

Bloekombos

When Bloekombos was founded in the north of Cape Town during Apartheid in 1986, it used to consist only of shacks with no toilets, piped water or electricity. Now there is government housing as well as shacks with around 88% of the 17 000 mainly black inhabitants living in government housing and only 9% in informal shacks.

One of the main problems in Bloekombos is the high unemployment rate; about 67% of the economically active population is out of work. The majority of people living in Bloekombos have an average monthly household income of R1600.00 per month. Most of the people in the community came to Cape Town from the Eastern Cape and many are illiterate. However, the four schools in Bloekombos are full and have programs that encourage learners to stay in school and these efforts appear to be producing results. While some students drop out of school due to teenage pregnancy, there is a relatively low drop out rate in the area.

Bloekombos Clinic

The municipal clinic in Bloekombos was built in 1997. Eight nursing sisters are handling about 340 patients per day, (more than half of which are TB patients). Nurses and volunteers work hard in Bloekombos and are sometimes forced to turn away clients that arrive late in the day due to a lack of time, space and staff. The most common illnesses in the area are TB, HIV and AIDS and malnourished children and babies. Many babies that are treated at the clinic are critically ill from malnourishment. The rate of teenage pregnancies in the area is high and many mothers are HIV positive. About 400 people are tested for HIV each month, and approximately half of them are HIV positive.

Men tend to rarely come to the clinic, but HOPE Cape Town Association is working hand in hand with traditional healers (sangomas) to motivate men to come in for treatment.