

## TOWNSHIP ENCOUNTERS

### Picnic at Monwabisi

THE small blond boy runs up to the wicket to argue that the batsman is out. Soon everyone is embroiled in the debate. Later they argue about military service as they sit together on the grass verge near the beach. Later still they go together to the KTC squatter camp to talk about their different lives.

These school children are from all over Cape Town. The white pupils are mostly from the predominantly Afrikaans-speaking schools in the Northern suburbs. The black pupils are from Langa, KTC and Khayelitsha.

"Hulle is genuine ouens," the blond one says later. "Ons kan met hulle praat." For him, this is a first time. He has never met a black person who wasn't a servant or a servant's child.

Most of the Saturday was spent at Monwabisi beach which is a showpiece resort, just the other side of the arid wastes of Khayelitsha. The children played games and talked and swam while a small group of parents looked on vaguely astonished.

A senior manager in a major Afrikaans company whose children were at the picnic said: "This so easily might never have happened. They could all have grown up to be soldiers on different sides and never had a chance to just, you know, relax... and be in each other's company."

Walking through KTC later the children were treated to the traditional hospitality of the residents. Pro Jack, co-ordinator of this IDASA project, said: "You know, when they stand there and get all quiet, it is because they can't believe how they have come from such different experiences but they have just been able to spend the day like any friends can."

**The Western Cape office of IDASA has moved to 6 Faircape House, Orange Street, Cape Town. Phone the National Office (021) 47-3127 for their number.**



Scholars come to grips with conditions in the vast shanty town, Soweto, near Port Elizabeth.

At the end of the day they all went back to Monte Vista, the conservative white Cape Town suburb which was the pick-up point for the white children. Probably for the first time those streets rang to the singing of African resistance songs and the laughter of black and white children as they ran the last races up and down the main street.

In the end many of the children exchanged addresses and made arrangements for the future.

Pro Jack commented: "In the Western Cape we are starting to set up several 'Twinning' programmes where we get a regular group of people from the different areas together, and they have a series of events and interactions. In the long run these projects will assume their own momentum and we will be able to pull out altogether. That's when we will have succeeded."

Anyone wishing to set up such a project or get involved in an existing one should please contact IDASA's Western Cape office.

**NIC BORAIN**  
Western Cape Regional  
Director

### 'Traumatic experience' for PE scholars

THE Eastern Cape office of IDASA broke new ground in February when it took the first two groups of scholars on a tour of a number of black townships in Port Elizabeth.

Some 50 scholars of Lawson Brown High School and Trinity High School went on two separate tours and were not only exposed to the poor social conditions in Red Location, the vast shanty town Soweto (By-the-Sea) and Veeplaas, but also introduced to

the history of the areas.

IDASA's Eastern Cape director, Max Mamase, who led both tours, said most of the children had never set foot in the townships and were shocked by the living conditions of people.

"They realised for the first time that the struggle for social justice was justifiable," said Max. "They asked whether the government was prepared to change these conditions and came to the conclusion that the government must change its rhetoric first."

The tours made a tremendous impact on both groups, and the scholars said they would encourage their friends to participate in future tours.

Red Location, one of the focal points of these social history tours, was first occupied by British soldiers during the Anglo-Boer War. The barracks there were vacated by the soldiers after the peace of Vereeniging was signed in 1902, making way for Fingo migrant workers who could, in terms of the Location Act of 1903, no longer stay in inner city locations.

The area has never been upgraded. In some sections one toilet serves between eight and nine residential blocks. A liquor outlet is the only "development" provided by the authorities. Residents are living under a threat of removal. Residents allowed the scholars to enter their "homes" and this first-hand exposure, said Max, had made a tremendous impression on them.

"It was a traumatic experience to many students to learn about these harsh realities but we believe that an on-going discussion of these issues will eventually pay dividends."

### Young doctors visit Duncan Village

A GROUP of 15 young doctors were taken on a social history tour of Duncan Village in East London in March. They were particularly interested in the health aspect of the township so the tour took on a medical flavour with visits to the Day Hospital and the Health Centre.

The tour leaders were both members of the Duncan Village Residents' Association, Dumisa Ntintili and Mteteleli Pobana. We met at the IDASA office and the doctors were given a briefing on the history of Duncan Village and shown slides of housing conditions, communal wash areas and communal toilets.

We stopped in the largest of the shack-dweller areas, C-Section, and the doctors met with people and asked about the primary health care and conditions in general. At this point we picked up surveillance by the security police which continued for the rest of the tour.

The tour continued on foot and we went through C-Section and D-Section and saw the bad roads, toilets and wash areas. The group was then taken to "Old" Duncan Village or Duncan Village "Proper", as it is known. There we met with Sister Florence Solomon and discussed the social and psychiatric problems found in the township.

The doctors are keen to get a primary health care project going in Duncan Village and have set up a further meeting with the Duncan Village Residents' Association.

A second, much smaller, tour took place on 10 March when a group of British Embassy officials were taken to Duncan Village and a smaller township.

Both of these tours have elicited a very positive response from the Duncan Village community. We plan to have a number of these tours with preferably not more than 15 participants per tour.

**Cindy Deutschmann**  
Border Regional Co-ordinator

# Durbanites exposed to township life

THE Natal region's "Shaping Our Future" series started its 1989 programme with an educational trip into townships and informal settlements around Durban on February 25.

To many of the 40 participants this was their first trip to the townships, a fact which generated an air of excitement and expectation.

They were taken through Umlazi, an urban area within KwaZulu, Lamontville, an urban area outside KwaZulu, past single men's hostels, an informal squatter settlement named Malagazi and Folweni, a 'rural' area which may be far removed from Durban but has grown into a large peri-urban area due to the geopolitics of apartheid.

Participants were exposed to a whole range of government structures in the area where many Black Durbanites dwell. Some of these areas fall under the Durban City Council and Natal Provincial Administration (Lamontville), some fall under a municipal government in KwaZulu (Umlazi), while others are situated on tribal land in KwaZulu (Malagazi and Folweni). Background information on the areas was provided on the bus by regional director Paul Graham and regional co-ordinator Fana Zungu.

Participants were also taken to a hall in Lamontville where they discussed and shared their impressions of the tour.

A variety of observations came to light. A woman expressed feelings of sadness and shame about the comfortable lifestyle she enjoyed. Another participant pointed out that people were seeing the "new face of South Africa". He said: "I saw a spirit and a form of energy within the community trying to make the best out of what they've got despite all obstacles."

Another person commented on the vibrancy of people living in houses as opposed to the gloomy atmosphere of the single men's hostels. Many were struck by the vast distances people in these areas were forced to travel, the poor transport facilities and the costs involved in travel. One participant said: "I feel sad about how little is spent on roads in these areas as opposed to the millions spent on Durban's beachfront." There was also discussion on the questions of land and housing.

Talk then moved from general issues to the question of education, with extra input being given by Davine Thaw of Careers Information Centre and Madoda Ntanda of the Umlazi College for Further Education.

Davine gave the education-based back-

ground to the Soweto riots of 1976 and pointed out that questions of power and control were essential to any discussion on education and should not be overlooked as this also reflected the broader perspective of conditions in South Africa.

She pointed out that there were shortfalls in both black and white education in South Africa which need to be addressed. Fana pointed out that it was the content of the school curriculum

that needed to be changed rather than merely providing facilities like desks and swimming pools. "Unless the syllabus content is changed, these things are meaningless," he said.

By the end of the afternoon participants were left with many issues to consider and many expressed the hope that similar trips would be arranged in the future.

**Rose Louw**  
Natal Region



A bus load of people take a trip into the unknown shack and peri-urban areas south of Durban.



Participants in a "Shaping our Future" event share thoughts after a visit to Durban's shackland.