

A Case Study of Participation in the City Deep Hostel Redevelopment

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Introduction

The City Deep Hostel redevelopment was chosen as a case study for two main reasons. Firstly, the research team wished to study a case where there would be (hypothetically) a strong community structure in the context of an urban project. Hostels, because of their history, were seen as politically vocal enclaves, with a strong local identity (Ramphela 1993) based on clearly marked boundaries (they were often built on no-man's land, next to mining or industrial areas), and the fact that they have been associated with a history of violence (Segal 1991; Sitas 1996; Chipkin 2004). It was hypothesized that urban projects in a hostel environment would necessarily require a certain degree of engagement between the developer and the residents. It was also expected that this engagement would be complex: the nature of the hostel renovation project (involving its conversion into family units) would necessarily question the nature and legitimacy of who does and who does not participate in decision-making regarding changes in the local space, in particular along gender lines (Elder 2003). City Deep Hostel was chosen after discussion with the City of Johannesburg, as the renovation process was quite advanced and was perceived as having been running relatively successfully under the management of Johannesburg Social Housing Company (Joshco).

City Deep Hostel is located a few kilometres southeast of the Johannesburg city centre. Its history goes back to the 1930s, when it was built for male workers employed at the nearby mine (Dlamini 2009), from which it gets its name. It was one of several Johannesburg hostels (see Figure 1), developed at the beginning of the century as single-sex rental accommodation directly linked to work contracts with companies and local authorities, built as compounds in order to better exploit and control the labour force. This model made it possible to locate workers in close proximity to their place of work – unlike township residents located further away from the City- but in a more easily-controlled environment (Pirie and Da Silva 1986). As the mine was closed down in the late 1970s, the hostel was used to accommodate municipal male workers.



Figure 1. Location of Johannesburg hostels
Source: Pirie and De Silva, 1986.

1) Background – Brief presentation of City Deep Hostel



Figure 2. City Deep Hostel (outlined) and surrounding environment
Source: Google Earth.

The location of the City Deep Hostel can be considered favourable at the metropolitan scale, as it provides relatively cheap accommodation close to Johannesburg centre, and is easily linked to it through Heidelberg Road. Its immediate environment however is more daunting. Located on the industrial and mining belt, which had been used by apartheid planners as a buffer between racially segregated urban spaces, the hostel is surrounded by industrial buildings and mining dumps (to the south). These have partly poisoned the ground and rendered urban agriculture, for instance, impossible¹. It is clearly isolated from other residential areas, in particular the former white workers suburbs of Regents Park and Rosettenville (further south). Its environment, however, has been shifting with the development in 1974 of City Deep Fresh Products Municipal Market (to the north and to the east of the hostel), after mining activities were abandoned in this part of the city. The market provides residents with access to fresh and cheap products (sold at wholesale prices) as well as some forms of direct or indirect employment. But in terms of direct access to local, everyday services and the urban environment, the hostel remains an urban enclave isolated from the urban fabric.

¹ Interview with City Deep Hostel's Women Group.

It is also specific in terms of its social and political characteristics. Located in ward 57, led by the Democratic Alliance, the hostel is an ANC stronghold (see Figure 3). The voting population is mostly based in the formerly white (but rapidly desegregating) suburbs of Regents Park, Roseacre and Klipriviersberg; the hostel appears again as an enclave in this political landscape.

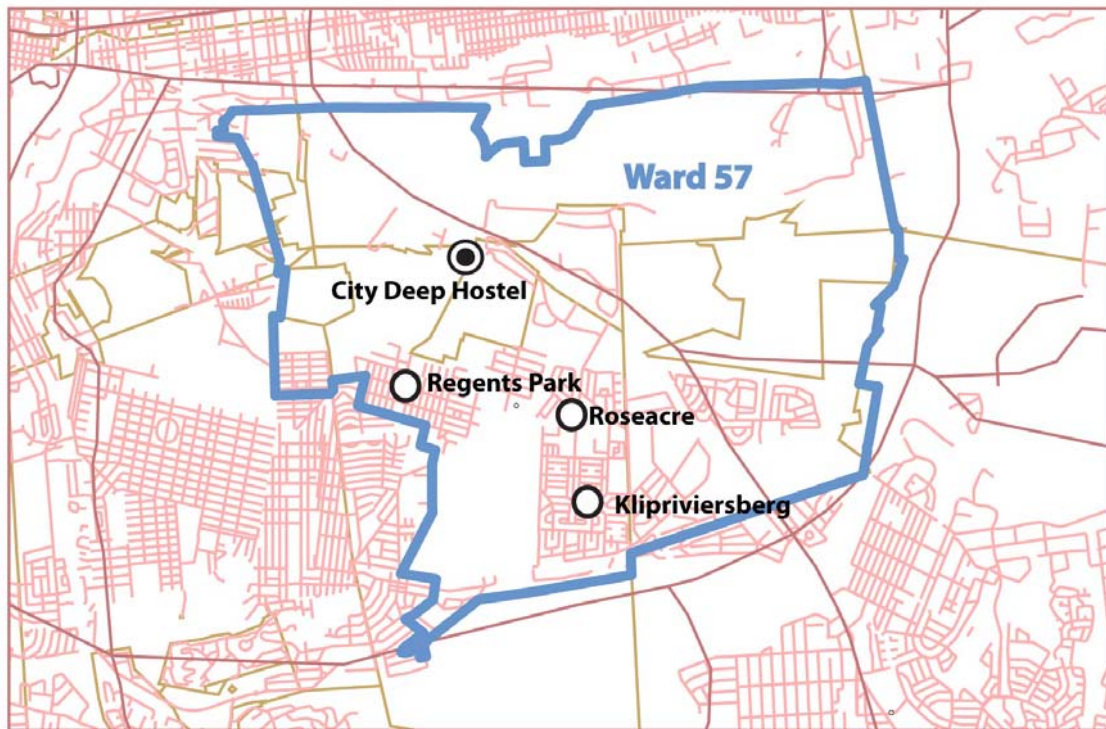


Figure 3. City Deep in ward 57.

Source: City of Johannesburg, local elections 2005-2006, accessed in June 2009 on www.demarcation.org.za/ward_delimitation/FINAL/gt/munic/Johannesburg.html

Subject to the sudden influx of new residents fleeing urban violence in the early 1990s, the hostel had become overcrowded— in 2005 when Joshco started intervening in the hostel redevelopment, they estimated the hostel population at about 1000 male residents². Living conditions and maintenance of the environment had deteriorated with a collapsed hostel management (Dlamini and Mgxabayi 2009). The newly-elected City Council of Johannesburg, after several failed attempts at regenerating the hostel, has, since 2005, involved Johannesburg Social Housing Company (Joshco), one of its entities, to drive the hostel's the renovation, its conversion into family units, and its longer-term management.

² Interview, Joshco's official.

2) Nature of the project

The redevelopment project cost is estimated at R148 million, mostly funded from public subsidy from different levels of government:

Table 1 – Funding sources for City Deep Hostel redevelopment

Funding Source	Amount (Million R)
National Housing Department – Social Housing Restructuring grant	64
Gauteng Province – Institutional Housing Subsidy	22.1
Gauteng Partnership Fund	13.6
City of Johannesburg	40
Private loan	8.3
Total	148

Source: Dlamini and Mgxabayi 2009

The planned number of units to be delivered is 654 family units: 373 units converted from hostel rooms into bachelors, one- and two-bedroom units; and 281 greenfield housing units around the hostel (see Figure 4).

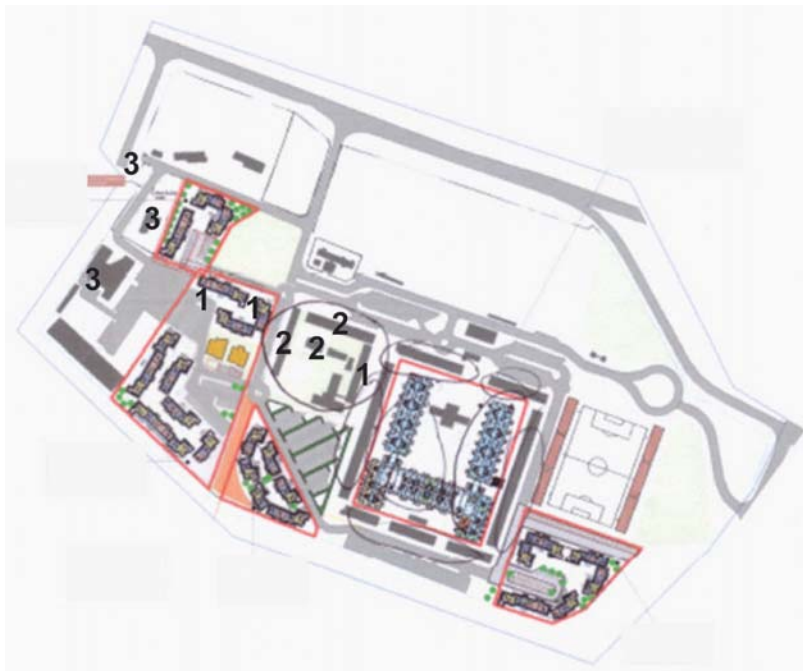


Figure 4. City Deep Hostel Renovation Plan
Source: Joshco, 2009.

The renovation project unfolded in several phases that often involved temporary displacement of hostel residents.

- 1) The first phase (completed) concerned the renovation of “the 123 units”, the original hostel terraced houses (#1 on the map). The units were completed in 2006 and opened to families (Dlamini 2009)
- 2) The second phase (in process) concerned the renovation of the rest of the hostel (3-storey buildings, #2 on the map) – 250 units to be completed. It had to be subdivided into several phases as tenants were removed from one part of the hostel to another during the renovation. During our study, Blocks A and B had been completed and were

occupied by families (92 family units); the Decant Block was under renovation, and all its tenants had been temporarily moved into Block E (60 units)³; Block C was to be converted next.

- 3) The third and last phase (not started, #3 on the map) will entail the construction of 281 greenfield rental units around the hostel – possibly intended for non-hostel residents, as they are targeting lower-income residents (earning below R3500 per month).

The question that this project raised almost immediately was about the process of beneficiary selection, given the fact that there was an obvious gap between the initial population of the hostel (about 1000 male residents) and the number of units directly provided and intended for them (373 units). We did not further explore the process regarding the selection of beneficiaries for the greenfield units, as the construction process had not started and there was little clarity about the plan. It was also, at the time of the study, not an issue that came up in our discussions with hostel residents.

The rent levels for the new family units are as follows, depending on the size of the unit:

Table 2- Rents per unit at City Deep new family units

Unit size	Rent	Subsidy (CoJ)	Paid by tenants	Qualifying salary
Bachelor unit	-	R639-00	-	
1 bedroom	R1 100-00	R639-00	R461-00	R1 383-00
2 bedrooms	R1 300-00	R639-00	R661-00	R1 983-00
3 bedrooms	R1 640-00	R639-00	R1 001-00	R3 003-00

Source: Joshco’s City Deep office, July 2009.



© Benit-Gbaffou, 2009. The 123 units (initial miners’ rooms), the first to be renovated and occupied by worker’s families.



© Benit-Gbaffou, 2009. On the right, the renovated “123 units”; on the left, renovated Block E; at the back, the “Decant Block” where displaced tenants wait for their units to be ready for occupation.

³ Interview, Joshco’s official.

I - Stakeholders involved in the project

The project initially seemed to involve two main stakeholders: the City of Johannesburg, as the owner and manager of the hostel, and the City Deep Hostel residents. However, of course this is not that simple. The City of Johannesburg is itself a complex structure with different departments, agencies, officials and politicians who have various views on the project – depending on the nature of their involvement therein. The ‘residents’ are not only divided into various social and political groups – their definition as ‘residents of City Deep Hostel’ (entitled to the new units) has been the object of debate.

1) City of Johannesburg

The City of Johannesburg is a crucial stakeholder in the hostel regeneration project, since it is the owner and the manager of the hostel, and has reserved this housing for municipal workers⁴. However, internally the City of Johannesburg is a complex and diverse entity.

CoJ Department of Housing

The Department of Housing within the city administration, is a crucial, although generally remote, stakeholder in the City Deep Hostel renovation project. Initially it was the city’s housing department that drove the renovation project after it had been approved in 2000 by the Gauteng Provincial Government under its Hostel Regeneration Programme⁵. Indeed, existing national programmes for the regeneration of hostels (first the Public Sector Hostel Redevelopment Programme, then the Community Residential Units Programme) explicitly exclude hostels aimed at accommodating municipal workers (South African Department of Housing 2000; 2008). However, due to a variety of problems, the City of Johannesburg Housing Department made little progress in the renovation of City Deep Hostel and, in 2005, mandated one of its entities, Joshco (Johannesburg Social Housing Company), to drive the renovation and eventually manage the hostel.

Joshco

Joshco is one of the publicly owned entities of the City of Johannesburg, created in 1994 to provide affordable and quality rental housing to the people of Johannesburg. Its projects are funded through provincial subsidies, national and municipal grant funding, and private loan funding. Joshco caters predominantly for individuals earning a household income between R1.500.00 and R7.500.00 per month. It has, therefore, two core functions: to act as a developer (by appointing contractors and professionals to build suitable housing or renovate existing buildings); and to act as a manager for the city’s newly-constructed or acquired rental housing stock⁶.

Joshco has some autonomy in its management, but is funded primarily through public subsidy and is accountable to the City of Johannesburg. In the case of City Deep Hostel, weekly meetings are held between Joshco and the city’s Housing Department⁷. Joshco’s officials working on the

⁴ Municipal workers here consist of workers employed directly by the City of Johannesburg or by its entities such as City Power, Johannesburg Water, Pikitup, etc.

⁵ Address by Public Transport, Roads and Works MEC Khabisi Mosunkutu on the tabling of Departmental Budget Vote, Gauteng Provincial Government, 27 May 2003. Accessed at <https://www.gautengonline.gov.za>, December 2009.

⁶ <http://www.joshco.co.za/about.html>

⁷ Interview, Joshco’s official.

project consist of project managers sitting at the head office, but also staff posted to City Deep premises, one of them on a 24-hour basis.

This seems all the more important to remember as there are many misconceptions and misrepresentations of Joshco's mandate by some residents of City Deep, even though all residents work for the City.

When Joshco arrived it did not arrive as a city entity. It arrived as a developer, using a contractor's name. Later when we saw that Joshco is continuing, we were having concerns – how do we deal with that contractor? Then we found out it is a city entity. (ANC official)

Residents are complaining about high rentals. [...]. And the place is not a rent-to-buy. [...] People can't pay so much just for renting. Joshco did not put a cent, everything is paid by [the Department of] Housing in bulk. They received R6 million from the City Housing Department when they started. Then 31 million to go on from [the Department of] Housing. They did not put a cent. (SANCO official)

There is another area for confusion: 90% of tenants don't understand what is Joshco. Even if they work for the city, they don't understand that Joshco is part of CoJ. They think that Joshco is just a developer, which will develop and then go. [...] People think that if Joshco moves we'll be back to R40. But at the same time they need the development. (Member of the Tenants Committee)

It would have helped if the city had come to introduce Joshco. Joshco was never formally introduced to the people by the City of Johannesburg. We took it for granted that they would know about us. (Joshco official).

We have held a number of meetings with the City of Johannesburg about redevelopment of the hostel. [...] Unfortunately it did not work at that time, there were two or three contractors before Joshco and they failed, maybe because of bankruptcy. After several months we heard from the Department of Housing that Joshco had been appointed. We were very surprised but we have welcome[d] those ideas. The City introduced Joshco to us and we have held a series of meetings. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

Through this collection of quotes from various stakeholders in the project, it is clear that information about Joshco is unevenly spread – in particular regarding its dual role as developer and manager. This lack of shared knowledge about Joshco's nature, mandate, and mode of funding, can be an impediment to the smooth running of the project. It is mainly due to communication difficulties between Joshco and the residents as a whole (see below)– creating a space for manipulation of information, enabling rumors to spread that then are difficult to correct.

The Ward Councillor

Theoretically, the main liaison between the City of Johannesburg and its residents is supposed to be the ward councillor. However, because the councillor is a member of the Democratic Alliance, and City Deep Hostel is an ANC stronghold, communication has not been easy.

Our councillor, we ignore her because she is DA. But DA could be good for residents. Even if the councillor is right, because you are SANCO you will oppose her. If her actions are good you should applaud them. [...] You need to help people; you need to get any loophole you can use. (Tenant 11).

The councillor, although stating that her role is one of oversight over all that is happening in her ward, admitted she knew very little about the project. She complained of being sidelined, not invited to meetings, not told about the project. The fact that the councillor does not speak any African languages did not help her to establish a link with City Deep residents.

I only attended one public meeting in City Deep, which was conducted in African languages. I do not understand the language and I became reluctant to attend other meetings, as they never bothered to offer translations. (Ward councillor)

As a result of this political context, the ward councillor is seldom mentioned as a stakeholder in the renovation project. The councillor, however, remains marginally a resource for residents to solve certain issues pertaining to the immediate surroundings of the hostel:

Two years ago, there were lots of criminals along the street: we reported to the ward councillor, and she did solve that problem. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

2) City Deep Hostel's Residents

City Deep hostel's residents are the major stakeholders of this hostel renovation project. According to the interviews with the Joshco officials, the initial number of hostel tenants was estimated to be 1000 in 2005; the figure was reduced to about 600 after a selection process determining who were the legitimate tenants (rather, the sorting out of the people deemed 'illegal' tenants, as they have been named: see section, 'Selection of Beneficiaries'). The number of residents has then increased again with the arrival of municipal male workers' families, who are primarily women and children. The issue of 'participation of residents' is therefore tricky since the very definition of residents is contested and fluid. This question will be dealt with while studying the participation process itself.

Few people question whether City Deep Hostel residents form a 'community'; again, the physical layout of the hostel, the common history of residents, the nature of the hostel management as one specific entity, etc. create a sense of shared belonging. But residents have divergent views on whether the 'community' is weak or strong, in particular in its interactions with Joshco, the main partner in the renovation process.

[The] City Deep community is not strong. There are a lot of political organisations, and those organisations are causing the conflict. They are misleading the residents, saying 'we can do better than the Tenants Committee'. As ANC or SANCO, we must control the situation. We must not take side[s]. You must be neutral, so that you are delivering to the people, not just ANC members. We are working hand-in-hand with management. We are not here to create conflict. (Tenants Committee)

Now there are too many divisions. Management is trying to divide the people. (SANCO official)

City Deep is a strong community. All of the residents are workers of the municipality. We can call them as shop steward[s]. We can take issues to the union. We can use the union to take the issue to Joshco. But there is confusion. Some still think it is a hostel; they are not seeing that it is now family units. If all residents could get united... well, very soon it is going to happen. Everyone will receive a letter from Joshco saying he owes R10.000, then if you call a meeting they will all come! (ANC official)

Two points are recurring in the interviews. The first is the lack of unity and pervasive divisions within the community, weakening its ability to participate (in agreement or in conflict with Joshco). But secondly, more positively, the political resources of City Deep Hostel's residents – due to their strong trade union culture, municipal network, and political linkages – allow them both to be more aware than other 'communities' of the stakes of development, and to possibly find a wide range of political channels to solve their issues.

In order to understand those issues better, we met and interviewed the leadership of each of the groups that were mentioned in most interviews with residents and officials. We will present each of them and describe their point of view before broadening the debate on the stakes of participation in City Deep Hostel's renovation. The existing collective structures that we were able to interview were: the Tenants' Committee, SANCO (sub-branch), ANC (voting district branch), and the Women's Group.

The Tenants' Committee

The Tenants' Committee was formed in 2004, replacing the former hostel committee which was in existence during the apartheid years. Initially, this committee comprised 17 male residents, but at the time we interviewed them they were a group of four male residents.

It was not easy to trace back the history of this committee and the reasons why it had been reduced to a small group (four or five members, sometimes nicknamed 'The Top Five' by the other groups). The history of the committee was told by various tenants, attributing its formation either to residents' own initiative, or to the City of Johannesburg's suggestion. The true answer may be a mixture of both, as it is often in moments of public intervention and change that collective mobilisation crystallizes and people find the motivation to come together.

We are not the first committee. There were lots of committees that had been formed before us. They were working with the hostel management. But a problem emerged when we wanted our families to come here. If I want my family to come I had to find a place for them in Alex. So we started to complain to management, and they asked us to form a committee. [...] When meeting with Joshco, that is when we started. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

The older committee, before 2004, they were maybe around 10 people. They were mostly speaking in the name of the management. In 2004, they called a public meeting: 'Now people of City Deep we need a new committee; we are not seeing movement in this hostel, let us call the new blood. And we started to elect the Tenants' Committee. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

I understand the Tenants' Committee was formed by management, the Housing Department. Then it was still a hostel. Before the Tenants' Committee it was a forum that was existing, representing the whole hostel. There was a peace committee in this hostel, meeting with all the hostels around to talk peace. I know because at the time I used to drive the kombi which would bring the peace committee to all the hostels. Then the city formed the Tenants' Committee. (SANCO official)

It was not very clear why the Tenants' Committee reduced in size and became a four-person group, as accounts of this process remain vague:

We started [with] 17 in 2004. Now we are only four. It is what happens when time goes on. Some members thought that committee was an easy thing. But they were failing to hold their responsibilities, or expecting to be paid. We were elected, people trusted us. The other[s] left long ago; maybe they stayed six to seven months in the committee. Let us not beg them. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

The Tenants' Committee was gathering leaders from different tribes: Amabaqa, Zulu, Venda, Sotho. At times there were 17; only four members have resisted in time and still are there. From day one they have communicated with Joshco. (Joshco official)

When we elected the Tenants' Committee... At the time we had the Hostel Forum, an old committee of fathers who are now on pension. We elected the committee of 17, trying to cover all nations – we have

many nations here. It was between 2000 and 2002 – Joshco came around 2003. [...] These members were just resigning until there was only four left. (ANC official).

There were about 17 to 19 members at the beginning. One of them was elected to be our Alliance Forum representative, but he quickly pulled out. (SANCO official)

There was a structure formed which the ANC was part of, including Joshco, the Tenants' Committee – at that time it was called the Hostel Forum, not the Tenants' Committee. But the Forum did not report to the people. So it was dissolved in 2005. The ANC moved out of the Forum. We never dissolved the Forum. (ANC official)

This shrinking size as well as the absence of public meetings organized by the Tenants' Committee (using rather a networked mode of communication with tenants, but sometimes failing to pass on information and messages, as seen for instance on the issue of explaining to residents what Joshco's mandate is) raises issues of legitimacy and representation, that the Tenants' Committee recognizes itself. This lack of representativity is at the core of criticisms addressed by other resident groups:

When we arrived in City Deep we found a committee that was not representative of all sectors of this community, sort of self-elected. We took the decision of working with this committee, but [also to] make sure it becomes representative [...]. We started working with this committee, and organised public meetings every week. (Joshco official)

The Tenants' Committee is still representing the old parts of the hostel. They are not representing the family units. Some of the people in that new portion do not take this committee seriously. In the old days the hostel committee was calling meetings on the grounds at 5:00. Now if you call women at 5:00 they are busy cooking for their husbands. (ANC official).

When calling a meeting, ANC and SANCO also invited the Tenants' Committee. But they never came again. We called them to clarify matters: 'you are not recognized by people, how can you pretend to be representing the people in front of Joshco?' (ANC official)

SANCO does not recognize the Tenants' Committee, they want to overrule it. But the Tenants' Committee has a full history in this place. They know their history. (Joshco official)

We were already having discussions on redevelopment. These members were supposed to call us and give us reports. They were just resigning until there was only four left. We don't want rumors. You must call a big meeting to explain why members are resigning. Then the Tenants' Committee chose people themselves, they co-opted one member. Now, if they call us in a meeting, only three of them were elected by us. That is where we started to differ from them and keep a distance. (ANC official).

The Tenants' Committee's position is openly and unambiguously to work hand-in-hand with Joshco to drive the process of renovation. They describe their own input as crucial for the peaceful unfolding of the project. This position is criticised by some as the Tenants' Committee being 'sell-outs' to Joshco and therefore not able to represent the tenants' real issues, especially when conflicting with the management's views.

We have held a number of meetings with the City of Johannesburg about redevelopment of the hostel. We cooperated with them: people are fed up to live in single-sex accommodation. [...] We have worked hard with Joshco, and we did allocation of tenants to the new units built in Phase One. Our work was excellent, residents were happy about the progress, then we moved to [the] second phase and everything ran smoothly. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

The main reason for having a committee is to upgrade the communication between residents and management. As a committee we are also tenants, we understand their issue[s]. We help management to convey messages to tenants, and we help tenants to take their grievances and ideas to management. We are the mediators. [...] If there are no leaders of residents, things are going to go wrong. Without a tenants' committee, if there is any problem like maintenance etc, where are you going to report? Another aim is to change the situation and bring a certain idea to the people. The situation at the hostel doesn't make a future for our people. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

I am proud of the relationship we have with Joshco. Overall it is quite all right. Other companies just dictate [to] you. We asked for a person who works 24 hours on site: the management understood this. If there is anything that the city or Joshco are planning, the first thing they do is to have a meeting with the [Tenants'] committee to sort out the issues, iron them out. Then we go together as one, management and committee. We discuss the agenda together and use it for public meetings. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

When Joshco presented the project we had a lot of input. First, we did not want to see use of cheap material. Secondly, we wanted to ensure that people are moving from one place to another peacefully: that there would be no harassment of tenants for them to move. Third, we wanted Joshco to make sure that people in the hostel are the first priority for the development. We agreed on all that. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

Our involvement has played a big role. In Selby, the project was supported by [the] community at the beginning but then there was a communication breakdown. The project didn't happen. Here, Phase One started with 123 units. People didn't want to move out. Until the management started to ask the committee: please help, we need these people to move so that we can rebuild the units for that date. We held lots of meetings, almost every day, until we convinced them. They moved out, on that side, then they came back. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

Some of the members of the ANC are part of the Tenants' Committee; or at least some of the ANC officials used to be in the 17 members of the Tenants' Committee and now have pulled off. Now the ANC does not recognize the Tenants' Committee, saying that 'they have sold this place to Joshco'. (Joshco official)

African National Congress – voting district branch

A second important residents group in City Deep Hostel is the ANC. City Deep Hostel corresponds to one voting district for ward 57 (out of 9 voting districts)- but is the most important of all, being the ANC stronghold in the ward.

We have meetings regularly, rotating amongst the voting districts. Every Wednesday we have Alliance executive meetings for the ward [the Alliance, at a national level, is between ANC, SANCO and COSATU]; most meetings are held here [in City Deep Hostel]. (ANC official)

The ANC has its own strategies, practices and views as a political party branch; but it also plays the role of a local civic able to hear and respond to residents' requests and grievances. As in many other neighbourhoods, the ANC, being a mass party very grounded locally, is often one important vehicle to bring residents' issues up:

Just before the [national] elections we called a big community meeting. When going door-to-door to call for the meeting, we were hearing even new issues. If you talk to people you will get the information. (ANC official)

As the Alliance, we deal with issues that the community feels the Tenants' Committee does not deal with. Then they come to us. (ANC official)

Besides its local embeddedness that allows ANC branches to be aware of residents' issues, such party structures also have important political resources and alternative channels to the regular ones to bring local issues to decision-makers. Local ANC leaders are on speaking terms with Joshco, but they are quite critical of their actions, especially on the issues of participation, communication, and taking people's issues into account:

Consultation with the people has been very poor.[...] When you go to Joshco [...], they don't have an answer for you. (ANC official)

Rather than engaging with Joshco, therefore, ANC local leaders often prefer to use other channels of action, accessed through their ANC networks and linkages, as a way to engage with decision-makers more directly.

For a water leak I'll go to Joshco's office. I won't go to the ANC even if I am a member of the ANC. If I reported and Joshco did not react, [and the] Tenants' Committee didn't react, then I'll go to the ANC. ANC sub-branches can go to Luthuli House, that is their right. (ANC official)

There was a structure formed which the ANC was part of, including Joshco, the Tenants' Committee – at that time it was called the Hostel Forum. But the Forum did not report to the people. So the ANC moved out of the Forum. [...] We found another way of calling Joshco to the table. We go to [their] New Doornfontein offices when we need. (ANC official)

If you meet Joshco's people here they won't answer directly. They will say, 'I'll investigate'. We don't want to deal with junior persons. (ANC official)

M [Joshco's official on site] is a good man, that man. He likes to communicate with everybody. He attends ANC and SANCO meetings. But it is just that he is under pressure. He cannot make any decision. I don't know if he reports further up. (Tenant 11)

When we need Joshco we call the city - the MMC of Housing, or Masondo [the Mayor] directly. He will call Joscho's executive. (ANC official).

This mode of action clearly separates daily management issues (water leakages) – dealt with directly with Joshco on-site – from broader, strategic issues (level of rent, status of lease, issue of electricity: see below) that require higher levels of engagement. It shows a level of political culture and power that most residents do not have. In a way, ANC hierarchy and ANC networks constitute an important resource in order for residents' important issues to be raised and possibly addressed. In another way, however, it shows that 'normal' channels of participation (Joshco's management; ward councillor and local government) do not play their role fully (as stated elsewhere: Benit-Gbaffou 2008). For individuals not belonging to the ANC or not resorting to ANC networks, participation in the full sense of the term, or around issues that require a strategic change in policy, is difficult.

SANCO

The South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) is also an important civic operating in City Deep. The SANCO branch for ward 57 was launched in October 2008, and, just like the ANC branch, its headquarters are in City Deep hostel. It has executive committee meetings every Monday, and used to call mass meetings – but no longer does so on a regular basis.

According to a number of interviews with tenants, SANCO is very popular in City Deep Hostel, quite inclusive of all residents, and a place where they feel free to raise issues. This was difficult for us to verify in practice, as there was no public meeting we were aware of during our research, and several residents confirmed that they had not attended SANCO public meetings for a long time. Perceptions of its efficiency vary. Most tenants interviewed think that it is quite efficient in raising the residents' issues (around jobs and training; around rent levels and various challenges for families, etc.), as SANCO used to offer wide and open public platforms of expression where all sort of issues (not only housing-related) could be mentioned. Some praise SANCO for being able to find solutions to their issues (even if sometimes their belief is unfounded, as appears to be the case when residents credit SANCO with negotiating reduced rent levels), while some are more critical and stress SANCO's empty promises. Many mention its divisions and deplore the disappearance of public meetings.

SANCO is very influential here. (Joshco official)

SANCO I believe has a majority in the community. Residents attend their meeting too much. (Tenant 12)

The oldest committee is there, for men only. SANCO committee is mixed, you'll find women and youth. We participate in [the] SANCO meeting. It is more open to us women. Also, SANCO calls meeting with a loudhailer. The Tenants' Committee, we don't know how they call meetings. In SANCO, we discuss all issues – jobs, training, etc... (Member of the Women's Group)

SANCO, it has been many months now without meetings. It used to be more. Every three weeks we used to have meetings. But now I don't know. This year we did not have any meeting. [The] last meeting was in October last year, we were supposed to meet again in January. Generally it used to be big meetings: the whole place was packed. (Tenant 5)

I have attended one public meeting in the area, which was called by SANCO, and [the] meeting was more about food parcels. Tenants were asked to register to get food parcels, but that has never materialised. (Tenant 9)

SANCO is efficient to raise residents' issues. The electricity issue, the rents that are too high... they talked with Masondo and it worked. The rents were reduced. [...] Most people trust SANCO still. They know SANCO from the rural areas, not this SANCO here. (Tenant 11)

SANCO is very critical of Joshco's work in City Deep (on this issue, more will be discussed in the second part of this report); in particular in the way it handled a number of residents issues (rents, electricity rates, issues with lease, etc.). Generally it argues that Joshco is not sympathetic enough to the problem of the poor and unemployed:

Because of the oppression we get from our management, people decided they needed an organization to protect them. By our management I am talking of the MMC, the Housing Department and Joshco. So we launched this SANCO in October 2008. (SANCO official)

Tenants are not happy about the way Joshco is handling things. Joshco was here just for development, not for administration. Now Joshco is sending letters to people telling them they owe Joshco a huge amount of money. (SANCO official)

Joshco has now that fear that somebody is watching them. We will end up in court. SANCO is a broad organization. We can call all the Gauteng branches, all the public hostels. (SANCO official)

Reciprocally, several members of staff in Joshco deplore the attitude of some SANCO leaders, which they consider irresponsible and possibly driven by the personal agenda of their leadership. This undermines SANCO's local credibility and legitimacy as a player in the participation process:

It is SANCO against Joshco. The reason being, SANCO wants to take over the administration of the hostel. It goes a long way, and we are used to see people hijacking buildings in the City Centre. Also, SANCO's chairman and 'Exco' used to work for the city, but the chairman was suspended for misconduct. He is now occupying a municipal unit. He must move out since he no longer works for the city. That is why they are against us. They are staying in the house in the corner; we want to redevelop the area, we are supposed to build a crèche there. That is why it has been delayed. (Joshco official)

We recognize the role of civic organisations and of SANCO in particular. But the actions of some of the members of this organisation have been irresponsible. (Joshco official)

These guys used to pay R40 for a bed. When you move to family units, you must pay R1000 and more. SANCO argues that people must pay less than R300, irrespective of which benefit they get. Even if it is not viable. SANCO is against any reasonable procedure. We have the proper SANCO which runs with the ANC. This SANCO here is pushing personal agendas. Any public meeting where we invite SANCO from the top structure, this SANCO here won't come to the meeting. (Joshco official)

SANCO has a support here, but through misrepresentation. In every family you have got youth. They made promises to the youth, and those who don't have personal units, that they would get RDP houses. People joined in. They did not deliver RDP houses, some people backed off. (Joshco official)

In any case, communication is hardly taking place between SANCO and Joshco – with suspicion from both sides and unwillingness to work together, especially after a few (failed) attempts to do so (the responsibility for the failure of the meetings has been denied by both parties).

Joshco doesn't like SANCO. So there is no real participation of residents with Joshco. SANCO has tried to sit down with Joshco but Joshco did not want. For instance, late 2008 Joshco was called to sit with the SANCO executive. They did not come to the meeting. (Tenant 12)

Before I started here none of Joshco staff would attend any meeting with SANCO. I took the initiative to attend their meetings. I listen to them. Sometimes I intervene if they say something not right. SANCO said to tenants you must have your title deed. I said how can you say that? But I don't talk in the meeting. If they say something wrong I take them aside another day, and ask, why do you say this? (Joshco official)

SANCO's position was not to talk with Joshco. We had been trying to meet with them so many times. SANCO was not recognised. We wrote letters to Joshco and they would not reply. The ...[one time] they replied, they invited us to the office. We finally met once, I had opened a path for more regular meetings. But then... (ex-SANCO official)

Surprisingly, it is not so much the lack of communication and cooperation between Joshco and SANCO that is blamed by tenants for SANCO's (and more broadly the Alliance's) perceived lack of efficacy. All tenants interviewed indicated that they do not see the effectiveness of these structures in City Deep hostel in dealing with residents' problems, mainly because of their in-fightings and divisions.

How can these structures be able to solve our problems while they are fighting amongst themselves? (Tenant 6)

ANC and SANCO are not effectively dealing with the problems in the area. This is because there is too much in-fighting. It seems there are too many divisions in ANC and in SANCO. If I have a problem, I [would] rather go straight to the Joshco office and report it myself. (Tenant 7)

When I have a problem, I take it to SANCO and to the ANC. But there is no progress. (Tenant 4)

I don't know if there is a tenants' committee. I once heard that there will be block committees that will be established, but how, I don't know. I don't remember when we last had a public meeting in City Deep Hostel. (Tenant 10)

In the area, there is ANC and there is SANCO. They work together as they understand one another. But there ...[is too much] in-fighting in SANCO, so it is not very efficient. (Tenant 3)

I am still a member of SANCO, but I no longer attend their meetings. Those at the top want to benefit for their own sake. (Tenant 5)

However, this assessment of SANCO-ANC efficiency is largely based on the lack of immediate response to individual issues. As mentioned by one ANC official, and although there is awareness and concern about these immediate issues amongst both organisations, the Alliance does not focus primarily on these everyday, management issues but rather on other types of decisions, taken at higher levels (rent level, status of arrears, etc.) that seldom lead to an immediate response but can bring about broader change. We will come back to the issue of the effectiveness of the Alliance (SANCO-ANC) below.

Women's Group

Originally, City Deep Hostel was designed as single-sex accommodation, for men only. The hostel renovation project in City Deep introduced the presence of women, who came to join their husbands in newly-built family units. Men who had lived alone for lengthy periods started to bring in their families. These changes have not been easy in the hostel, particularly to those who resisted the renovation/conversion project.

Women in City Deep Hostel have not been active or visible participants in the hostel upgrading project. The main reason for their non-participation is their late arrival in City Deep – only once the family units were complete (first phase) were they invited to live in City Deep. However, since their arrival, it seems that it is a challenge for them to participate in public participation processes and be active in public meetings. Their role is often described, by some male tenants in particular, as being confined to a domestic role. Their freedom to speak in public meetings is sometimes contested as they remain the 'dependant' of the formal tenant, which is the husband and municipal worker.

As women go around inviting people to meetings, some men discourage their ...[wives] to come. 'My wife has come to see me, not to go to meetings'. [...] But they'd be happy if we were working. (Member of the Women's Group)

In public meetings women keep quiet. Women are able to speak up when we are together. Men keep saying they are visitors, it is not their place. (Joshco official)

We don't like being called visitors by our husbands. (Member of the Women's Group)

When I go to the meeting, my husband is happy. I tell him what we talk about. I must explain what we did there. As a woman myself, when he comes in, he must show he is the man of the house. I am the woman of the house. The hostel life is no longer there. (Member of the Women's Group)

I go door-to-door trying to invite women to come to women's meetings, but to some family units its a bit of [a] struggle, as their husbands resist or refuse to permit their wives to attend women's meetings. (Member of the Women's Group)

Three weeks ago, [March 2009] we had a public meeting where we [...] said we wanted women to participate. Someone said 'I want Joshco to tell me, between me and my wife, who is employed by the municipality? Why must my wife be involved? Why should my wife come and stay with me here when my own home is in the Eastern Cape?' There are still people thinking like that in the hostel. It is a matter of changing the mind-sets. (Joshco official)

Although we favour SANCO and feel free to attend meetings called by SANCO we still fear to fully participate, as men do not welcome us in public meetings. (Member of the Women's Group)

Joshco is aware of the issue and trying to encourage women's participation – both in the collective everyday life of the complex, in public meetings, and in city life in general. Several elements explain this interest in increasing women's participation. First, the belief is strong that women will manage private and public spaces within the complex better than men do – as their focus is seen to be on their family and domestic chores, they will 'take care' of the unit itself, and the hostel public spaces and facilities, more than men would.

This place is no longer a hostel. It is now a place for families. In public meetings we need gender equity. Some people say, no, women are just visitors. But it is important to include women. Some families make mistakes. Instead of going to correct the male, I can send the female [to] talk with the female. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

There are also a number of planning issues in the project that women are more sensitive to, given their usual role in the household:

Joshco did not prepare men for the coming of their family. Men don't give women money to cook and clean the house. You cannot just say 'give me money'. They also get irritated when kids play around. Also, with the women and children around they realised we needed a crèche. (Joshco official)

We lack privacy here. We need proper units. (Member of the Women's Group)

Joshco felt the need to develop a community development component in its housing management model (and organised, for instance, a campaign against domestic violence). They approached the Department of Community Development in the City of Johannesburg, asking them to involve social workers and be able to refer issues to them. The Department encouraged Joshco to develop gender-sensitive and



©Benit-Gbaffou 2009. The arrival of families in City Deep Hostel means the emergence of new social needs to be accommodated.

representative structures, along the lines of good governance practices.

Lastly, a tragic incident heightened consciousness about the level of violence potentially triggered by unresolved and unmanaged household and gender issues: a woman – who was quite active in the Women’s Group – who had publicly challenged her husband (on issues of maintenance money) was shot by her husband and died. Her husband fled and finally committed suicide. The issue is still very sensitive in the City Deep Hostel community: it seems difficult to talk about it, and those who do use euphemisms, talking about ‘the accident’, or ‘the incident’.

The women’s meetings stopped because men were harassing me. ‘You are making our women to plot against us’. After that accident most women were scared and stopped coming. Men were saying to their ...[wives]: that is what we do with women who misbehave’. (Joshco official)

[On the] awareness campaign, we started late. We should have started from the onset. In public meetings women keep quiet. Late X would [speak] openly. [...] We need counseling, block by block. Joshco should have learnt from this incident: we need to do something to protect both men and women. (Joshco official)

Dealing with issues of safety is all the more important, given that there are a number of issues linked to the changes brought about by the conversion of the hostel that are leading to conflict, which could potentially be regulated by violence. There are not only changes in everyday life – about the uses of space, noise management, lifestyles – that certainly challenge the way male tenants used to live, and impose some changes that not all households are able or willing to cope with. There can also be more difficult issues directly linked to the legacy of living apart for a long time.

There is an issue with men’s *niaze*⁸. A man came here with his *niaze* and presented her as his wife. Then he fell sick, then his true wife came here and then chaos started. I don’t want *niaze* in my project. Then these incidents will happen again. The wives, they come and stand here without their husband knowing. Now if you find this *niaze*, you try to gain your husband peacefully. Counseling is needed here. We also need to prepare the men. If you have this *niaze* she must stay in the kitchen. We don’t say get rid of her. But respect your wife. That is Joshco’s rule. ‘I am Zulu I am allowed to have 2-3 wives’, then we need you to register those 2-3 wives. (Joshco official)

Joshco is therefore supporting a group of women, organised as the Women’s Group – providing some access to training and counseling, but mainly offering a space for free discussion for women. It is also starting to organise community development workshops (such as a Campaign on Domestic Violence, called the ‘Wellness Campaign’, organised in City Deep Hostel Sports Field on 29 March 2009). In our group interview, women’s expressed concern (besides household issues) was mainly about accessing jobs. The isolated position of City Deep within the city makes it difficult for women coming from rural areas to build networks and locate job



© Benit-Gbaffou 2009. Wellness Campaign organised by Joshco as part of their endeavour to engage in community development

⁸ Lover or mistress.

opportunities. In addition, the difficulty that many of them face in speaking English prevents them from accessing a number of jobs. Their call for any form of skills training programme has so far been met with limited responses. Using their existing skills, for instance in gardening, is difficult since all open ground around the area is polluted. They are fully aware that the crèche and shops to be built on the City Deep site could provide jobs, but their inability to speak English might exclude them from accessing such opportunities. These are issues that they are sometimes able to raise in public platforms, and in particular in SANCO.

II - Participation process – what is at stake?

Obviously, there are many different dimensions to participation, as outlined in the conceptual chapter of this report. Below, we present several instances in which participation was involved, discussed, or curtailed, that emerged in interviews with tenants, local leaders and officials from Joshco. The topics that emerged have been classified according to their stage in the project (each stage involving a specific type of participation). The first is prior to the renovation phase – at this point, consultation with City Deep residents was aimed at building trust in order to secure residents' buy-in, and selecting those who should benefit from the development and in what order. The second stage is the renovation-construction phase, and the third stage is the post-renovation phase, where participation issues are linked to the management of the area.

1) Participation prior to renovation

Interaction between Joshco and City Deep Hostel residents occurred prior to the renovation in at least two important instances – and these were called for by Joshco itself, as it was considered crucial for the development process. The first instance of participation was regarding the relevance and acceptability of redevelopment and hostel conversion for local residents. Here, it was necessary to overcome not only distrust, after more than a decade of little or no management by the city, but also resistance to change. The second was about the collective construction of legitimate criteria for selecting and prioritising beneficiaries of the new development. This was seen as critical, given that the possibility of violence, feared by Joshco and a majority of residents, remains a very real possibility in a hostel environment.

Rebuilding trust

When, in 2005, Joshco was appointed by the City of Johannesburg to conduct the renovation process, and eventually to manage the hostel rental stock, the hostel had not been actually managed for more than a decade, and residents had been promised development for several years by the City of Johannesburg without seeing any change in their environment. Distrust and skepticism were rife towards the city structures and their redevelopment interventions.

It was difficult to access people when we got there. Because development had been promised long ago and nothing had happened, there was a high level of anger; there was a very divided community; and there was a group of staff members (cleaners, local managers) who were very disillusioned and negative, seeing Joshco as wanting to take over and possibly firing them from their jobs. (Joshco official)

Joshco was never formally introduced to the people by the City of Johannesburg. We took it for granted people would know who we were, that they would know about us. It could have helped to be properly introduced. (Joshco official)

Joshco was acutely aware of the issue and struggled to find tenant representatives that would accept to engage with them.

There was a committee that was not representative of all sectors of the community, [a] sort of self-elected committee. We took a decision – we would work with this committee but make sure that it becomes representative. (Joshco official)

Managing change

Part of the distrust and opposition to Joshco came from some existing leaders, for which change (in management but also due to the inclusion of families) meant disruption of their business or their leadership.

Some of the *indunas*⁹ played a very destructive role. One gave us wrong information on who was living there. We figured out he was also renting out some space for his own gain. When we took over he was deployed somewhere else. (Joshco official)

There was an *induna* before. But now these times are gone. Now Mr. S. [Joshco's Housing Manager on site] is our *induna*. (Tenant 11)

In the hostel there are people from all over South Africa – Eastern Cape mostly, but also Northern Cape and KwaZulu Natal. They tend to tribalise themselves, and the Amabaqa are dominating. Most hostel managers were Amabaqa. They used to rule the place and you still find them dominating the others. It happened for instance this weekend. One bought liquor and was busy selling it from his room. One Sotho told him, 'Don't do that!' and he replied 'You can't tell me what to do and not to do'. The Sotho reported to us, we came with security and confiscated the fridge. (Joshco official)

There was resistance to the project mainly because of the presence of lots of illegals in the hostel. They were opposed to the whole idea of redevelopment. Also because some were involved in illegal activities and redevelopment would mean losing their revenue. They would come to public meetings and do everything they could to disrupt it. They would raise all issues that would derail the project; they would intimidate people and prevent them from attending the meeting. (Joshco official)

Beyond direct interest to resist the renovation and conversion project, change is always challenging, especially after decades of hostel life. The weight of conservatism and fear of loss (of power, of identity, of culture, of social status, or even of access to housing) was stressed by several interviewees (although few stories were told about active resistance to the project, as it had been going for several years already at the time of our research).

People are from rural areas, and they come to the hostel. Development means change. There is that resistance, those complaints that their cultures are going to be destroyed. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

The challenge is to change the mind-sets. [...] This needs a collective effort, a strategy on how to change. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

It was so difficult. Some people didn't want to move, didn't understand. Some said we must kill the people of Joshco, they are going to demolish our building, it is ours. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

Things were not that bad at the time. Our interest was to see improvement. The Housing Department was announcing everywhere that hostels would be converted into family units. Only few are still thinking about the old style. We are going forward and not backward. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

⁹ Traditional leaders. During apartheid, hostel's management often used them as middlemen to lead, manage and control the tenants.

A problem emerged when we wanted our families to come here. If I want my family to come I had to find a place for them in Alex. So we started to complain to management, and they asked us to form a committee. It was difficult because some of the residents did not want this development. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

Overall, however, the need for renovation and redevelopment was apparently shared by a majority of tenants, given the state of dilapidation and neglect of the hostel; the question of its conversion into family units was not directly mentioned as a major area for contestation.

We realized that the conditions in which we were staying were not conducive to our development. We called a meeting for ourselves and started to discuss the issue. As a result a committee of more than ten people [the Hostel Forum] was selected to go and negotiate with the City of Johannesburg about the changing of the hostel into family units. The selected group went to the City [...] and the response from the City was positive. (Tenant 7)

We all agreed that the hostel life was no longer good for us. We had a meeting and decided it is better for the hostel to be changed into family units. Some of the tenants were not in favour of that; we were divided. Actually I was amongst those who did not favour the family units, but we were outnumbered by those who wanted family units. I am used to hostel life, and I did not understand what is a family unit and how life is going to be in family units. (Tenant 1)

This overall support for redevelopment gave Joshco some bargaining power, allowing it to impose strict limitations on tenants' requests – threatening to take the project away from City Deep if things were delayed for too long:

We were very firm in terms of what we wanted and why we were there. If we had to listen to everything, this project would never have taken off. We're talking, consulting, we're honest but we need to make sure this development happens. We reached a point where we told tenants that if they don't want to accept this offer it will be taken to other hostels away from City Deep. (Joshco official)

On top of issues usually mentioned by developers when it comes to participation (adding direct and indirect costs to the project by delaying the development process or requesting additions that make it financially more costly), some argued that hostel tenants' specific mentality, inherited from the apartheid legacy, led to a necessary limitation in the scope and importance of residents' participation:

The guys used to live in hostels do not take responsibility. They are used to have somebody doing everything for them. If he breaks a tap, somebody must come and fix it for him. They are used not to take care. The mentality is different from those who stay in the city or in the township. That goes with history. People have been used to be[ing] given instructions. You need to put your foot down, put an iron fist. (Joshco official)

People are used to tak[ing] instructions, from *indunas*, from supervisors. We need a strong management to tell them, 'this is the right thing, this is not the right thing'. There is a lot of confusion about 'house rules'. We need to call the tenants together and tell them about the 'house rules'. What to do, what not to do. (Member of Tenants' Committee)

Joshco's strategy in this regard has been to develop tenants' training workshops, on how to be a 'good' tenant and take responsibility for their new home. The role of women here has also been seen as crucial by Joshco and the Tenants' Committee – women often being seen as mediators, more open to dialogue with the management, than men. The training included learning how to interpret the contents of a lease agreement, how and why rent is payable, how to maintain their

homes and what to do in the event of a family problem and domestic violence. Joshco is also planning to set up an office on the site that will offer social services where a social worker will be stationed to provide counseling to the community.¹⁰ Participation here is seen as an education process that facilitates the management of both the process of renovation and the tenants' relationship with Joshco.

When I wanted to move them from the Decant Block to E Block, they refused at the first meeting. I tried to put my foot down. D, the Portfolio Manager, said 'let's listen to their concern, take them to management and come back with the report'. But there was nothing to report on, because the contractor must start working. At the second meeting I told them 'we'll force you to move'. There was a public meeting on Thursday, and on Friday I still did not know whether they would move or not. On Friday morning I found 2 of them waiting for me in the office. 2 out of 200. We started taking the furniture to the storeroom. Then 50 others came in, then the rest of them came in till Sunday. They resisted because they say it is the fourth time they were moved. When they moved previously their belongings were lost. I promised nothing would be lost this time. The relocation was peaceful and today they are very happy. Now they say they are happy there and want to stay there. Now they start feeling the importance of staying in their own unit. The other day I was visiting a tenant who used to be in the Decant Block and was allocated a unit in A block. I teased him: 'Since you moved out of the hostel [into a unit] you're picking up weight!' There is definitely a change of value, of lifestyle. (Joshco official)

Selecting beneficiaries

The selection process is almost always the most contentious issue within development processes in housing projects, as it is the one that can trigger conflicts and turn to violence and disruption. This is perhaps even more feared in a hostel environment where violence is part of the repertoire of possible actions undertaken to solve issues. Although it is seldom mentioned directly, the threat of violent conflict is often present:

On allocation policy, we don't impose rules which they will contest. (Joshco official)

Some people [...] said we must kill the people of Joshco, they are going to demolish our building, it is ours. If we had not been there, Joshco would not have been able to come in. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

Therefore, the project needed to develop a general agreement on the criteria for selecting those who would be entitled to the new units and those who would not; and also on how to craft a legitimate 'waiting list' that would prioritise some beneficiaries over other beneficiaries. This negotiation process was complex and we were able to identify three issues that we will present successively.

- The first one is about the question of the so-called 'illegal' tenants – how the informal tenants who joined the hostel in the 1990s were excluded from the process of allocation, and how a consensus was formed between Joshco and the 'legal' tenants on this matter.
- The second issue, once all remaining residents were entitled to benefit from a new unit, is the question of the waiting list and the order in which residents would be entitled to be allocated units. This in itself was an important participatory process, as Joshco needed residents' agreement for the process to go smoothly.
- The third issue is the actual practice of allocating units, where other factors (such as the cost of units, willingness to move, need to urgently assign units that are ready) entered into play and required slight shifts from the strict application of the original waiting list.

¹⁰ Interview with official from Joscho.

'Illegal' tenants

During the apartheid years and in the early 1990s there was political instability in South Africa. Hostels were often marred by political violence (Segal 1991; Chipkin 2004). The loss of control and vulnerability in the hostel attracted a lot of people who were either fleeing the violence in the townships or seeking accommodation. In City Deep Hostel, the newcomers were not municipal workers and therefore were often considered and called 'illegal' by previous tenants, even though the newcomers were often the relatives or friends of the formal tenants. Overcrowding in the hostel rooms rocketed; a number of informal dwellings (shacks) developed around the hostel, in its public spaces – the whole area was becoming difficult to manage. The officials, both from the CoJ and Joshco did not have the exact number of hostel dwellers at the beginning of the project, but they estimated it at about 1000 residents. Joshco faced enormous difficulties when they began the development process in the area, as there was no management control, and some 'illegal' tenants were opposing and obstructing the process out of fear of losing their accommodation or informal (and sometimes criminal) business they were running.

It was not easy to build consensus about what to do with the 'illegal' tenants – accommodate them and regularise them, or chase them away. There were divergent views on the matter, but eventually a majority of tenants seem to have agreed that it was best to exclude them from the project. What possibly convinced most 'legal' tenants were a mixture of fear, pragmatism and the possibility of alternative solutions. Tenants came to understand that the number of new units would be limited and therefore would not accommodate everyone, but there was the prospect that relatives could be invited into family units when the units were completed. This led to a broad acceptance amongst residents that 'illegals' should go, despite the risk of rising tensions and possible further violence in the hostel, driven by the 'illegal' residents themselves when they realised they faced exclusion from the area.

People here who were illegals came during the violence. We favoured that initially. They were going to help us to fight that. When violence cleared, they started to be our enemy. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

We decided not to relocate the tenants if they were there illegally. Initially this was not well received. In fact many of them were relatives of the people staying here legally. So we managed it through the Tenants' Committee. [...] People realized that Joshco is not opposed to their cousin being there. When they get their family unit they can bring back their cousin/ father/ relatives. So they started supporting the process. (Joshco official)

Legal residents here had mixed ideas. It was clear we don't need these people and we don't know how to put them. The word illegal is a broad word, not easy to define. If my son is here he is my son. If your son is here he is illegal. We did not get a straight answer. No agreement on this. We just counted, how many registered tenants are here; and stated that no illegal tenants would take occupation of these units. It is only management who could do that [take those decisions], not residents. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

True, some of these illegals came as sons, brothers, cousins. My son is not an illegal to me, but he is illegal to you [...]. I am not right to bring someone from the outside. That is how we come to fight against one another. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

The place was full of illegals. We are sick and tired of these illegals. They were acting criminally in the hostel. They were pushing things too far. In fact City Deep was not a hostel, it was a compound: reserved only for the people working for the Council. This place was like a bush. Everything was disorder. There were shacks, shebeens... all those things were taking place. The question was how to get control back. They were more than us here. It is one of the main reasons that caused the council to give up

[development]. They found they were not safe here. [...] They were disrespectful. They were unemployed so during the day they were just breaking into your room. They were roaming around here, instead of going out of the hostel and looking for a job. Some of them they came from Nancefield or Selby [hostels], just because they know that in City Deep it is free. There is no control that will stop them. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

There were lots of shacks. Mostly with children of the people working for the City. My uncle's children were there for instance. If he comes to Johannesburg he must come to me. Until the 1990s where there was 'dudlama', civil war. Then outsiders lived here in full numbers. That was not a problem with the residents. It was the residents' decision to take these people out. Then the fights were finished, the residents asked them to go. Some of them are living in the forest right now, just next door. There actually was an argument. Myself I did not agree that my brothers must leave and go to Tembisa. Joshco was thinking to bring residents from Bellavista, Citrine Court, to occupy these units. But we engaged with the Tenants' Committee of Citrine Court and they said no. By this time however residents became united around the idea that priority should be given to people from here. The city was issuing notices, saying that someone not working in the City must move out on this date. Some of the people were becoming violent, so we agreed they must leave. The situation was not controllable. Until it is a family unit: then my son can come. (Tenant 12)

Once consensus had been reached amongst 'legal' tenants that 'illegal' ones should go, a challenge remained on how to remove the latter without violence. Several strategies were developed to 'sort' the 'legal' from 'illegal' tenants – as mentioned below:

Our strategy was decided during one of our meetings: to avoid the attendance of the illegals. They won't vote for us anyway. We were using [a] loud hailer to call for meetings, calling all the residents of City Deep which were Council employees. An ordinary person could not come, as we would track the cards that each City employee has; also, we know one another. [...] We were inviting only workers for the City of Johannesburg. We just say: follow the rules. I am not right to bring someone from the outside. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

We first wanted to use the renovation process to regularise tenancy in the complex: when relocating the tenants to other blocks we would check their papers and use the process to remove illegal people. We did not succeed. So we tried a second way, by reinforcing boundaries around the hostel through walls, gates, guard houses, access control system. Only those who could prove on their pay slip that they were working for the city and paying the R40 monthly fee would be given access cards. Those who were left without access cards could get in by signing in, but we engaged with them, gave them notice that they had to find another accommodation. We managed to reduce the number of tenants to less than 600. (Joshco official)

Finally, an important number of 'illegal' tenants were removed peacefully, through a conjunction of internal disciplining of city workers (on the rules to be followed) and a strict security access control implemented by Joshco – not prohibiting access (which might have led to violent confrontation), but starting a dynamic of differentiation and individualisation of tenants, and a process of policy iteration that those not 'legal' should seek alternative accommodation.

Who gets what and when? The complex crafting of a waiting list

Joshco initially thought of applying the company's general criteria to sort out beneficiaries, the conditions being:

- Be a South African citizen;
- Qualify for a state housing subsidy;
- Be registered on the project waiting list; and

- Be able to afford rental payments, which must not exceed 25% of gross monthly income.¹¹

In this line of thought, Joshco started asking tenants to come and register in Joshco's office, bring in their documents and indicate what type of unit they would be able to afford. But very soon it was realised that this approach would not be suitable for the hostel, and a specific allocation policy needed to be designed:

A special allocation criteria was approved by Council for this project, since people being legally here were fighting over who gets the units first. We workshopped with the Tenants' Committee, in public meetings, and the feedback was presented to the Council. The Council had to establish a policy through a system of points. Initially they had no criteria. City Deep is not the first hostel to be converted by the city – for instance in Van Blerk we did not encounter problems. The committee was not so strong there. In City Deep there was a lot of contestation along these issues. (Joshco official)

The allocation policy had to be discussed and negotiated, and several additional criteria were added. After noticing that a 'first come first served' criteria would not work, priority was given to the oldest residents, or at least those who had stayed in the hostel the longest. While length of stay is often the most important element of local legitimacy in most housing projects (see for instance the initial allocation criteria in Alexandra township: Sinwell 2009), in City Deep it took on a specific meaning due to a traditional respect for old age that had been reinforced in the hostel environment; therefore, little contest could occur about this criteria:

Culturally we know that people of South Africa believe in old people. We started from there. The allocation will go according to age. I am old by birth, I have been working here for the City of Johannesburg for a long time... people they all understand that. There is no way you'll start with children. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

In Phase One, the criteria was first-come, first-served. There was no looking at how old you were or how long you'd been in the area. You just brought the documents needed by Joshco to qualify, and you registered, and there it was. The Tenants' Committee changed that in Phase Two. For Phase One, ANC, Tenants' Committee and Joshco were in charge. For Phase Two, only Joshco and the Tenants' Committee continued. They changed the criteria, they were putting old age first. For Phase Two people were allocated in terms of years they'd been living here. People having lived there for 30 years were given first priority. We never challenged that criteria. We heard that it was discussed with people in the hostel. We won't challenge that one. We did not challenge the old men. Now they are coming to us and complaining about the rent. (ANC official)

However, this was not enough to differentiate between residents, as many of them could prove their presence from decades ago. So another criterion was added: the permanency of residence in the hostel – those who had left the hostel for a period of time (some of which came back after hearing about the redevelopment) were not excluded but they were given less priority than those who had never left the hostel:

Many people have been staying in the hostel, but maybe forty percent decided to leave the hostel and stay outside. As the development starts people come back. That is what is happening now. The ones who did not leave must be the priority. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

We created two databases. A general one, with everybody who stayed here. A sub-database, with the people who stayed here 100%. We are working on that sub-database, then we target the rest. There was

¹¹ <http://www.joburg.org.za>

agreement on this between us and residents and management: to take somebody who is staying outside would create a lot of discontent. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

The Tenants' Committee, residents and Joshco agreed that preference would be given to people who stayed in the hostel for...[a] longer time...without breaking their stay in the hostel. For instance, for the 92 units in Block A, preference was given to those who had stayed more than 40 years in the hostel. Then we move to those who had stayed between 30 and 40 years. Now we are allocating to those who stayed for more than 27 years. And so on. (Joshco official)

The process was contested, especially regarding people who came late. In the Tenants' Committee nobody came in after 1990. But in the hostel 110 people came after 1990, mostly working for [what is now] Pikitup. Most of them used to stay at Selby hostel. But the Selby management started being strict with them, so they came to City Deep because at the time there was no management so you could put up a shack. [...] When Joshco took over we demolished the shacks and asked tenants for their pay slip, to see if there were any deductions [the R40 rent deducted from the city pay slip if one has a lease in a municipal hostel]. Those who did not have deductions were pushed out. Those who had deductions [but had not been in City Deep for a long time] were put in the Decant Block then E Block (about 110 people). (Joshco official)

The database was not only checked against documents (such as pay slips), but it was also made public and tested in public meetings, so that the process was as open and transparent as possible and that residents can exert some degree of community control as to who gets on the waiting list and in which order.

I prepared the database, I presented it to the Tenants' Committee, and they could tell if it was right or wrong. But we found out that sometimes people know each other only by nicknames. Sometimes there are files about the tenant with his picture, so we can confirm it is the right person. Once the list is confirmed with the Tenants' Committee we photocopy and placate it everywhere so that everybody sees. Then we call for a public meeting, we take the list, we call each name, the person comes up and every one can see him and identify him. They are going to challenge the person they don't know. Then we take the person aside, talk with him and tell him he'll still be considered for a unit but he will be put at the end of the list. (Joshco official)

The thing we can be proud of is the transparency in terms of allocation. People who are here all need to get these units. Strategically people who never moved must get a unit first. We did that transparently and we are proud of that. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

Allocation in practice

Several tenants interviewed believed that the criteria for allocating units were not systematically applied and sometimes that the process was unfair or improper – mentioning that 'outsiders' had benefited in the development, at the expense of local tenants who had stayed very long in the area and had not (yet) received their unit.

Joshco came to develop this area and started to include people from Bellavista [an area outside City Deep] on the accommodation list while residents in the area were not yet fully accommodated. That started to cause some problems in the area as original residents started to question the authenticity of the process. (Tenant 5)

There are people who left City Deep a long time ago, but they remained in the system and they managed to come back and get units. It is unfair. Joshco failed to manage this process. (Tenant 8)

And indeed in some (few) occurrences the interviewees themselves had not been living in City Deep for a long time.

I arrived in City Deep around 2005-2006, because I started working in town and was looking for a place close to town. City Deep was still a hostel. I knew some of the workers there, so I moved in with them. Then I moved to the unit last year, with my family. [...] I don't think length of residence is a criteria which is working. I've got five years here and I got a unit. There are people of 30 years residence who have not. (Tenant 11)

Around 2007, I was looking for a place to stay and phoned a friend in City Deep. He told me, come and stay with me, we'll find a place for you. My friend was staying in a family unit, I stayed with him for a month and then moved in the hostel block. I stayed there for about one month, then I talked to a guy responsible for the relocations for this block. People still want to stay in the hostel so there is no problem for you to move in the family unit. (Tenant 5)

Reasons for these perceptions and facts are linked to several factors. The first one is linked to the gap between tenants' affordability levels and the provision of units, some of which are too expensive (due to their size) for tenants on the waiting list. As the project is moving in phases, delivering a certain number of units of each size (and price) at each stage, the units available do not necessarily match the wishes of the tenant who is next on the list. Joshco then needs to offer the (bigger) units to a candidate that is willing to rent the bigger unit and able to pay for it – departing from the waiting list and sometimes even from the beneficiary list:

There are several units which are occupied by outsiders. They were given to outsiders because City Deep people did not like those units – they were so expensive. (Tenant 4)

Quite a number of people chose a one-bedroom or a bachelor. These got finished quickly. Now there were only 2-3 bedroom units left. People were so afraid because they were not aware how much they would have to pay. (Tenant 11)

People don't fight for the units. There are not enough units for the people but Joshco is trying to build enough units. There are many vacant units, people say [the] money is too much and I agree. (Tenant 5)

As City Deep Hostel tenants are supposed to have been consulted initially on the size of the unit they would wish, and the rent level they would be able to afford (see section below, 'Participation in the construction phase'), the matter of the gap between the units built and beneficiaries' wishes is surprising. Is it because tenants were not well informed about the costs attached to each unit size, or because they did not realize at the time of consultation that these costs would not be sustainable for them, or because Joshco itself wanted to build a variety of unit sizes and rent levels in order to balance the project?

Another factor explaining confusion about allocation came from the change of allocation criteria in the middle of the process, as mentioned before:

There were some people who were disadvantaged. In the first phase, they were allocating units to 200 people in blocks B and D. But in Phase One there were only 123 new units. So the remaining people were supposed to become a priority. But now the criteria changed: they were put far down on the list. Now they are coming back to us. But I am saying 'you were part of the meeting!' It was individual complaints; but it was valid. They even had letters saying 'you'll be priority'. (ANC official)

This feature is not unique to City Deep Hostel Project – in many instances the initial allocation criteria is changed – be it for pragmatic reasons pertaining to the development process, or due to a shifting power balance within the beneficiary communities that leads to a re-negotiation of the

initial criteria (see Sinwell 2009 on Alexandra). This always creates winners and losers, confusion and discontent.

Lastly, one needs to mention the difficulty in communication between Joshco and the residents, linked to the fragmented nature of residents' representative groups, their apparent lack of systematic feedback to tenants and the sometimes-difficult relationship between some of these groups and Joshco's management. This lack of communication is a breeding ground for rumors, quick to spread in a closed environment such as that of a hostel. Some tenants continue to trust rumors more than their own experience, even if it directly contradicts such rumors:

I don't know who decides on allocations. I never attended any of Joshco's meetings or presentations, so I don't know. People are not treated equally. I heard from other people that someone who was sick was allocated a unit in priority. But other people who are sick are not getting the unit. Someone was also staying in a shack outside the yard. I was trying to negotiate for that guy with Joshco. But they were afraid to do so. They are not addressing the real problems of the community. One day I was fed up of waiting for my unit, I went to Joshco's office on site, I said, I have been waiting for a long time, other people are getting their units and not me, do you need to be bribed? I want my unit now! The guy gave me the keys, made me sign. What I have heard is there was a lot of corruption. (Tenant 11)

2) Participation in the construction phase

Few residents complained about the lack of participation in the construction stage of the project. The renovation had been expected for so long, so many promises had been made by the city, that possibly the priority for all residents was to see the renovation take off and be completed. Moreover, because of the specific social situation in the hostel and the challenges it meant for Joshco to start the project, there seems to have been a high degree of interaction between Joshco and the tenants initially, specifically on the choice of beneficiaries and on the allocation process, as mentioned earlier. Overall, participation in the construction phase has been limited: but it does not seem to have been a matter for direct contestation. Three areas in particular emerged as spaces for potential or actual tenants' participation:

- design of the project and, in particular, the units themselves;
- participation as labour in the construction process; and
- planning for public facilities on site.

Urban design

The accounts from Joshco's officials on tenants' participation in the design of their unit were not always consistent – possibly reflecting their different degrees of involvement or different moments of intervention they had experience with. Some recognise that Joshco did not do much in terms of a participatory design process, lacking the required resources in terms of skills, time, and funding to organise such workshops. One official, however, stated that community design workshops were organised, using the Canadian model of getting residents involved in the designing process so as to take into consideration their uses of space. The outcomes of these workshops were said to be integrated into the units' design; for example, there was a different repartition of space within the unit, with the bedroom made bigger and the living room smaller. Some requests, however, could not be taken into account due to cost issues (such as integrating cupboards in the unit).

But overall there was not much change in the design because some people cannot read. (Joshco official)

While the full participation of tenants in designing the layout of the units may have been too complex to organise given the limited funding, tenants were asked to choose the size of the unit they would like. However, there seemed to be limited awareness about the cost attached to each size, and many interviewees state that the rent level associated to each unit has never been discussed nor even presented.

We were not consulted and we did not play any role in the drawing of the plans for the units. We were just given a choice of what size of unit we wanted. Then, if you have registered for a unit with a certain number of rooms and such units run short, tenants are asked to take the available unit. (Tenant 10)

We were only told about the available options for units to choose from, which ranged from bachelors to three-bedroom units. We had never been part of decision-making on what type and size of units should be built for tenants. (Tenant 11)

CoJ started the project by surveying the needs – how many rooms each tenant needed and could afford. So it is the people who designed the units. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

We were asked to go and register to get a new unit. At registration we were asked to indicate what unit we prefer, how many rooms we want. We were not told about the price of each type of unit. (Tenant 1)

We were encouraged to register for family units. During registration we were given choices on the type of units we wanted, one, two or three bedrooms. The process went smoothly: we were called in a meeting and informed about the process. (Tenant 4)

During registration process we were asked to tell what size of unit we want, according to the number of rooms. [...] After the completion of a phase, tenants were requested to go and choose the unit that suits them according to what they had said in the registration. The cost of each unit was not communicated to us. We got this information when we already were occupying the unit. (Tenant 7)

So, although the complaints do not focus directly on the lack of involvement of tenants into the unit design process, lack of information and discussion about sizes and costs led to uninformed decisions – tenants unrealistically ‘choosing’ big units only to find out, once such units had been built, that they were not able to afford them. This explains what has been mentioned above – Joshco’s difficulty in finding local tenants willing to pay for bigger size units, prompting Joshco to resort to outside candidates. This has also led to contestation around rent levels, which will be discussed later (see section ‘Living in the new family units: management issues’). What is unclear is whether the lack of information on the rent level was because the information was not fully available (exact cost of units having been determined after completion), or, because there was something wrong during the process of registration itself. Another possibility is that this may have been a deliberate choice made by Joshco, who may have preferred not to raise this challenging issue before the project started (especially given the gap between the previous level of rent – R40 – and the expected level of rent – from R400 onwards, except for bachelor units).

Labour

Employment creation is usually one of the benefits expected by local people when there is a development project in a community. However, this was not expressed strongly by residents interviewed. City Deep renovation project has never employed the beneficiaries, the reason being that tenants in City Deep are employees of the City of Johannesburg. However, some tenants

argue that their wives and children are generally unemployed and could benefit from building contracts. This is a new concern, since their presence in the hostel is recent. An official from Joshco has indicated that it is considering employing some residents in the construction process of the third phase.

However, this is always a complex issue – if there are a limited number of contracts for a short period of time, how would builders or contractors be selected? Even local leaders who argue for contract opportunities for ‘local’ residents in City Deep recognise the challenges of the selection process – defining who are the ‘local’ residents entitled to benefit would certainly be a contested process. Community leaders’ views depend mainly on the nature and scale of their own constituencies or clienteles.

The development is running people; it is not the people who are running the development. Communication with Joshco is poor. Even contractors here – they are supposed to employ people from here. Tenants have children who are not working. But if you start doing this, people might also bring outsiders – come here, you’ll get a job. So it is not easy. Also, it should target the people of this ward: not only people of City Deep should get access to these jobs. We are not based in City Deep, we are based in this ward. This is an issue we’ll raise in the city. We have been working hard in this election. (ANC official)

Making City Deep Hostel a place to live in – Planning for public facilities on site

Originally, City Deep hostel was planned as a basic residential compound, with very limited public facilities for residents: a communal kitchen on each floor; ablution facilities at the center of the plot surrounded by hostel buildings; and sports fields. Informal activities such as spaza shops and *shebeens*¹² had developed in the 1990s when the hostel management gave up strict control over the area. An adult training centre was also present next to the hostel buildings.

In the renovated City Deep Hostel, the provision of public facilities is limited for now. A participation process with residents has taken place, whereby residents were asked to list their needs for public facilities.

Some meaningful inputs were made by communities during public meetings. You go there as Joshco, you don’t know how they live. One issue we were not aware of, for instance: on Friday evenings, buses come here to fetch people going to various provinces. We had designed traffic movement without taking this aspect into consideration. So we redesigned a traffic circle to accommodate those buses. (Joshco official)

Initially, we thought of replacing the ablution block that is standing in the middle of the courtyard, ...[with] a crèche. We thought this was such a fantastic idea. The residents said, no, we rather want a lappa where one can sit and *braai*. It is better to put the crèche further away because of the noise. And what if there are not enough children for the crèche? (Joshco official)

We did not go to Joshco. Those things were not things we can discuss with Joshco. The things we discuss with Joshco are about how big the unit should be, where are the shops, where are people going to drink the liquor? (ex-SANCO official)

A lot of issues discussed did not emerge directly through Joshco’s participatory process, but rather in residents’ own public meetings (as stated above): the perception is that Joshco does not really provide the space for such discussions. However, be it through direct interaction or indirect information, Joshco officials appeared quite aware of residents’ requests regarding

¹² *Shebeens* are informal taverns or liquor outlets.

public facilities on site. Some of them helped Joshco to refine its understanding of residents' practices and needs. However, not all requests were answered, for at least three sets of reasons.

First, there was not necessarily clarity and agreement from tenants themselves on what they needed. On the issue of the crèche, for instance, the outcome of the discussion before the arrival of women and children was very different from issues coming up since the arrival of families in the area:

We need a crèche for children, and a park. We have transportation issues, for kids attending school in the township, the train is not safe. We would like a mobile clinic. (Member of the Women's group)

I took all the ideas that women brought to the men, and made them think it was their idea. A crèche, ah, yes, of course! (Joshco official)

Secondly, Joshco argued that many demands in fact did not depend on Joshco or even on the City of Johannesburg, but on other levels of government – schools for instance are a provincial government prerogative. However, some local leaders had ideas on how to lobby different levels of government, and their own departments, in order to develop specific collective services on site. Due to their high level of understanding and knowledge of local government structures, their own interpersonal networks within local government and in particular its administration (through work, trade unions, political affiliations), some were able to make the relevant contacts and to start organising a number of collective services on site.

I have been a shop steward in SAMWU for 17 years. I am 25 years in City Council. So I know my ways. I tried to organise so many things for City Deep. I tried to get a mobile clinic here. I met with the Post Office manager so that we have mail boxes here. I talked to Metro Bus to come and collect people from City Deep. I went to Rosettenville to speak with the Health Department there. They did not have a problem coming to City Deep. [...] The taxi industry said I wanted to make City Deep my turf. I negotiated with them so that they go via City Deep on their way from Vosloorus to town. [...] SANCO called a meeting for all residents, I told them we should get a mobile clinic here. Residents were very happy to see those big things being there. Also the crèche, now they are building it. (ex-SANCO official)

However, this did not go far due to both SANCO internal in-fighting, and to the difficult relationship between Joshco and SANCO. A way of going beyond SANCO-Joshco opposition might have been found on these specific projects for the sake of residents' benefit, but, because of a lack of unity within SANCO on the line to adopt, such cooperation did not occur.

I wanted things that people will enjoy. Then they [SANCO officials] were saying, if you want these things, you must go back to where you come from, to your flat in town. [...And] when we were about to go to Joshco, there was a problem with SANCO. They said we can't go to Joshco because we are fighting with them over electricity and rent. So, while I had written to Joshco, somebody else had sent another letter saying different things, with a different agenda. You are not taken seriously when this happens. (ex-SANCO official)

Thirdly, Joshco's view on public facilities on site is ambivalent, understandably so: they recognise the need for public facilities to be available locally, to make City Deep 'a community'; however, they also are cautious to avoid reproducing an apartheid-type enclave where City Deep residents would be self-sufficient, isolated and secluded in the hostel area.

Another issue is access to schools, there is one school here, it is a high school and it does not serve the age group that is prominent here. The new families' main issue is a primary school. Same with the clinic.

People want a clinic on site; they say we've got space here. Our view is that Steeldale is not far away, and it has got a clinic. People tend to see this as a village, they must have everything there. We say you are part of the big city, you need to go there. You also need to go out. But we agreed on developing a crèche on site, near the main road. This will be a regional facility [not only for City Deep Hostel residents], also open to people working in the area. (Joshco official)

Eventually, Joshco agreed that direct local needs, such as a crèche, a public park, bus and taxi stops, as well as some shops, were to be provided for on site. What seems to be slowly developing also is an awareness that community development programmes, not as visible as public facilities but crucial for residents' empowerment, need to be provided. In our meeting with the Women's Group for instance, emphasis was not put so much on physical facilities (maybe because it was agreed they would be provided), but rather on access to training and job opportunities. City Deep women face a number of challenges in obtaining employment: physical isolation from the rest of the city; lack of education and qualifications; and lack of access to social networks and public and non-governmental support systems that perhaps could compensate for these disadvantages.

We cannot do gardening because the soil around here is poisoned: it is old mine dumps, so it is difficult to build on it and you can't use it for community projects. Shops should be open in June [2009], but illegals staying here make it difficult, development is stuck. We need a school where women can learn English. Otherwise all the jobs at the shops and the crèche will be taken by outsiders! Can't you link us with NGOs? (Member of the Women's Group)

3) Living in the new family units: management issues

Once residents moved into the new family units, other issues involving the relationship between Joshco ('the management') and residents emerged, which underscored the ongoing problems in communication that make it difficult to find solutions to issues and make decisions collaboratively. Even if this goes beyond the issue of residents' participation in the project itself, it is revealing of matters both pertaining to Joshco-resident relationships, and to the impact of disparities in residents' power to participate, to negotiate and to frame their immediate environment and living conditions. As it emerged strongly in our interviews (given that these are the current issues they are grappling with), we decided to include them in our study. Three issues were especially prominent:

- issues around rent levels;
- issues on electricity rates and service provider; and
- issues on the nature of the City Deep complex, once renovated and accommodating families.

Rent levels

Some residents complained about the rent levels, but seldom directly. The issue was raised mostly by local leaders, who reported the issue to us, and through testimonies about how local tenants found it difficult to rent the biggest (and more expensive) units.

The other complaint residents bring to us is about rent. Before we were paying R40 and the city was paying the rest. Now it is too different. People in the new units now feel they are paying too much. You can cry when you are inside; not when you are outside. (ANC official)

The city has four to five hostels. Here, it is the first hostel redevelopment. Van Beek Hostel in Doornfontein has been redeveloped by the City Housing Department. In Van Beek hostel, a one-bedroom unit is about R100. Why in City Deep it is R244 for one bedroom? When we complained about it to Strike [MMC Housing], the rent went down for some units. (ANC official)

Residents are complaining about high rentals. They used to pay R40, plus R360 subsidy for the City, which made R400 for a bed. Now a one-bedroom unit is R800 including subsidy. And the place is not a rent-to-buy. People are coming from the homelands, they have got family to support that side. No negotiation has taken place. People can't pay so much just for renting. (SANCO official)

It is difficult to assess whether the residents' complaints are related to their habit of paying very little as housing expenditure (and the shock of reorganizing their budget to face the increase, indeed important), or to a mere inability to pay. Some residents – those coming from 'the City', the 'outsiders', argue that they found value for money in the renovated City Deep Hostel, and that no equivalent could be found outside the hostel.

Myself, I was paying R2000 at my place, now I pay R150, it is much better for me. But people here they don't know, they are used to pay[ing] R40. (Tenant 5)

We all thought that Joshco would ask for a lot of money for rent. We've been paying R40 for 20 years. People think that if Joshco moves we'll be back to R40. But at the same time they need the development. Go to Selby if you want to pay R40! People outside, in Johannesburg, they pay much more. Here it is a townhouse, sort of. You can sleep with an unlocked door. There is security here. This is a beautiful place: this is Dainfern! (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

For Joshco, SANCO's arguments are merely a demagogic way of winning residents' support, even if based on unrealistic and unsustainable promises:

These guys used to pay R40 for a bed. When you move to family units, you must pay R1000 and more. SANCO argues that people must pay less than R300 irrespective of which benefit they get. Even if it is not viable. SANCO is against any reasonable procedure. (Joshco official)

Joscho argues that City Deep Hostels' tenants are generally not the poorest of the poor, all tenants being employed by the City of Johannesburg and its agencies, and benefiting from a rental subsidy from the city (see Table 2, above). Table 3 shows the income profile of the tenants who have moved into the renovated units: all of them earn more than R3.500 per month. This does not say much however, about the income levels of those who have not yet been allocated units – which might be lower, on average, if rent levels indeed constitute an obstacle for them to move into the renovated units. But even if the remaining tenants earned less than R3.500, they would be entitled to the new greenfield units to be built. Therefore, Joshco does not see the issue of affordability as a central one.

Table 3 – Income profile of households having moved into City Deep Hostel renovated units

Monthly income level (R)	Number of households
Between R3.500 and R4.000	3
Between R4.000 and R5.000	118
Between R5.000 and R7.000	60
Superior to R7.000	25
Total	206

Source: Joshco, City Deep tenants income profile, February 2010.

What was expressed more directly in the interviews was the absence of clarity and an adequate communication channel with Joshco, leading to confusion and the spread of rumors. The lack of understanding about who determines the rent and is able to change it is one example – some residents believe that the rents went down as a result of ANC and SANCO raising the issue with the Mayoral Committee, while Joshco denies it:

The rents can't go down, even if we wanted. Once it is a Council's resolution, even a MMC could not instruct Joshco to put the rents down. No politician can tell us to decrease the rent levels, as they would have been sitting in the Council voting the tariffs levels. In practice, Joscho's auditors control what is the rent we are levying. If they found out that the rent we are charging is lower than what has been agreed in Council, it would be an audit query. (Joscho official)

A second example of miscommunication about rents is given by the letters sent by Joshco to tenants, apparently mistakenly charging them for significant amounts, claiming that these amounts were overdue, and sometimes threatening tenants with eviction. All tenants complained about this – some had been to the head office to get clarification (and were told this was a mistake, they should ignore the letter); some were frightened and did not enquire; some were frustrated with Joshco's answer.

At the moment there are letters coming from Joshco, saying 'you are owing Joshco', no matter if you have been paying or not. The letters are written in English. You go to Joshco with the letter, 'how can I owe you R10.000?' The rent money is deducted directly from your salary. They say, no, forget about those letters. But these letters are threatening! 'We give you seven days and then we'll remove you'. Even yesterday I received two of these letters. This shows that Joshco is not properly communicating with us. (ANC official)

We are receiving those letters from Joshco, saying we are owing a certain amount that we don't understand. Joshco is unable to answer about these letters. (Tenant 9)

Normally the rent money is deducted from my salary every month, for R260 per month. But now there are letters sent around by Joshco claiming that I owe the company R2391. I don't understand what that amount is for. I went to enquire about it at Joshco's main office, and they told me there are mistakes about these letters as they are supposed to go to my employer [the City of Johannesburg]. So they told me to ignore the letter. (Tenant 4)

As with the issue of the disjuncture between unit sizes and resident needs (and the related costs), matters of rent payment, while at the core of the relationship between Joshco and the residents, seem to be fraught with uncertainty, miscommunication and rumors. This makes it easy for discontent to rise, and points to the limits of communication between Joshco and its tenants, at least as a collective.

Electricity

Electricity supply in the City Deep hostel is another of the issues that has created tensions between tenants and Joshco. Not only community leaders but also almost every tenant interviewed (even those not linked to any existing residents' organisation) mentioned the issue – showing a certain level of collective awareness and even mobilisation.

The City used to buy electricity in bulk for residents. Joshco changed the system without telling the municipality. They were buying electricity from Conlock: cards were sold only in City Deep, you could not find them outside. We residents reported the matter to the Mayor, he said he did not know anything about that. Conlock meters were taken out by Joshco afterwards. (Tenant 11)

Those prepaid meters' card[s], you could not buy them in the city. You would get stuck at night without electricity, you go to the office and coupons are finished. You can't get it from Spar. (Tenant 5)

Joshco had used a private contractor – not to buy electricity, as understood by some residents, but to install and manage the prepaid electricity meters. Not only was this impractical (as the prepaid cards were not easy to access), it was considered by a number of residents as being more costly than City Power's prepaid meter system. It is the residents' (or at least their leaders') specific political resources – having knowledge of local government structures and personal networks in City Power - that helped them check with City Power that the rates were indeed too high, find out that Conlock had not been accredited by City Power as a prepaid meter provider, and eventually find a channel to raise the issue, the Mayoral Committee.

There was a problem of electricity. Electricity was paid in bulk by the city. When Joshco built the units they put prepaid meters, using a private company from Durban – Conlock, not City Power. Those who moved into those new units were getting huge bills and getting electricity cuts¹³. Joshco did not have an answer to that: 'this is not my job'. We'd be sent from pillar to post, until we met Strike [Ralegoma, the MMC for Housing], in December 2008. We used our ANC PCO [Parliamentary Constituency Office] to get to Strike. We raised this with him: the electricity issue, the rental price issue, the issue of the lease agreement. We know what we must pay and what we must not pay because we are from the city. We are working there, we are from there. We went to City Power, do they know Conlock? They say no, it is Joshco. We only know that the Council is paying us in bulk. Strike promised to organize a meeting with City Power, Conlock, Joshco and ANC sub-branch. But this has never happened. What has changed is that now Joshco has removed those prepaid meters and put new ones from City Power. We have those cards. We have paid enough, we want our money back, this Conlock was just there to rob us. (ANC official)

Eventually, Joshco terminated the contract with Conlock and asked City Power to provide and manage the prepaid meters (which had been installed but were not operational at the time of the research). Some local leaders still argue that Joshco must reimburse the tenants because of the high rates charged by this company for some time; and that it at least should recognise that they made a mistake in using this company rather than City Power to provide the meters. Others argue they will oppose the prepaid meter system, even if provided by City Power.

The Conlock meters were removed but our money was not repaid. This item is still on the agenda, and we are arranging a meeting with the Mayor. We have a committee we elected, an Alliance committee at the ward level. The problem is not here alone: the whole ward is complaining. Joshco is administrating other buildings in the ward, like Turffontein, South Hill, etc. OK they removed the meters, but they never gave feedback to the community saying for instance: 'Maybe we were wrong to use Conlock'. Firstly we wrote to Joshco. Joshco did not respond. Then we went to Doornfontein [Joshco central office]. Then we wrote to the Mayor. On December 15 [2008] we sat down together. Joshco was not present. The Mayor said to the MMC to arrange a meeting with all departments, meet with SANCO and hear their problem. The meeting was supposed to happen two weeks after that first meeting. They did not get back to us until we reminded them. Then we were called to a meeting but it was only with the Housing Department, we said we are not going to discuss only with you because you can't answer about electricity and ...high [water] bills. So we postponed the meeting and until now we are still waiting. (SANCO official)

City power installed meters but has not activated them because residents opposed it. Some think that this is a hostel and we should not be paying - especially the old people from City Deep. If the meters are activated

¹³ The quote is not very clear here – if it is about the electricity prepaid meters, then tenants do not get bills nor electricity 'cuts' per se. The interviewee might be referring here to the rent/ tariff bills sent by Joshco on the one hand, and to the fact that the electricity vouchers bought from Conlock were providing a too-limited amount of electricity.

they'll toyi-toyi. Everyone is getting electricity for free right now. City Power is still busy installing the boxes. (Tenant 5)

This story confirms the difficulty of communication between Joshco and the tenants. An official can discuss issues with individual tenants but there is seldom a clear collective message about decisions or processes. According to ANC and SANCO leaders, initial direct discussions between residents and Joshco about Conlock did not lead anywhere. Residents resorted to higher levels of local government to raise the issue – as a strategy to put political pressure on Joshco – before Joshco dismissed the private company. While Joscho stresses that there was no mention of this issue to them by the Mayoral Committee, the episode certainly contributed in raising awareness that the prepaid electricity meter system was an issue in City Deep Hostel:

We removed Conlock because we became aware about issues. People did not know Conlock. It was contested. We found out that there was unhappiness about Conlock from the tenants, in our executive committee meetings. To purchase a voucher, you had to go to Joscho's office and buy it from the housing supervisor at the time; and offices are not open at all times. We had to dismiss our supervisor because he stole cash. So there are many reasons why we got rid of Conlock. We never got an instruction from politicians to remove Conlock. There is nothing wrong with it but it is better to use City Power. (Joscho official)

Finally, the level of energy and political resources deployed by residents to sort out what appears to be an everyday management problem – and the level of conflict and tension this creates in tenant-Joshco relations – demonstrates the damaging effect of the absence of a public platform where tenants can raise issues with Joshco collectively. Moreover, decisions that impact the whole community are not announced and explained publicly (such as the issue of the City Power prepaid meters, which are not currently working, for no clear reason). This allows for rumors to be spread, and threats to emerge. Local leaders also play on these rumors, as the absence of public meetings organised by residents' organisations (be it the Tenants' Committee, ANC or SANCO) blurs the nature of these organisations' actions and results:

We take all our problems to the ANC. They give us direction, go and meet so and so. But they are not giving us things in black and white. They are just gossiping: we have a meeting with so and so, the outcome was this and this. (Tenant 5)

A place for families, or still a municipal workers' hostel?

One unresolved issue is around the rights of the families that Joshco encouraged to come and live in City Deep Hostel. Local leaders, as well as some tenants, have expressed concern about cases in which the main tenant – the city worker – passes away, gets retrenched or retires. According to the rule, the family needs to move out of the unit, since it remains reserved for municipal workers only. This seems to contradict the local identity that Joshco is trying to build for City Deep Hostel (even considering changing its name, as it is no longer a 'hostel') – as a space where women and children have a sense of place, feel at home, feel entitled to participate and speak out, take care of the place, and stop being 'visitors'.

They're building an old age home; then units will become empty, as they will go on pension, so newcomers will come. How do you deal with the case of someone going on pension? What about his children? If they are still learning, it means they must leave the school. You also have the case where city employees pass away. Their families are here. Joshco was trying to remove those families. We said you can't do that. The issue is to be raised with the Mayor. They don't consider the wife as a tenant, although they've created

family units. If the main member dies, you need to have a plan. There was one woman to be evicted. I met with Joshco to plead for her. I had to go to the police, and make an affidavit stating that if the lady does not pay, I'll pay for her. (ANC official)

A concern in City Deep is about evictions. People are receiving letters of eviction, saying you must move out. They can't evict anyone, they must go and apply for [an] eviction, to get a court order. SANCO is there to fight for the people. If the father was working and passed away, and if the children can't afford to pay the rent, they are told they must vacate the place. And yet it is a family unit. Joshco is still treating this place as a hostel providing beds. They forgot they said they are building family units. (SANCO official)

The case-by-case approach – allowing for Joshco to take into account specific circumstances affecting a tenant's family – can be seen as a case-sensitive and flexible way of handling the contradiction. One could argue that this exemplifies some of the key principles of participation, where the individual is to be empowered and decisions are supposed to be made close to the ground so as to be adapted to unique contexts and circumstances. However, this fundamental ambiguity in the status, and therefore, identity of the tenants' families in City Deep Hostel, requires more than a case-by-case approach, which, once again, could lead to accusations of bias and corruption from some tenants. Joshco's sensitivity to individual cases should remain, but lack of transparency about the criteria for such decisions can lead to rumors and eventually defeat the intended image of a humane and caring management.

There is a problem of evictions. There are several women who lost their husband[s], and the families are facing eviction from Joshco. But it seems as if Joshco is biased towards some families, families are not treated equally. Some get eviction notices and some do not. (Tenant 9)

If a municipal worker dies, we give the family first preference to take over the lease contract from the deceased. However, we are not able to keep families who are not able to pay the rent. (Joshco official)

Ultimately, the contradiction in which Joshco is trapped (building families' sense of local belonging but not being able to provide municipal workers' wives and children with tenure security in the absence of a rental subsidy) will need to be addressed. However, the issue is not an easy one. South Africa's current housing policy does not provide rent subsidy for low-income tenants. The City of Johannesburg is contributing towards the rent of its workers, partly bearing the weight of the rent increases in the renovated City Deep Hostel (see Table 2 above) by paying R639 per municipal worker directly into Joshco's account. If the municipal worker passes away, the subsidy is not available for the workers' spouse and family. Without a job, in most cases, and with no rental subsidy, these families are unlikely to be able to afford the rents charged. Although there is a strong case for a housing policy that would consider income-related rental subsidy (especially for inner-city accommodation where the RDP model is not appropriate), this does not solve the immediate issue of City Deep residents, nor support Joshco's ability to adequately respond to these difficult cases that will be increasing in number as time goes by. The oppositional relationship between Joshco and SANCO has not, so far, allowed them to build a workable solution to what appears to be a real issue for tenants' families. This implies a need to go beyond Joshco's policy and practice to find a solution, for instance by challenging the loopholes in the housing policy itself at metropolitan, provincial or national levels.

III – Participation, representation and community fragmentation

Communities are seldom homogeneous, but sometimes a community of needs, or of goals, helps to overcome divisions and allows the community to present a united front in facing developers or local authorities. When development occurs and the needs become more complex, or more diversified, old or new divisions surface and sometimes constitute an important obstacle to community participation.

1) City Deep, an empowered or disempowered community?

City Deep Hostel is quite a ‘strong’ community, with empowered leaders who have many political resources: experience in political leadership through party or union work; understanding of the local government structure; networks both in local government agencies and departments and in political parties. This degree of political awareness and access is not common in low-income communities: it has led to some successes in terms of structural changes (dismissal of the electricity service provider) and at an individual level (not evicting a woman whose husband passed away).

However this form of access to decision-makers is reactive, not proactive: the character of the relationship of some empowered leaders to Joshco prevents constructive engagement and cooperation. The City Deep Hostel community is weakened by its leadership divisions – divisions which center on their respective attitudes towards Joshco.

Joscho meets with the Tenants’ Committee. ANC and SANCO meet with senior managers from the city and Joshco. Now we have two links that are disconnected. (ANC official)

These two opposite strategies (cooperate with Joshco, as the Tenants’ Committee; oppose Joshco, as SANCO and sometimes the ANC) could possibly work as a strategy (good cop / bad cop) if they were coordinated. They are not, and possible cross-overs are rendered impossible by the influence of collective suspicion and personal rivalries. For instance, when a SANCO member realised some cooperation with Joshco could yield positive results, he was called to order by SANCO:

SANCO, we are two groups, we are always fighting. You can’t stay in those meetings. Even if the meeting has an agenda, they can go far, far from the agenda. [...] Residents are asking: when will the mobile clinic be here? When is the scrapping of electricity arrears going to happen? Now they can’t give [any] answer, because we are divided. When I started, it was not like this. It [SANCO] divided at the time I was raising so many things. They said I was trying to be something in SANCO, I wanted to take their position. I was coming with another view, not stopping Joshco from what they were doing, coming to add on what they were doing. I have been blocked from ‘adding’, not because of Joshco. Because of SANCO. (ex-SANCO official)

When members of the Tenants’ Committee, realising that they lack representativity and feeling the need to hear more about the residents’ issues, tried to join SANCO, they were suspected of being spies, the enemy from within.

One guy from the Tenants’ Committee went to SANCO meetings but we were fighting so much that he left. [...] Some of the members of the Tenants’ Committee have tried to join SANCO. They went to the Rosettenville branch to register. At City Deep they refused to take them as members, they called them *impipis*, ‘you’ve been eating with Joshco’. It is a missing link, because the Tenants’ Committee have got all the information since they sit with Joshco regularly. (ex-SANCO official)

Avenues for cooperation between the various residents' groups (all playing a meaningful, but incomplete role in the community) seem to be blocked. The absence of regular public meetings, either organised by Joshco or by any of these residents' organisations, fosters a climate of suspicion and rumors that do nothing to solve the issue. This is the weaker side of City Deep Hostel's community. While some leaders are empowered, skilled and networked, a lot of residents can only rely on rumors and hearsay.

In a space like the hostel's, still resembling an enclave where gossip is rife and social control over individuals is heavy, and where the history of violence is still present in residents' memories and still considered a possible avenue for conflict resolution, this configuration is disempowering. While fear of violence might have given residents some bargaining power with Joshco (negotiations on allocations had to be held and agreement with residents had to be found before the project could go ahead), it is a paradoxical form of empowerment as it is equally oppressive (of dissent, of minority groups like women, of search for compromise). Getting away from this legacy of violence is a challenge.

2) Participation as a competition for power

City Deep Hostel is contested turf, and Joshco is seen as overtaking the area. The concepts of 'residents' power' (the top of Arnstein's ladder) might be of limited utility when looking at the local power configuration, where SANCO, for instance, argue that the hostel management should be in the hands of SANCO and not Joshco. The contest for power is clearly seen in the expression of what each stakeholder should do – but doesn't – in views paradoxically shared by the Tenants' Committee and the ANC:

Initially there was no active ANC nor SANCO branch. Because most of the people here support the ruling party. So we decided to ask some guys to be active on SANCO issues. We ask them to help us on those issues. People please be active in ANC so that when we need something you can help. If there is a political issue we'll give it to you to handle. We'll refer it to you. We the committee we will only specialise on the problem within the premises of this hostel, for instance the pruning of trees, leaking pipes, dissatisfaction of residents. Let me give an example: the market here has got two gates, entrance and exit. That exit gate only works for cars. People of this hostel cannot use that gate, although that exit gate for cars is just next to us. If there is a real SANCO, they can deal with that. Because of the confusion, no one can help us solve this issue. It is a matter of protocol. They have to tell us if there is a problem inside. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

It is not saying we [ANC] must take all the challenges of the community. The Tenants' Committee must come to us for political issues. (ANC official)

It seems agreed that the Tenants' Committee should deal with 'tenants' issues' (everyday-life type of complaints), and that the ANC should deal with political issues – even if the distinction regarding the point at which tenants' issues become political is blurred. The dichotomy between inside / outside the hostel is not working either, as there are, of course, political issues 'inside' – and the residents are the ANC constituency and voting base. Complementary strategies (cooperation and dialogue with Joshco, versus a more confrontational approach or the use of political channels to put pressure on Joshco) could be more efficient and rewarding for residents. Unfortunately, personal rivalries and a history of hostility and suspicion do not seem to make this cooperation possible.

3) The challenges of establishing a representative tenants' committee

Paradoxically again, there is an agreement across the whole set of stakeholders that a representative tenants' committee is missing, and that a way forward is to have a unified body to represent tenants and interact with Joshco:

In February 2009 we had a meeting with local government representatives. They advised that we have a committee representing also women, youth, people with disability... in a 'committee of ten'. We distributed forms to tenants so they can nominate that committee, putting forms in the box. We also want to have block representatives. (Joshco official)

The right way to encourage more participation would be to elect a block committee with one or two representatives for each block. (ANC official)

The management of Joshco came up with a good idea. We support it. If you are a leader you are not happy if your community is falling apart. They suggested we have a committee whereby every block has its representative. We called a meeting to discuss about this idea. But attendance was poor, the message wasn't conveyed. It got stuck there. Now we are waiting for the management to tell us how far they are with this idea. (Member of the Tenants' Committee)

Somehow the process of electing new representatives to the Tenants' Committee got stuck. It is not very clear how the process was initiated. It seems Joshco started putting posters on the walls of each unit – and understood the need to rather have elections in a public meeting, where candidates can be seen by all.

In February 2009 we had a meeting with local government representatives. They advised that we have a committee representing also women, youth, people with disability... in a 'committee of ten'. We distributed forms to tenants so they can nominate that committee, putting forms in the box. We also want to have block representatives. So we would have a block committee, the 'committee of 10' and the Tenants' Committee to form the tenants' structure. But two tenants came to see me and told me 'we don't know each other, the forms are not working. The best would be to call everyone on a block and see the persons and point who you want to nominate. So we need to call for public meetings. We should not adopt a formal process. If I force them we will end up having conflict. (Joshco official)

Joshco put papers on the units' walls, saying 'elect one representative for this block'. This was around November 2008. But maybe I don't know this name or I don't know the right name for this person. That needs broader communication before we can elect people. They just put papers and say 'elect'. (ANC official)

The issue, in reality, is more complex – and several forms of composition of the future new committee are possible, each of which would probably favour one of the stakeholders, and disadvantage the others.

- The first model is the one Joshco was trying to have elected, before turning back: a committee made up of block representatives. This majority rule, with a strong geographic component (one or two representatives per block), might lead to the dissolution of the Tenants' Committee (who have a weak or concentrated constituency), and might advantage SANCO or the ANC (with a broader base). Joshco fears to dissolve the support base they have found in their cooperation with the Tenants' Committee.

We need a neutral committee, not a political one. When we raised this issue of a blocks committee, Joshco was happy about this. But when SANCO called for a meeting, mid 2008, and told people to elect a block committee, Joshco told them, no, we have already got the Top 5 – the Tenants' Committee. These people are working for Joshco, not for the residents. Because of that, there is still no block committee. If you get

already the Top 5 we won't elect block representatives. Now it is stuck as long as you keep these Top 5. (ANC official)

- A second model is the 'committee of ten' as drawn from current ideas on models of good governance, with representation of all groups (women, SANCO, Tenants' Committee, etc.). But the strong opposition between SANCO and Joshco might mean that their direct representation on the committee could block the situation.

The way I see it, the 'committee of 10' could include the Tenants' Committee, a youth representative, a women's representative, a representative of people with disabilities, and... SANCO representative? I am not sure yet. (Joshco official)

- The third is a combination of the two, with the 'committee of ten' and the block representatives' committee, as presented by Joshco:

The block committee should be a separate committee. The 'committee of 10' will report to the block committee who will report to the tenants. The Tenants' Committee is happy with this. The ANC retaliated that if you involved the four guys we won't have any change. There must be a nomination process and we will see if these four will be nominated. (Joshco official)

In a way, these solutions are similar to the 'sunset clause' in the immediate aftermath of 1994 – where an intermediate system, in order to accommodate the old power as well as a new power, was set up that was not fully democratic (one man-one vote) but entailed a form of representation of each group no matter the demographic weight of their constituency, in order to smooth the transition and not exclude the minority groups.

At the time of our research, the process seemed to be on hold. Joshco was confronted with two dangers: the danger of having a working relationship (the existing one, with the Tenants' Committee) dismantled and the 'committee of ten' paralyzed by conflict and opposition; and, the danger of crystallizing violence in a process that has important power stakes for each residents' organisation. The incident of the women's activist killed by her husband has also shown the dangers of attempting too-radical social engineering. However, the lack of a representative tenants' committee that can work with Joshco is understood as unsustainable, as it reproduces a culture of rumor, miscommunication and possibly violence.

CONCLUSIONS

Things are going, even if we are not there. (Tenant 5)

Participation has worked. I see them starting [to] accept..., appreciate.... Now they are starting [to] dream... about their unit. (Joshco official)

We were happy to get the development, the conversion of the hostel. Hostels are known as places of violence. This place will be better with the families. (ANC official)

Joshco, they are achieving something really nice, to my personal view. Before it wasn't like that. They are doing a good job security-wise – people don't just enter the place. Lights are there. Benches are painted all right. The playgrounds are being kept now. They are cutting the grass inside. This place is very nice. (Tenant 5)

Block E tenants now are talking to the Tenants' Committee. 'Since you have started the negotiation with Joshco our situation has improved. And we see progress. (Joshco official)

Overall, even the opponents to Joshco are not unhappy with the renovation/ conversion per se. The final product appears to be of relatively good quality and affordable; the environment has improved; some public facilities are being provided – the lives of the residents are changing for the better. The appointment of a Joshco staff member to live on the City Deep Hostel premises and therefore to be permanently available to tenants' queries has been an important step in providing tenants with accountability.

The level of participation was overall quite high, through a combination of 'invented' and 'invited' spaces of participation (Cornwall 2004) – but it seems to have been decreasing as the project has moved from the redevelopment phase to the management phase. In contrast to the beginning of the project, when negotiations between Joshco and the residents were a prerequisite for the project to start, there is currently no functioning public platform in which residents can collectively raise their issues with Joshco, because personal and political divisions within the tenants' leadership make it difficult to create and sustain such an inclusive platform or channel of communication.

Participation in the 'invited spaces' created by Joshco had merely a managerial objective: get the project started, get it going, limit violent conflict, find ways of negotiating, increase a sense of belonging so as to create 'good' tenants and a sense of community in the new City Deep development. Such participation has had developmental effects, and sometimes led residents to use this 'invited space' of participation to locate their own voices. The timid rise of women's expression of their right to stay, and of their specific needs, is one example. Part of the participation process, initially motivated by the fear of violence (as an expected specificity of the hostel environment) allowed for some crucial issues affecting residents to be discussed (for instance allocation criteria and public facilities on site).

But a number of other issues are being ignored, or treated only at an individual level, leading to local frictions. Certain matters – of the rent levels, of the status of workers' families as far as security of tenure is concerned, of electricity – have not been addressed in public platforms. Were they avoided out of fear of conflict, especially in a context of divided tenants' leadership? One possible explanation is the difficulty of finding answers at Joshco-level, when solutions to issues (of the affordability of rent levels for instance) lead to questioning the housing policy framework more broadly at municipal but also national level – in particular, on the kind of support available to low-income tenants in metropolitan inner cities. The absence of a supportive institutional and policy framework in this respect is not conducive for intermediate stakeholders such as Joshco to engage residents in such debates – although such a public platform could be used to bring forward, within the ANC in particular, the need for a more robust housing policy directed towards inner-city tenants.

On the other hand, the main existing way residents are able to raise collective issues (electricity, dependants remaining in City Deep if the formal tenant passes away, requests for training and education...) is through their existing fragmented civics and organisations, be it those which cooperate with Joshco or those which confront it. Community leaders are generally highly politically skilled and resourced – they show an awareness about what can be negotiated or

contested; they are able to take initiative; they are able to put political pressure on Joshco from the top if it is not responding to pressure from the bottom – but some also resort to threats of violence, which can be destructive. However, these organisations are only accountable to their own constituencies; and at the time of the research, none of them was engaging its constituency in public meetings: this lack of transparency and general communication is also conducive to rumors, hearsay and tensions.

Generally, many tenants have stressed that the infighting and divisions within the civic structures has served to undermine their credibility and effectiveness. This reflects the fact that participation is obviously a highly political process. Recognition as the legitimate residents' representative body becomes key to accessing power and to claiming the 'right' to manage City Deep. It is about building constituencies (at the local and at the ward level; at the community and at the political level); it might sometimes also be about personal interests. What is the place of the common resident's interests in this? It is difficult to say, as it is always difficult to separate, within democratic principles themselves, public benefit from political support and the quest for power. This case study emphasises that it is important not to romanticise participation, but rather to understand its political stakes.

The high level of fragmentation of the residents' community leads to the difficulty in organising any public meeting. Generally, this absence of a functional public platform is conducive for rumors to spread, which can be dangerous, especially in a hostel context where they are quick to get out of proportion and where violence still appears to some as a legitimate way of solving conflict. This absence of a functional channel of public participation also means that residents' often-legitimate issues (minor or major) cannot be solved adequately or in an efficient manner. For instance, some residents' organisations thought they had to resort to the Mayoral committee to solve the prepaid meters issue; however, that might have been possible to solve locally, with less investment of time and political effort. Also, the problem of the dependants' security of tenure cannot be framed in terms that are conducive to a solution – it is seen as a 'tenants versus Joshco' debate whilst it should be framed in terms of the need for broader housing policy changes.

Some consideration should be given to manners in which this could be improved. While social engineering is always complex and sometimes even dangerous (as shown by the example of the late woman activist), it seems important that the process of constructing a representative and legitimate body for tenants is continued. A mixture between block representatives (democratically-elected) and an *ad-hoc* committee representing various stakeholders (the 'committee of ten') may hold some potential. Alternatively, if the establishment of a single committee proves unmanageable, a commitment to the continuation of multiple engagements with the diverse existing organisations seems to represent the most acceptable solution for the time being.

REFERENCE LIST

Interviews and Public Meetings

Interviews with individual tenants:

Interviews with tenants took place either in City Deep or in Planact's offices. 12 tenants were interviewed individually in total (10 males, 2 females), from the 28 May 2009 to the 18 June 2009. Other female tenants were interviewed in a group, within the Women's group (7 March 2009). Sometimes civic / party officials would talk as tenants and not as officials: in these cases we've mentioned their input as tenants'.

Interviews with officials and community leaders:

Baloi, Kholwane, Joshco: City Deep Hostel Secretary, Interview 7 April 2009 (City Deep Hostel)

Mlakalaka, ANC representative in City Deep Hostel voting district, Interview 28 May 2009 (City Deep Hostel)

Ndumndum, Skhumbuzo, Joshco: Executive Manager Development, Interview 27 February 2009 (Joshco's head office)

Seama, Sidney, Joshco: City Deep Hostel Housing Manager, Interview 3 April 2009 (City Deep Hostel)

Silinda, James, SANCO chair for ward 57, Interview 4 June 2009 (City Deep Adult Training Facility)

Tenants Committee (Maxime Ramahuta, Chair), Interview 7 April 2009 (City Deep Hostel)

Turk, Bev, Ward 57 Councillor, interview 20 March 2009 (regional offices)

Women's Group, Interview 7 March 2009 (City Deep Hostel)

Group and Public Meetings:

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