. When these partnerships are productive, each organisation's members learn from the other organisations' experiences.

### **5.3.2. Coordination of collective agency**

Despite the powerful impact of networking and partnerships, as related above, agency coordination among street traders' organisations in Durban is still wishful thinking. Though some organisations and some members – as revealed by the researcher's findings – unanimously acknowledge the need for such coordination, achieving this progress is unfortunately still a long way off. The SASEWA respondent, commenting on this situation, said:

*There is not much coordination. Organisations and street committees are still divided. Each organisation or street committee initiates its own programme according to its strengths or its constituency's needs.*  
(Spindile, female, 44 years)

Even traders on the street are aware of the importance of having some kind of coordination among associations in order to be able to coordinate a strong position against the divisive processes of the municipal services. According to a street trader respondent:

*The lack of coordination is a major hindrance to street trader's organisations' agency. It is weakening us against powerful municipal services and against formal businesses when they feel like we hinder their businesses. This lack of coordination creates gaps and loopholes through which municipal services pass to divide us as they easily get information on our organisations and our common programmes because they have infiltrated some organisations and committees.*  
(Michael, male, 60 years)

Some organisations, realising the effectiveness of working with StreetNet International, have expressed their willingness to affiliate under it. However, according to a StreetNet International representative, that would mean meddling within organisations' daily matters and they therefore have limited their role to coordinating action on an international level. Thus, on a local level they have, as reported by a StreetNet International respondent:

*... Recommended that street traders' organisations create a local or even regional forum which should be involved with their common issues as it is in Western Cape and Johannesburg. Durban street traders' organisations accordingly initiated a forum – SISONKE – which coordinates their agency, especially in negotiating with the local authority. Unfortunately, only a few organisations have supported the SISONKE Forum.*  
(Steve, male, 55 years)

Asked why StreetNet International cannot organise local associations, the same respondent replied:

*Our organisation is a country-based organisation which tries to work with local unions, as we already do in Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana, Tanzania, Kenya, the SADEC region... We do not build street traders' capacities; we do not have the resources for that. That should be a union's obligation. Internationally, we have 35 affiliates in 31 countries but we do not do the capacity-building; that is, as I said, for trade unions. However, we assist the organisations with structural organisation when they request our assistance.*  
(Steve, male, 55 years)

Despite the fact that StreetNet International does not build organisations' capacities, it can greatly contribute to their organising as it has well-trained human resources personnel who can assist toward this end. Therefore, it can greatly contribute to the creation of a reliable coordinating organisation likely to unite street traders' organisations in Durban.

### **5.3.3. Mistrust processes as a barrier to coordination and organising**

As the researcher's findings have revealed, the coordination scheme recommended by StreetNet International has not had the intended results. The SISONKE Forum, as a respondent from Siyagunda Association noted, collapsed without realising the unification of street traders' organisations and committees, because:

*It did not work in a way that served the common interests of street traders. This alliance has been marred by divisions and processes of putting some organisations above others. It does not consider all organisations the same way and it exhibits favouritism.*

(Peter, male, 26 years)

Some respondents reported that the reasons for this mistrust range from accusations of corruption and embezzlement practices to the collaboration with municipal services in creating a tough working environment for street traders. One respondent stated:

*Our committees are betraying us. They do not take our concerns to the municipality. We suspect them of having befriended municipal officials at our expense.*

(Paul, male, 63 years).

One particular matter of discord is the misuse and even misappropriation of the alleged financial assistance from big businesses, NGOs and state departments to support street traders' organisations. Most respondents (at least 50 percent of interviewed street traders) believe in the existence of this kind of financial assistance though they seem to not know much about it. According to the above respondent:

*It has come to our knowledge that there are sponsors who send us financial assistance, but we do not see what this money is being used for or how it benefits the organisation and street traders in particular. We think that our leaders use that money for their sole benefit, for example, by buying themselves cars.*

(Paul, male, 63 years)

The members' mistrust seems to create a rift between committee leaders and their constituencies. It is reinforced by the fact that some street traders find their committees unwilling to use democratic processes in their organisations. In this matter, one street trader respondent reported:

*Our committee is supposed to organise elections after a two-year period. Now it has been in place more than three and a half years without elections. We have not been consulted or informed about the reason for this shortcoming. As a member, I question their trustworthiness. They just do as they please. Maybe they get advantages which we do not know about.*

(Michael, male, 60 years)

The lack of regular communication within the organisation reinforces the members' feeling that they are being lied to by their representatives and therefore fuels mistrust and even tensions in the organisation.

#### **5.3.4. Defending street traders' rights**

As reported above, 90 percent of the interviewed street traders are sceptical about the effectiveness of their committees and the commitment of their representatives to defending their rights. However, the representatives believe that they are very committed to improving their constituencies' working conditions. As one organisation respondent stated:

*We participate in the Unicity Municipal Forum meetings, in which every association or organisation has a representative. We have lobbied for more representation, according to which each organisation should have three representatives, including at least one woman. We are still to see our demands materialise. It is in this Unicity Municipal Forum that we express our grievances.*  
(Chris, male, 53 years)

However, most interviewed street traders believe that the lack of change indicates how these committees are not taken seriously by municipal services. Accordingly, as one respondent stated:

*Despite the numerous meetings our committees and representatives hold with municipal services, we do not see any change occurring. If there is any change at all, it is to make matters worse. Maybe the municipality does not take us seriously because our committees and organisations are not unified. We need a strong coordinator such as StreetNet International to represent us.*  
(Translated: Michael, male, 60 years)

Nonetheless, the respondents from the organisations were satisfied with the way they fulfil their duties in representing their constituency. Citing the numerous lawsuits initiated either against the removal of refugee street traders, the confiscation of traders' goods or about the Early Morning Market, a respondent from SASEWA said:

*We are very active. Whenever there is a case, we immediately do whatever we can to counter it. We have been empowered by SEWU and StreetNet. The problem is with other organisations and committees which are not as structured and empowered as ours. This creates loopholes for municipal services which result from divisions among street traders' committees and organisations. Most of time, the latter have competing interests and therefore the municipality takes advantage of this situation.*

(Nontombela, female, 47 years)

The competition for municipal advantages – such as access to urban space – between street committees or street traders' organisations has been confirmed by Pratt (2006:46) findings'.

#### **5.4. ADVOCACY FOR GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES FOR STREET TRADERS**

Despite the fact that street trading makes a significant contribution to the GDP (ILO, 2002:53), its growth opportunities are limited when it comes to personal businesses. According to the researcher's findings, these businesses are limited in terms of income-generation and do not facilitate their owners being self-reliant. Seventy percent of the sample thought that street traders' organisations can play a crucial role in improving this situation through advocacy. However, the following opportunities could have helped these businesses to thrive and to be sustainable.

##### **5.4.1. The 2010 FIFA World Cup campaign**

The 2010 FIFA World cup campaign has seen to the launch of a vast infrastructural development campaign on the national as well as local level. For the city of Durban, this campaign represented an opportunity for the local authority to transform the city into a world-class city (Horn, 2005) that is attractive to the many soccer fans and other tourists who will flock into the city for the event. It was equally a job-creation opportunity that would benefit many people and improve business opportunities. Street traders' organisations, as acknowledged by a respondent from StreetNet International, have initiated a World-Class City for All campaign (WCCA) intended to defend the rights and interests of street traders in Durban. According to the StreetNet International respondent:

*Seeing that the chances for street traders to benefit from the World Cup*



*campaign were scarce, we launched this campaign to defend traders' interests and rights, as from experience we knew the intended local government projects would be against the interests of the poor, especially street traders. The World-Class City for All campaign was then designed to bring the local authority to the understanding that we as street traders also have to be part of their plans and be beneficiaries.*

(Helen, female, 42 years)

However, as acknowledged by 7 out of a total of 15 respondents, street traders' expectations have not materialised. According to one of these respondents:

*Despite our organisations' negotiations with the city management to include us in their plans, we have come to realise that this demand has not been met. Only big businesses, contractors and a few people who got jobs have benefited from this event. Nothing has trickled down to street traders; on the contrary, things became worse for us.*

(Candice, female, 45 years)

Despite the advocacy by street traders' organisations for the city to exercise an inclusive planning process for the World Cup event, the infrastructural development campaign has occurred without consulting street traders or their organisations.

Asked how things became worse and why she thinks street traders did not benefit, the same respondent, a trader at the beachfront, observed:

*The municipality has launched a vast infrastructural development campaign in order to make the city more attractive. This has chased away our customers as we used to benefit from selling to tourists. Now there is dust all over the place; even the pool has been destroyed. There is nothing attractive at the beachfront. Even hotels are visibly almost empty.*

(Candice, female, 45 years)

The researcher observed the negative impact that the infrastructural campaign has had on the beachfront traders – who used to benefit from a heavy presence of tourists. The pavements were covered with sand and no tourists or even swimmers could be seen. Another street trader respondent said that this infrastructural campaign had occasioned street traders being removed

from their trading sites by the municipality services in order to accommodate the construction of new World Cup-related infrastructures. As this respondent reported:

*We have been removed from our usual trading place, which was on the street near a taxi rank, without even being consulted. The new place where we have been moved to is far from regular pedestrians' passage, therefore leading us to lose our regular and potential customers. This World Cup campaign has been disastrous for us*

(Translated: Simangele, female, 43 years)

This has been confirmed by Horn's (2005) findings and was denounced by the World-Class City for All campaign launched by StreetNet International and its partners (Horn, 2005 & 2006).

#### **5.4.2. Promotion of street traders' businesses**

Street traders' businesses are classed among survivalist SMMEs which should, according to the new democratic legislative material, be supported and empowered so as to integrate them into the socio-economic life of the new South Africa. In this regard, 9 out of 15 street trader respondents found that street traders' organisations have an important role to play as agents of change, committed to empowering their members to achieve self-sufficiency status. Thus, these organisations should be the initiators and moderating agents of this process, which must be inclusive of other stakeholders as well in order to achieve this goal. However, as one of these respondents said:

*It is difficult to achieve this goal as our organisations are not united in one front so as to speak with one voice for the promotion of our common interests. The divisions among our organisations and committees simply put us in a weak position when it comes to negotiating with local government institutions or the private sector. Actually, each street traders' organisation or street committee runs its own programme and most of the time the organisations compete against each others. This is detrimental to the promotion of our interests.*

(Michael, male, 60 years)

The lack of supporting mechanisms in Durban causes street traders' businesses to stagnate. However, as the above respondent said:

*I believe that if lobbied, the business support for SMMEs could be open to us. But in order for this to happen, our organisations must be in a position to negotiate. This is not easy with fragmented organisations and committees; we need to have a strong coordinated organisation able to approach supporting institutions and negotiate on our behalf. The current fragmentation of our organisations is actually negatively seen by potential supporters.*  
(Michael, male, 60 years)

It is obvious that stronger organisations are likely to be in a good position to negotiate and to influence change. Therefore it is the organisations' duty to put aside their conflicts and disparate interests and see how they can unite for better coordination of activities related to common interests.

- **Access to services**

Street traders in Durban have, through their organisations, been very active in this regard. As confirmed by 85 percent of the sample, initiated collective action has especially focused on access to services issues. These organisations have had to struggle in order to see things improve. This collective action, as they acknowledged, has contributed to improving their trading conditions. As one respondent said:

*We have, through our organisations, lobbied local authorities for this purpose. When our organisations' negotiations with the municipality stalled, these organisations, together with some street committees, initiated and launched protest marches which greatly pushed the municipality to launch an infrastructural programme aimed at meeting our needs in this regard. Now some of us have sheltered tables, access to toilets and storage facilities in some areas, though there is still a shortage of these services.*  
(Simangele, female, 43 years)

These provided services were just a step in the right direction but much still has to be done to improve their working conditions. According to one street trader respondent:

*We acknowledge the efforts of the municipality in providing us with infrastructure, but these are not enough, especially as our numbers increase.*

*For instance, there is a big shortage of toilets and those who have sheltered stalls find that these shelters do not protect them or their stuff against bad weather conditions. Often, we are forced to close our businesses in order to protect ourselves and our stuff.*

(Simangele, female, 43 years)

Brown's (2006:3) findings have confirmed the dependency of street traders' livelihoods to the small transactions they are able to make despite adverse weather conditions they might be operating under. According to her, street traders do not have much choice as to how they operate. As noted by another respondent, street traders' organisations have advocated for infrastructure improvement but they do not see things changing. However, the DISTBO manager was optimistic with regard to services provision:

*Our plan is that every trader should be provided with a sheltered stall covered enough to protect the trader and his/her stuff. But for the time being, we do not have enough resources to do so; they will have to wait. We have already provided them with bathrooms, storage places and trading sites, and we are still improving them.*

This municipality plan to provide sheltered sites to street traders is a good one but, considering the number of street traders to be assisted, its realisation is questionable and some traders are sceptical about it.

- **Access to resources**

Access to financial resources determines the viability of small survivalist SMMEs. Considering traders' limited income, they are unable to offer much by way of guarantees to commercial banking institutions, which doubt the businesses' ability to repay loans. According to one respondent:

*Bank services are not accessible to us. Even opening an account is almost impossible. Banks always ask for pay slips that we cannot produce. Getting a loan is quite impossible as they say we have no guarantee to offer. In order to get loans, we often use family connections or other networks such as loan-sharks or informal lenders.*

(Andrea, female, 62 years)

This has been confirmed by Pratt (2006:44), who found that most street traders use family networks to access financial resources to reconstruct capital and meet other business needs. Unfortunately, as most respondents acknowledged, taking money from informal lenders or loan-sharks often threatens the viability of the business as they mandate very high interest rates. However, some traders had received loans from the Land Bank or the Post Office Bank scheme, as confirmed by Devenish and Skinner (2006:271-272). Asked how she reconstitutes her capital, a respondent confirmed:

*I go to loan-sharks [‘Mashonisa’ in isiZulu translates as ‘those who bury others’] in order to get a loan. The advantage of going to them is that they do not ask for a guarantee of the viability of the business. Moreover, I can ask them for money any time I need it. The only problem is the high interest I have to pay them. Thirty percent of the initial amount is quite high; some even ask for a higher interest rate. That is not good. Especially when the business is not producing much, such as now, when we are really struggling to make a sound income.*

(Translated: Fortune, female, 46 years)

Twelve out of fifteen of the interviewed street traders were of the opinion that their organisations should play a more active role in getting banking institutions to design schemes aimed at making banking services – such as micro-credit loans – accessible to informal/street traders. According to one of these respondents:

*It is understandable that banks ask for guarantees; unfortunately, we do not have guarantees to offer. I believe that if our organisations were persuasive enough, banks would be willing to help us with rotating micro-credits, for instance, and would allow us to open accounts without many conditions. Our committees and organisations must convene on how to approach banking institutions.*

(Translated: Gugu, female, 42 years)

Hearing this, a respondent who had been a member of SEWU observed regretfully:

*I really miss SEWU. This organisation had managed to negotiate with some banks and got them to agree to provide us with some advantages, especially with regard to bank services access, including micro-credit.*

(Andrea, female, 62 years)

- **Skills development and education**

As the researcher's observation and inquiry revealed, 75 percent of the sample have a very limited educational level. This low level of education is even worse with women. As one respondent reported:

*Access to training and skills development is not easy for us. We meet many challenges, including our lack of resources, which prevent us from acquiring skills. However, we need to develop our skills – especially in finance management. Most of us do not know how to manage our small businesses' finances and thus we end up closing our businesses because of a lack of management knowledge. We need to be trained in order to run our businesses with less risk.*

(Translated: Gugu, female, 42 years)

Unanimously, these respondents acknowledged the lack of municipality involvement and the inability of their organisations and committees to provide them with adequate skills. As one respondent said:

*The municipality promised us some years ago to provide us with training in finance management and record-keeping but it has now been a long time since that promise came. Nothing is happening. They no longer even speak about this issue.*

(Fortune, female, 46 years)

Realising the importance of training and skills development, some respondents have acknowledged the empowering role played by SEWU in this regard. As a SASEWA respondent noted:

*SEWU has played a very important role in empowering women. This organisation has imported members with a wide range of skills besides negotiating, finance management and organisational skills. Women have even been trained in welding, plumbing, sculpting, driving, fashion design, building... skills traditionally reserved for men. This has provided them with abilities to look for better-paid jobs. I myself have been empowered by SEWU.*

(Nontombela, female, 47 years)

The above was confirmed by Devenish and Skinner's (2006:268-269) findings about the training programme provided by or arranged by SEWU for its constituency. SEWU has made a big impact among street traders and some respondents wished their organisations would

similarly commit themselves to empowering them through developing their abilities. As one respondent reported:

*I wish our committees and associations were as structured and organised as SEWU was; they could then provide for our skills development. SEWU also started from scratch. I do not see what prevents us from doing what they did. We just have to sit down and think about how we can build a strong organisation able to tackle its responsibilities.*

(Translated: Malusi, male, 24 years)

Lack of education and training, as this respondent believed, puts street traders in a position of weakness when negotiating with municipal services, other stakeholders and/or partners. Eighty percent of the respondents think that their organisation should prioritise education and training. According to another respondent:

*Our committees and organisations focus only on advocating and lobbying for us and forget that some of us need to improve our skills, while others are in urgent need of being educated since most of us lack even the basic education of innumeracy and literacy. This should be a priority for our committees. We have created our organisation not only to defend our interests but also to be empowered by it. No one else will make the decision to empower us if we cannot do it ourselves through our organisation.*

(Fortune, female, 46 years)

Twenty-three respondents out of a total of 23 (the total sample) believed that education and training through short skills development programmes can be a very important step in helping them with socio-economic integration and that it will also improve street traders' working conditions as they become more empowered and subsequently gain better access to relevant information.

- **Access to social security**

Informal traders' access to social security benefits is limited, as confirmed by Brown (2006:183) above. The state's role in the provision of social protection is limited to health care and disability grants, as acknowledged by all respondents. However, with regard to

maternity, loss of income, life and disability insurance as well as a recognised national childcare scheme, nothing has been provided for. As reported by one respondent:

*In terms of social security, we acknowledge the effort of the government to provide health care to poor people at very low cost. However, it is not every day we get quality treatment. When one needs quality treatment, we are either asked for medical aid or we have to go to very expensive private hospitals which we cannot afford.*

(Translated: Mary, female, 58 years)

Faced with this shortcoming, as acknowledged by 22 respondents out of 28, street traders have to fend for themselves, especially when it comes to life and disability insurance, childcare etc.

The researcher found that street traders' organisations have advocated for some advantages but these have been limited to the provision of childcare facilities in the Warwick Junction project scheme by the municipality. These facilities, however, are not accessible to all women street traders with small children. Therefore, as one respondent said:

*Women street traders are used to having their babies and small ones with them at their working sites. This is not healthy for the small ones and young babies; it can even be dangerous as mothers cannot easily take care of their small ones while doing business. For those who cannot access childcare facilities, this is a tough experience.*

(Translated: Phumzile, female, 46 years)

On the other hand, 75 percent of the sample confirmed that they have subscribed to funeral policies in private schemes. According to one respondent:

*Having a funeral policy gives me the assurance that my family will not incur the expenses of my burial when I die. It also gives me the assurance that my family can even benefit from my policy. It is even possible to have more than one policy thus I can extend the chances of making larger payouts for my family.*

(Malusi, male, 24 years)



These schemes do not include goods insurance for loss or other adverse circumstances. This can often be hazardous and dangerous for poor street traders as it can result in putting them out of business. One respondent observed:

*When we put our stuff in storage rooms, we do not have any protection or guarantee for goods loss, whether by fire, arson or break-ins. Last month, for instance, a storage room experienced a fire and all the stuff inside burned. Nothing was recovered and we ended up losing all our stuff. Rebuilding the business has been a very costly and stressful experience.*

(Phumzile, female, 46 years)

However, as acknowledged by a SASEWA respondent, street traders' organisations, led by StreetNet International, have advocated for the Social Welfare Department to provide maternity and disability cover, but this scheme is still to be implemented.

- **Access to information**

Evidently, street traders' organisations in Durban have not vested much in this issue. These organisations should be the official link between informal/street traders and other institutions and they are in a good position to tackle this empowering process. Information often does not reach street traders, as attested to by 12 respondents out of a total of 15 street traders. According to one respondent:

*We do not get much information – especially in terms of regulations. Our committee does not educate us in this regard or inform us on new developments.*

(Translated: Thabo, male, 39 years)

This inadequate information mechanism was confirmed by the researcher's findings, which revealed that 40 percent of the sample had only a basic understanding of the street trading by-laws. However, another former SEWU member, when asked how she gained her knowledge of street trading regulations, displayed a copy of the informal trade policy, of which the by-laws are one component. She said:

*Knowing the by-laws is crucial for street traders because it empowers the traders, who can then stand up to enforcing officers in the case of victimisation. Knowing them allows one to know what we are allowed to do and what we are not allowed to do.*  
(Translated: Mary, female, 58 years)

Asked how she came to have a copy of the policy and why she thought the others were not as informed as her in this regard, she said:

*I received this copy of the street trading policy from SEWU as I was an active member of this organisation. It has managed to empower us women, while other street traders remained with no access to regulation-related information*  
(Translated: Mary, female, 58 years)

The information disseminating role played by SEWU while it was still operative was very empowering for women informal/street traders, however, as reported by 18 out of 28 respondents, it has not been replicated by other organisations and street committees. According to one of these respondents:

*SEWU ensured to empower its constituencies by providing them with adequate information – especially with regard to regulations. While other street traders seem to not have a good knowledge of the by-laws, its former members know everything pertaining to the regulations, despite the fact that their language seems to be difficult for a common street trader.*  
(Phumzile, female, 46 years)

## **5.5. THE MANAGEMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FORMAL AND INFORMAL BUSINESSES**

Though the relationships between informal and formal traders are often personal, respondents (70 percent of the sample) believed that these relationships could be affected and shaped by the nature of their organisations' involvement. Accordingly, they thought that these relationships could be either positive and fruitful or negative – depending on how both parties approach one another. However, street traders' organisations have much interest in developing positive relationships with formal businesses.

### **5.5.1. Collaboration between formal and informal traders**

Sixty percent of the total sample expressed their satisfaction with the results of their organisations' involvement with formal businesses located in their operational areas. According to one of the respondents:

*Our committee has established positive relationships with formal businesses operating in this street. It has negotiated with them on our behalf bulk purchasing powers at low interest rates. These traders even allow us to use their bathroom facilities and their shops as storage places for our stuff. I personally find this to be productive for myself and my neighbouring street traders.*

(Thabo, male, 39 years)

The positive effect of bulk purchase power has been confirmed by Brown's (2006) findings, which considered this as being helpful to street traders as they are thus in a position to improve their income.

#### **5.5.2. Defending street traders' interests against formal businesses' exploitation**

Though collaboration between informal/street traders and formal traders has yielded good results and is to be encouraged, it is not always to the advantage of street traders, as acknowledged by 17 out of 28 respondents. The researcher observed processes of exploitation first-hand. There is much competition between formal and informal businesses over the use of street space. Sixty percent of the sample stated that they often lack alternative spaces, which has contributed to putting street traders under pressure from formal business owners. According to one street trader:

*Often the neighbouring shop owners come to me and give me stuff that I have to sell for them as they say that I am more flexible and closer to the customers than they are. This often results in me doing business for them while my own business is being overlooked. Saying no to this request could bring unexpected consequences so I prefer to be quiet and do what they ask because I have also to balance my interests.*

(Chris, male, 53 years)

This imbalanced relationship has been confirmed by Castells and Portes (adapted in Devey, 2003:89), who found that formal traders exploit and take advantage of informal street traders.

In addition, according to another street trader, if a shop owner does not like the street trader operating on the pavement in front of his/her shop, problems can arise:

*Many shop owners do not want street traders in front of their shops. They say that we are a hindrance to their businesses and take away their customers. I even suspect them of collaborating with the police, who used to give us a hard time by charging us without any apparent by-laws infringement on our part. They just seem to be too friendly.*  
(Translated: Clere, female, 42 years)

However, as expressed by 11 street trader respondents out of a total of 15, street traders' organisations could have an important role to play in the improvement of the relationship between the formal and informal sectors and in the elimination of exploitative processes. According to one of them:

*Building positive relationships with the formal businesses can prevent us from having to face the consequences resulting from competition and exploitation as we share the same operational space. This can be achieved by negotiating with them instead of having them against us. I think our organisations and committees can help to establish this kind of relationship and should be even more involved in finding solutions to potentially conflictual situations between us and formal traders.*  
(Thabo, male, 39 years)

### **5.5.3. Defending street traders' interests against economic global factors**

As observed by 80 percent of the sample, economic global factors such as globalisation and recession are currently negatively impacting on the South African economy in general and particularly in Durban. Consequently, as 5 out of 15 street trader respondents argued, they bear the brunt of fierce competition from Eastern nationals who bring cheap products from China and other Eastern countries. Such economic factors increase the likelihood of workers being retrenched, which contributes to increasing numbers of street traders. This is what one respondent expressed, saying:

*We as street traders are concerned about these factors. On the one hand, the number of informal traders increases as more people lose their jobs due to retrenchment and, on the other hand, overseas products, especially Asians', have inundated the market. Street traders, who mainly trade in clothing, bags and luggage, are losing their customers as Chinese*

*products are often cheaper than their stuff.*  
(Amanda, female, 41 years)

According to another respondent:

*We are victims of imported goods, which are invading the streets and taking away our customers. Our regular customers are no longer buying the way they used to due to difficult times. Our businesses are falling apart. We understand that times are tough and people do not have much money to spend or that they prefer saving the little money they have. The fact is, we are now experiencing a hard time.*

(Chris, male, 53 years)

In this atmosphere, as these respondents say, their organisations have to stand up and protect their interests by advocating and lobbying the local and national authorities to apply import quota barriers. As one respondent said:

*Our organisations can do much to protect us against this rising problem. They have to coordinate an advocacy and lobbying programme aimed at convincing local as well as national authorities that our interests should also be their concerns. Government institutions have to protect our businesses as well as the local market by cutting down on competition. Otherwise we cannot survive economically.*

(Jimmy, male, 25 years)

The lack of government institutions' involvement in this issue is quite discouraging for street traders as they are the ones who first feel the brunt of this problem. On the other hand, government is tied by international norms to which it is committed. Nevertheless, import quota barriers can be bilaterally negotiated so as to protect the national producers and retailers.

## **5.6. CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

Interpreting and discussing data findings has focused on the working environment of street traders in the Durban-CBD and the role played by their organisations and committees in empowering them. The sample used was chosen according to above specified methods and comprised street traders, their representatives and people involved in street trading in the same area.

Street traders' organisations and committees in Durban have been found to be divided into two groups: those with a fair level of democratically transparent and accountable structures and those created as a result of municipal interference in street trading management, whose structures seem to lack initiative and discourage their constituents' participation. The first group is very active often in promoting the interests of street traders against formal businesses pressures. This group often puts its focus on advocating, lobbying for the interests of their membership and also at a lesser extent striving to build partnerships likely to benefit street traders. However, the latter group lags behind and presents a divided approach in managing matters in relation to their constituencies businesses. While the first group tries to be through its institutions, a good example of community economic development, the latter group does not contribute much to strengthening their members' businesses, thus contributes to weakening other organisations' efforts in the event of collective action. Consequently, municipal services often take advantage of this lack of adequate coordination of street traders' organisations and of this apparent weakness of street traders' organisations.

The role of street traders' organisations is mainly limited to advocating and lobbying for their members' rights; however, members often find that they have to fend for themselves – especially with regard to growing and protecting their businesses – which, for most of them, represent their sole livelihood strategy. Therefore, as frequently acknowledged by the respondents to this inquiry, better coordinated and structured organisations are capacitated to take charge of the task of empowering their members.

## **CHAPTER SIX. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1. GENERAL CONCLUSION**

All over the world, whether in rich western or poor southern and Third World Street countries especially in the Sub-Saharan region, street trading is a valuable source of employment and income-generation for marginalised people. It plays accordingly an important role in these countries' GDP and is an important livelihood strategy for million of economically disadvantaged communities.

In South Africa, during the apartheid and post-apartheid period, it has and continues to play this important role by allowing the socio-economically marginalised population to make ends meet and to integrate the socio-economic framework at national, provincial and municipal levels. In Durban, it is a source of employment and an important livelihood strategy for thousands which otherwise would be exposed to indescribable life challenges.

Despite this important role street trading is often confronted to numerous socio-economic and political challenges that have hindered street traders from organising into strong organisations, likely to better represent their interests. This organising process is differently approached and present good results in some regions while presenting gaps in others. While in

some Western countries and some Southern countries such as India, this organising process is quite well advanced and street traders have been able to build powerful organisations which play a very important role in empowering them. In some Southern countries – especially in Africa – they seem to be exposed to numerous challenges preventing this organisation process. In South Africa for instance street traders are still confronted with the apartheid regime legacy against which in Durban street traders’ organisations have presented a fragmented front, often marred by divisions and competing interests. Street traders are often limited to organising around a particular issue when a crisis rises and consequently their organisations have not been able to build strong structures which would provide them with enough capacity to face the challenges they meet. These therefore often lack adequate capacities likely to make their businesses to thrive.

Despite their noted large numbers – though often fluctuating – these organisations have - with a few exceptions - not been able to empower their constituencies; their role has often been limited to bulk purchasing power negotiations, lobbying for urban trading space access and services and for better regulations.

The focus of this inquiry was to assess the role of street traders’ organisations in empowering street traders in the Durban-CBD as well as to explore the challenges they face and to design a framework to provide a guide on how to build strong street traders’ organisations that will be capacitated to defend their members’ rights and empower them.

The assessment work of this study, carried out during a transitory period for street traders as Durban was involved in a vast infrastructural transformation, often occurred during street traders’ vast campaigns for rights, as they fought for the survival and the viability of their marginalised businesses. In their struggles, their organisations did and still do play an important role. However, this role is not facilitated by the challenges above-mentioned. Meeting this role’s requirements necessitates reshaping the organisations so that they can play an even bigger role in further challenges related to the socio-economic integration of marginalised street traders in an ever-changing environment that is subjected to global economic imperatives.



### **6.1.1. Conclusion regarding the topic background**

Street trading in South Africa, and particularly in Durban, has presented a tough environment in which to operate as a result of the racially discriminatory apartheid system, which socio-politically and economically marginalised black people. The change of political power in 1994 saw South Africa becoming open to a non-racial, non-discriminatory and democratic system but it did not empower street traders, despite that national legislation promoted the informal economy as being an important economic factor.

The post-apartheid Durban street trading environment has been, as above-mentioned, characterised by a contradictory evolution. This evolution has seen the local government becoming involved in integrating informal traders into its municipal plans. For instance, it created one department to be in charge of informal trading issues, namely DISTBO. After a period of laudable period of collaboration in the improvement of basic infrastructure, especially in the development of the Warwick Junction Project a shift was operated by this department which cracked down on informal businesses.

Apartheid-inherited administrative processes and tough regulations (e.g., the city by-laws) still characterise the local government's management of street trading, which has often been associated with favouring formal businesses at the expense of informal businesses. These processes, which include marginalisation, administrative harassment and the criminalisation of street trading, have hindered its expansion in the city, despite much infrastructural investment by the local government. They have effectively incapacitated street traders, especially women, who dominate informal trade in the city and are the most exposed because they operate at the margins of the socio-economic framework.

Besides the above institutional challenges, members of street traders' organisations in Durban also face competition from formal businesses for urban space use and customers, though from time to time they do develop positive relationships. Similarly, these businesses are challenged by global economic trends such as globalisation and recession, which create adverse

consequences such as job losses, market competition and increased poverty as well as increase the number of potential informal traders, which would further challenge the viability of these businesses.

Durban street traders' organisations mostly regroup poor marginalised survivalist businesses whose owners lack basic education and access to resources such as finances, services such as banking services or economic opportunities. Therefore street traders' organisations share the challenge of lacking financial resources. In addition, while some have a certain level of democracy and accountability and are structured and strong enough to take collective action (e.g. lobbying and advocating for street traders' urban space use), leading negotiations and obtaining bulk purchasing powers for their constituency, others are just the creation of municipal institutions.

Of these organisations, SEWU is still commended as it has contributed to empowering women informal traders, especially street traders, before it was liquidated in 2004. The role played by StreetNet International and other organisations such as the Siyagunda Association, the Eye Traders' Association etc. in defending street traders' rights is equally commendable.

### **6.1.2. Conclusion regarding the theories**

In order to draw sound answers to the posed research questions, the researcher found it relevant to use capacity-building theory and concepts as a guiding framework. Qualitative methods have been used to enable the researcher to approach and explore the issue under study. Such methods are flexible and keep the sample at the centre of the inquiry process through non-obtrusive in-depth interactions with the sample and through the use of field observation.

These theories and methods have been found to be feasible and relevant in providing sound answers to the research question about the issue of the empowerment of street traders.

This decision was motivated by the fact that street traders, as social actors, need to be the instigators of their own empowerment as they are capacitated to be equal stakeholders in socio-economic and political processes affecting their livelihood strategies. In this capacitating process, street traders' organisations have a very important role to play. The processes of capacity-building must be development-oriented instead of being limited by being rights-oriented and must focus on the individual, the organisation and group being objects of the capacitating process.

Street traders' organisations, as addressed by the theories presented in the study, have to be not only actors in the empowerment process but also its central motivator and initiator. Therefore, besides building their constituency's capacities and abilities, street traders' organisations need to build their own capacities so as to be able to empower their members accordingly.

### **6.1.3. Conclusion regarding data**

The study was motivated by the assumption that street traders' organisations in Durban CBD are relatively weak and play a very limited role in empowering their membership. This assumption has been confirmed by the analysis of the collected data. While it is not advisable to generalise on this issue, which questioned the effectiveness and the efficiency of the role played by street traders' organisations in empowering street traders in the Durban-CBD, the findings have provided the researcher with a good understanding of the issue.

However, street traders play an important economic role in the Durban socio-economic framework and, as such, are a force to be reckoned with, despite the fact that their organisations' lack of coordination weakens them and leaves loopholes which municipal institutions use to enforce adverse top-down processes and regulations affecting street traders. Street traders' aspirations are that the municipal authority considers them as equal stakeholders in street trading processes. They would like to see the local government aligning its practices and regulations with national legislative tools which provide for the socio-

economic integration and the promotion of marginalised communities instead of the discriminatory and divisive practices they currently encounter.

It is worth mentioning that street traders' organisations substantively lack resources to move away from the limited and vicious circle of advocacy, lobbying and bulk power purchasing towards being more committed to building the capacities of their constituencies. Street traders need and would like to see their organisations investing more effort into building their capacities so as to allow them to successfully tackle economic issues such as employment markets and business management and, subsequently, to improve their chances of accessing better job opportunities.

Against the backdrop of the numerous challenges met by street traders in Durban – including the lack of financial and human resources capacity; lack of access to services; lack of social protection and the defence and protection of their rights – their organisations have little to oppose in the absence of an organised, well-structured and capacitated coordination framework. They equally lack strong inter-organisational structures and linkages that can contribute to their empowerment. The fact that only a few organisations are relatively strong is not very conducive to empowering all street traders.

The example of the Early Morning Market, together with the problem of urban space use and the many lawsuits aimed at delivering adequate services and trading rights, has proven that street traders' coordination and capacity-building are needed in the Durban socio-economic framework.

Therefore, street traders' organisations and committees have to refocus their priorities to build the capacities of their members and to strengthen their structures so as to be able to influence policy change and the commitment and involvement of other stakeholders at municipal, national and international level. This is likely to contribute to better empowering street traders and to improving their sustainability.

## **6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The empowerment of informal traders, especially street traders, in the Durban-CBD necessitates changing the current approach to street trading. It equally requires the involvement and commitment of a wide range of stakeholders or actors in addition to street traders' organisations. However, the central role of this empowering process has to be played by street traders' organisations themselves. The following recommendations will contribute to the realisation of this empowerment task.

### **6.2.1. Strengthening street vendors' organisations**

If street traders' organisations are not strong enough, challenges from the municipality's divisive, non-inclusive and discriminatory processes and practices will not end. The stronger the organisations are, the better they will be able to face municipal processes, practices and regulations so as to achieve positive results.

### **6.2.2. Building strong organisations**

Building strong organisations can be a time and resource-consuming process. However, an awareness-raising campaign aimed at convincing street/informal traders of the necessity to join organisations will empower them when the need for collective action arises. Here are some suggestions in order to fulfil this task:

- Existing street committees and organisations should emphasise the importance of amalgamating small groups and discourage the formation of competing small committees which are not very representative of their members' interests.
- The new organisations should strive to ensure democratic structures are established through an inclusive and transparent electoral process.
- Organisations' structures and processes should be transparent and have mechanisms to ensure an accountable management process.
- Democratic and transparent elections should be held on dates fixed in the organisation's constitution or be decided by the members.
- A membership database should be compiled and must be regularly updated by each organisation.

- The organisations have to create their own linkages and partnerships with organisations that have common interests or assist where possible locally, nationally or internationally, as well as with the private sector (if possible) in order to maximise assistance opportunities.

### **6.2.3. Building members' skills or educational capacities**

The starting point of the capacitating process should be an awareness-raising campaign intended to make street traders understand the precariousness and the disempowering position of being unorganised and the need to be able to control their own empowerment process.

- Each organisation has to provide for its members' skills development and set relevant programmes (e.g., using workshops and training sessions) according to their needs and availability on an ongoing basis. The focus of these programmes has to be on improving their socio-economic integration by facilitating their access to better job opportunities in order for them to be able to improve their livelihood strategies and face the challenges they meet in their businesses. The educational programme would also ensure that their organisational, managerial and negotiating capacities are improved, as well as their knowledge of major issues such as those of HIV/AIDS, their rights and obligations as street traders and as citizens.

- Each organisation should, according to its resources, establish an information-dissemination mechanism regarding its members' activities, regulations and business and market opportunities.

### **6.2.4. Creation of an inter-organisational coordinating alliance**

There is a need to create a strong coordinating alliance of street traders' organisations in order for them to be able to 'speak with one strong voice', which is particularly pertinent when it comes to collective action. This alliance should be in charge of coordinating collective action and should serve as a trade union. It should, after consultation with all of the organisations, initiate, coordinate and lead negotiations with municipal services and the private sector, including banks and formal businesses. The alliance has to make and keep an updated database of its member organisations as well as build linkages and partnerships with other trade unions, whether nationally or internationally.

### **6.2.5. Improvement of local government practices and processes**

Local governmental institutions need to improve their involvement in the process of empowering informal traders.

- The focus should be on re-conceptualising municipal practices, processes and regulations, which should empower rather than criminalise street/informal trading. This should include an integrated information system accessible by these traders with regard to regulations, other obligations as well as street traders' rights. This re-conceptualisation should aim to make local government practices, processes and regulations people-oriented instead of being overly restrictive, prohibitive or criminalising.
- The current regulation of street trading needs to be amended and levelled with the political developments. The practice of confiscating street traders' goods, as research has revealed, has no constitutional basis and can be undermining the viability of street traders businesses. The fact of issuing fines in case of regulation infringement is by itself sufficient to ensure traders' compliance with the regulations.
- Instead of being discriminated against, informal traders' businesses should be treated as survivalist SMMEs that are eligible for local government assistance as they also play an important economic role in the municipality and even on a national level. Thus, marginalising and discriminating against street traders should be eliminated from municipal practices. These businesses have to be part of the municipality's integration plans.
- The dialogue between the municipal authority and the informal traders needs to be improved, especially with regard to street trading matters. Therefore, relocations and removals should be planned in consultation with street traders' representatives, who will then inform their members of any proposed initiatives. Traders' interests have to be taken into consideration. This will increase transparency in street trading management and minimise divisive and corrupt practices (i.e., traders' organisations competing for municipal favour).
- The police force should be encouraged to focus its efforts on fighting crime instead of cracking down on street traders. A genuine collaboration between traders and the police – such as with the Traders Against Crime campaign – can achieve positive results and protect ordinary pedestrians as well as street traders, their customers and their things.

- Local government should keep and update a database of street traders' organisations as well as of street traders who hold permits and those who do not have them.
- Street trading issues related to regulations should be dealt with by the DISTBO agents only so that the police can focus on fighting crime.
- An empowerment scheme in line with the black economic empowerment (BEE) concepts should be developed to include the survivalist SMMEs, which would naturally include street traders.
- The national government should develop a people-centred and inclusive street trading policy that is aligned with the current socio-economic and political environment.

#### **6.2.6. Social protection and conflict resolution**

- Social protection schemes besides health care should be extended to informal/street traders, which would include maternity grants, life and disabilities cover. Traders should also be protected against theft and arson when their goods are kept in storage facilities.
- Informal street traders' organisations have to be involved in the resolution of conflictual situations between traders and to act without bias. They can also assist the traders in dealing with conflictual situations with other parties.



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# APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEW GUIDE

### 1. Questions for Street traders

- Why did you choose this activity? Did you have alternatives besides being a street trader?
- How do Municipal street trading policies and by-laws affect street traders businesses?
- How can street trading policy be improved so as to make it people-oriented?
- How do street traders access information related to their business in terms of regulations and enforcement?
- Did you have any access to job-related information before choosing to be street traders?
- What mechanisms do you as street trader use in order to face the hard-line policy as well as the enforcement?
- How do you as street traders organise yourselves in order to meet the challenges to your businesses?
- What educational levels do you have? What is your age?
- Where do you live in relation to your working place? Is there any other breadwinner in your family? What is your marital status?
- What is the source of your financial capital? Does your capital allow you to organise a decent business? Have you any access to a bank credit facility to increase your capital?
- Are you affiliated to any street trading organisation? Which one?
- Has your organisation been registered? When?
- Do you provide any contribution to your organisation functioning? How much?
- What is your appreciation of your organisation's achievements?
- How often do you meet in your organisation/committee?
- What are the channels of decision-making in your committee?
- Do you as street traders have any role to play in the decision-making of municipal decisions affecting your businesses? If yes, how do you rate your participation?
- How do you secure your goods with regard to storage? Does your organisation help you to find a storage place?



- Have you got any insurance scheme? In case you do, what kind of insurance have you got? How do you protect your goods against adverse hazards such as theft or fire?

## **2. Questions for street traders organisations**

- Does any trade union help your organisation to empower your constituencies?
- How does StreetNet International help street traders' organisations to improve their representativity and their structures?
- What are the mechanisms undertaken to integrate street trading in the socio-economic mainstream? How can this be achieved? What can be done to improve street trading working conditions in relation to law enforcement?
- How do street traders access information related to their business in terms of regulations and enforcement?
- How do you empower your constituencies? How does your organisation contribute to building its constituencies' capacities and abilities?
- What role do or can trade unions play towards improving the integration of street trading in the mainstream municipal economy?
- How many street traders have subscribed currently to your organisation? Do you hold a membership affiliation register?
- Does your organisation have a constitution? How is your organisation structured?
- What is the appreciation of StreetNet International about the role played by Street traders' organisations?  
towards street traders' socio-economic integration in Durban?
- What are the channels of decision-making in your committee or organisation?
- How do Municipal street trading policies and regulations affect street traders businesses?
- What role can the Black Economic Empowerment play to meet this end?
- How can street trading policy be improved so as to make it people-oriented?
- How "collective action" is initiated and coordinated? Has your organisation have any partners?
- How do you rate the consultation process in the decision-making of municipal decisions in relation to street trading?

### **3. Questions for municipal services officials**

- What are the mechanisms undertaken to integrate street trading in the socio-economic mainstream? How can this be achieved? What can be done to improve street trading working conditions in relation to law enforcement?
- How can street trading policy be improved so as to make it people-oriented?
- What is the responsiveness level of street traders to municipal street trading policies and by-laws which affect their traders business?
- How suitable are street trading policies in terms of empowering and integrating street traders in the Durban socio-economic framework?
- What are the relationships between your services and street traders' organisations?
- Are street traders represented in the process of decision-making in the matters affecting their businesses especially with regard to policy and enforcement? At what extent is this inclusion process applied in the case it exists?

**APPENDIX 2: PHOTOS OF STREET TRADERS ACTIVITIES AND COLLECTIVE ACTION  
AGAINST THE EARLY MORNING MARKET DEMOLITION**

