

World Cup 2010

Trading on uneven playing field

Informal traders in Durban would like to benefit from the World Cup. But as **Quraisha Daya** relates, although the municipality's intentions are good, traders have been relegated and time is rapidly running out.

Margaret Ntuli (not her real name) could not make enough money today, to afford transport home. As a street trader at Durban's beachfront selling handmade crafts and curios, business is often so dismal, that many of her nights are spent sleeping on the hard asphalt in fear of patrolling policemen who have chased her away many times before. While the country eagerly awaits the 2010 World Cup and an escalation in revenue due to the anticipated boom in tourism, Margaret Ntuli is not as enthusiastic about the event. "I don't think I will benefit from the world cup," she says, "everyone just bypasses us - it is only the big businesses that will make money."

The formal sector, encompassing the tourism, finance and recreation industries will be the primary benefactors of this international event. As such, the extent to which opportunities will reach the informal sector is questionable. From Warwick to Durban station, from the beachfront to the Workshop, Margaret's thinking is echoed by many street traders in the eThekweni municipality.

Euphoria gripped South Africa

when it won the bid to host 2010, but since then many have realised that "the World Cup is not for everyone." According to Emanuel Dlamini, head of the Traders' Association at Warwick Junction, street traders are taken for granted and looked down upon, and no one mentions implementing the planned deals between formal and informal businesses, regarding use of the Fifa logo. "Government is confused," he says as he explains that the Informal Development Policy has changed in order to facilitate the growth of the informal sector.

Yet, with the advent of international events such as the Fifa World Cup draw held at the ICC last year, traders around the Workshop area were shut down. "We did not know where to go," said one trader, "and we have heard that in the two months of the World Cup, there will be no market. I have five children to support and I might have to look for a job." This uncertainty is slowly creeping into the minds of many who once thought that the event would herald profit and opportunity.

Since December last year, there has been a general decline in

business, even though traders in Warwick Junction experience a constant flow of traffic. Rentals have soared, and security and parking concerns, along with the influx of cheap Chinese goods and the rise in inflation, has hit traders hard.

Many traders stated that tourists are told not to visit these 'dangerous' areas, so they have not benefited from international events in the past, and do not see the 2010 World Cup bringing in additional revenue.

Also, municipal clean-up campaigns are taking place throughout the country in order to present to the world a picture-perfect South Africa. Traders surrounding the Durban Station have been harassed and fined by Durban Metro police for selling their merchandise on wooden tables, which 'degrade the aesthetics of the city', even though they have legal permits to trade there. Many believe that they will be 'swept under the rug' come 2010.

These allegations are nothing new to Philip Sithole of the eThekweni Business Support Unit (BSU), which is responsible for registering traders and allocating them sites. "Most of the time, these allegations are not true," he said, "Street traders want to create media attention and sway the public. People are quick to blame government, but we do support informal traders." However, Dlamini explained that the altercations between traders and police revolve around the gap between the Constitution and municipal by-laws. They diverge on the question of the informal sector and according to him, Metro police are still using old by-laws.



TRAINING PROGRAMMES

In anticipation of the 2010 World Cup and other international events, Sithole explained that various training programmes will be implemented in July 2008, by the BSU, in order to maximise the entrepreneurial opportunities of street traders.

The first of these programmes involves business language, where traders will learn the basics of foreign languages in order to communicate with tourists as well as to calculate exchange rates.

Secondly, they will receive training in the quality management of products, especially handmade goods, to meet the expectations of an international market.

Thirdly, food sellers will learn how to adhere to international standards of excellence in terms of health regulations and the preparation and presentation of food.

COMMUNICATION NEEDED

One of the main projects, which will directly impact on the informal sector, is the establishment of flea

markets specifically designed for 2010, particularly along the beachfront. The markets will also be an alternative venue for traders if sites such as the Workshop market are shut down during the World Cup, as well as for small businesses from rural areas who wish to trade. Sithole stated that those currently trading in these areas will not be relocated, but if the area is required for a 2010 event, alternative-trading sites will be provided.

The challenge, explains Sithole, is to get traders to leave their stalls and attend training programmes. At the same time, the BSU has yet to identify the flea market sites as well as the venues for the training programmes. He believes there is still enough time but in reality time is running out.

As Dlamini points out, traders must be told immediately where and when they need to move and which merchandise they may sell. "Instead of telling people beforehand, they will tell them about the plans next year," he says, "this will cause a lot of rioting - I can see that happening. So instead

of crime decreasing, it will increase because of the lack of communication." Communication between informal traders, government and police is problematic. The lack of understanding could escalate into widespread confusion and great losses for all.

With next year's 2009 elections, the focus will shift away from the informal sector and parties will make empty promises to sway votes.

But what many street traders are not aware of is that even although parties or councillors may plan for their success, Fifa by-laws will reign supreme during the event. Merchandise, logos and trading zones will be demarcated by Fifa, which will change the country's by-laws for all sectors. The by-laws, according to Dlamini, are difficult to understand and do not appear to help anybody.

One such by-law is that traders are prohibited from trading within a 7km radius of the stadiums.

Many traders are happy to change their merchandise or relocate closer to stadiums come 2010. But is this realistic?

Dlamini argues that such possibilities should have been discussed at least six months ago, but a meeting with the Fifa committee has not been scheduled yet. "Tell people the truth," he says, "the World Cup is not going to happen correctly if something is not done." Quite obviously, the urgency with which concerns need to be met cannot be underestimated. LB

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