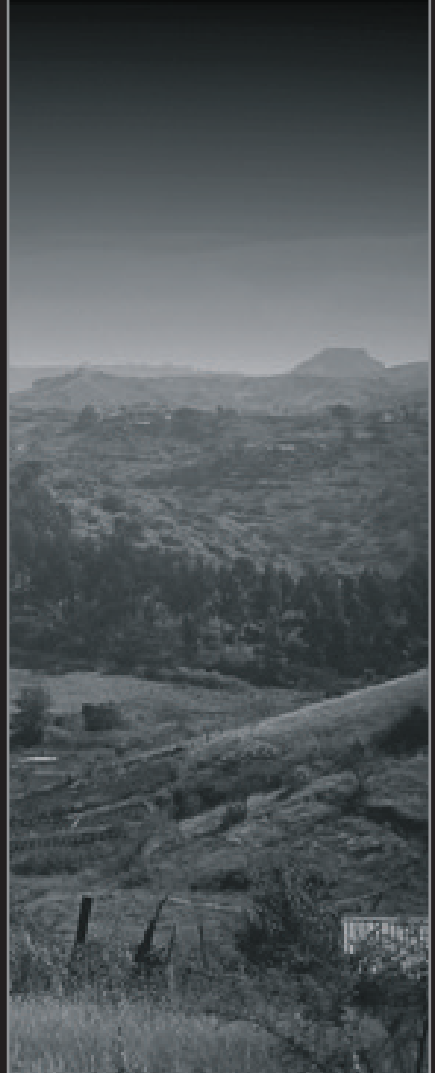


# Post Conflict Peace Building in Richmond



# POST CONFLICT PEACE BUILDING IN RICHMOND



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## ABOUT IPT

Founded in 1990, IPT is a facilitation, training and research non-governmental organisation that seeks to help organisations, both public and private, that are undergoing transformations owing to political, social and economic changes.

IPT is staffed by a diverse group of associates with a wide range of experience who, over the last 14 years, have developed a methodology that ensures effective consultative and collaborative problem solving processes within target organisations.

A primary focus of IPT's work is building and strengthening interpersonal and inter-group relationships. This is achieved through facilitation and training.

IPT has worked for the past 14 years with rural communities. Key focus areas are safety and security, the education sector and the criminal justice sector where internal facilitation and workshops assist with the transformation process.

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## Foreword

Since 1990 when IPT began its peace building initiatives in KwaZulu-Natal, Richmond has been the focus of much of the conflict.

There are many causal factors to violence and, while politics is the most obvious, it is our belief that poverty and lack of opportunity make everything worse. Recently HIV/Aids has played a hugely demoralising role in rural communities with social pressure on families and communities to care for the orphans and dying, pay for burial and also sustain themselves where one or more contributors to the household income have either died, or are unable to work.

We embarked on this project, which was funded by The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, with enthusiasm and reasonably sure that, due to the broader political settlement, the time was right to build the framework for sustainable peace. There have also been positive spin offs from South Africa's increasingly improved profile, and with the positive impact of tourism on the provincial economy. We also sensed that people are tired of violence and badly wanted some return to normality and a secure environment, able to move freely around the area, visit the shops, and travel to and from the town without the threat of violence and even death.

It has been our experience that the best learning is extracted from difficulties and failure and in this preface I'd like to highlight some of the questions that we are still grappling with as the first phase of the project draws to a close.

- Even with criteria, the selection of community mediators is challenging for how can one ensure they stay in the community?
- How does one manage the minefield of political affiliation in a post conflict zone?
- How does one explain to unemployed rural mediators that a funded project pays no retainers or subsistence?
- If subsistence is paid, how does one control it from a distance?
- Is it fair to expect people to operate without an office base and without access to computers, faxes and phones?

- Mediators and conflict resolvers first test their skills in interpersonal conflict – so how does one measure the success of an initiative of this nature?

One of our principle challenges was unwittingly caused by the generosity of another funding agency. On a visit to Richmond with us they found the levels of poverty and disadvantage in schools so moving that they allocated a significant amount of money for school improvement. This generous donation created high expectation and highlighted several problems associated with the allocation of development resources.

By publishing this guideline we hope to share our learning and help others who are involved in similar work to learn from our experience.

Glenda Caine  
Director: IPT

# 1. BACKGROUND

## a. Demographics

The village of Richmond is located in the midlands area of KwaZulu-Natal, about 38 kilometres south west of Pietermaritzburg and 100 kilometres west of Durban. Since the local government demarcation process, which considerably changed the boundaries of municipalities for the local government elections held on December 5, 2000, the Richmond municipality measures about 1 050 km<sup>2</sup>, according to the municipality's Integrated Development Plan. The population is estimated at about 74 000.

The expansion of the area served by the Richmond municipality as a result of the demarcation process meant an increase in size from about 42 km<sup>2</sup>. In addition, 90% of the new Richmond area had no basic infrastructure, housing, water, sewerage, roads, electricity, telephones or recreation facilities at the time of the appointment of the new council in December 2000. As a result there were many development-related needs and a number that were particularly urgent.

About 53% of the population of Richmond is female and nearly 47% is between 0 and 19 years of age. Another 20% falls within the 20 to 29 year age category. Unemployment is estimated to be about 38% and is highest in Ward 3 (51%) and Ward 4 (42%). An estimated 77% of households in Richmond earn less than

Wards that make up  
Richmond municipality

Ward 1  
Richmond Village

Ward 2  
KwaMagoda  
Sigcakini  
Townlands  
Harare  
Vietnam

Ward 3  
Lusaka  
Sidakeni  
Baynesfield  
Thorneville  
Byrne

Ward 4  
Hopewell  
Argosy Farm (Hopewell)

Ward 5  
St Bernard's Mission  
eNkumane Mission  
iNhlazuka  
Strehla/Amandus Hill  
Durslade

Ward 6  
Greater iNdaleni (including  
Simozomeni and KwaMagoda)  
Angola  
Congo  
Cuba  
D1  
Ruanda  
Mission  
Emaswazini  
Namibia  
No. 4  
Simozomeni

Ward 7  
Masangazana  
Phatheni  
Mgxobelene  
Emoyeni  
KwaGengeshe  
Qwentaba  
Emoyeni 2  
Makakane  
Paardekraal

R1 500 per month, according to the Integrated Development Plan for Richmond.

The municipality is divided into seven wards. Three are urban or peri-urban, while the others include extensive areas of farmland combined with settlements of varying sizes.

b. A history of political violence

Richmond's Integrated Development Plan states that historically political violence has scarred and divided communities. While the municipality has taken measures in recent years to address the perceptions of violence and security levels in Richmond, the history of the area makes this task difficult.

Allister Sparks wrote in the Natal Witness on November 5, 2003: "The first wave of violence was part of the broader civil war that raged throughout KwaZulu-Natal from 1991 until 1994, between supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the African National Congress (ANC). Richmond was simply the worst spot in that widespread violence. It died down with the peace agreement between the IFP and the ANC that preceded the democratic election – only to flare up again, more unexpectedly and in many ways more viciously, in May 1997 between supporters of the ANC and the newly-formed United Democratic Movement (UDM)."

Sifiso Nkabinde, who was chairman of the ANC in the early 1990s, was one of the leading figures during the violence and until his assassination in Richmond in January 1999. In one of the early attacks involving the ANC and IFP, Nkabinde's aunt was seriously wounded during an attack on their iNdaleni home towards the end of 1990, according to KwaZulu-Natal Briefing (Number 9, November 1997). While Nkabinde's uncle shot one attacker dead and injured another, a rifle left behind at the scene became the pretext for an escalation in fighting between the two political parties. The article in Briefing states: "As chairman of the ANC in Richmond it was Nkabinde who received a letter from the [largely IFP-supporting] Nkoben community asking for the rifle's return since it was a "community weapon" and



the attack on iNdaleni had not been sanctioned by “the community”. The failure of the comrades to return the weapon led to an attack on Magoda [an ANC stronghold] on January 23, 1991, marking the start of an IFP offensive against the ANC.”

The violence continued and in March 1991 what became known as the Battle of the Forest occurred. According to *The Natal Story: 16 Years of Conflict* by Anthea Jeffery, about 55 people were killed in the fight. After an initial attack on the home of a traditional leader, ANC youth, who claimed that they had earlier been attacked by IFP supporters, set up an ambush. When the police intervened in the ensuing fight the ANC supporters fled to nearby timber plantations where they had hidden weapons. A battle lasting only six minutes broke out when the IFP supporters followed the ANC youth but it resulted in the deaths of 23 IFP members. About 30 alleged IFP collaborators were killed over the next few days.

By the end of 1993 the violence in Richmond was largely a result of power struggles within the ANC, according to *KwaZulu-Natal Briefing* (November 1997). In one incident the chairman of the Midlands ANC Youth League Mzwandile Mbongwa and three others were killed during a ‘people’s court’ after Mbongwa had a fall out with Nkabinde and was accused of being a police informer.

Other attacks occurred over the years and most remained unsolved by the police. In March 1996 three policemen from Pietermaritzburg were killed when their vehicle came under fire as they drove near to Nkabinde’s house looking for escaped prisoners.

In 1997 the ANC expelled Nkabinde, who had since 1994 been an ANC member of the KwaZulu-Natal legislature, from its ranks after he was exposed as allegedly having been a police informer. Nine ANC aligned councillors subsequently resigned from their positions on the Richmond council. This left only the mayor Andrew Ragavaloo and Rodney van der Byl as the ANC representatives, as well as two independent councillors. Van der Byl was subsequently shot dead outside his Richmond house in May 1997.

Nkabinde, meanwhile, joined Bantu Holomisa's United Democratic Movement (UDM) and the violence continued between his new party, which consisted largely of ex-ANC members, and the ANC.

Attacks continued in 1997 and 1998. The deputy mayor of Richmond at the time Percy Thompson and seven other people were killed in a Richmond tavern in July 1998, and the local IFP leader from the area Paulos Vezi was injured in an ambush in the same month.

After being acquitted in April 1998 of murder charges laid against him, Nkabinde was subsequently murdered in Richmond in January 1999.

During the years of violence the Richmond area was screened across televisions nationally and internationally and about 600 soldiers and police officers were deployed to Richmond in an effort to stabilise the area and find the perpetrators of the attacks.

Several police teams were instructed to investigate the violence in Richmond. A special team commanded by Bushie Engelbrecht was appointed to investigate in Richmond after the murder of the policemen in March 1996. Engelbrecht states in his book *A Christmas to Remember* (1999): "Since 1993, the modus operandi of the killings has changed slightly, but what has emerged in our investigations is that Nkabinde would allegedly give the instruction to kill to Bob Ndlovu, who was very close to him. It is alleged that Ndlovu and Nkabinde were the only ones who knew where the arsenal of weapons was kept. To date it has not been found."

In addition, the KwaZulu-Natal legislature set up a sub-committee of the provincial Safety and Security Portfolio Committee to investigate the existence or otherwise of 'no-go' areas in Richmond. It began work in May 1996, but was plagued by political in-fighting and endless bickering over procedural technicalities. The committee submitted its final report and recommendations on March 25, 1997. The overall conclusion was that a commission of inquiry was needed to investigate the situation in Richmond, according to KwaZulu-Natal Briefing (November 1997). The commission was never established.

Arrests of both ANC and UDM supporters, including Bob Ndlovu, were eventually made though many trials were only concluded after the violence subsided.

c. The current situation

As IPT prepared to start working in Richmond in 2002 some people had started to drift back to the homes from which they fled during the height of the violence. Others at least returned to visit relatives and friends. The general perception amongst people was that some semblance of peace had returned. However, there was dissatisfaction with the pace of development and the distribution of resources which some regarded as having the potential to disrupt the fragile peace. In addition, the people of Richmond say that it is a challenge to create a peaceful environment and to shift the mentality from one of confrontation to co-operation.

A report in the Mercury newspaper on January 19, 2001 stated that the acting municipal manager Gerry van Vuuren warned that in-fighting within political parties was a major threat to development, peace and service delivery. In-fighting in the UDM had led to a water project being suspended, while about 60 people had marched to the municipal offices to demand the resignation of ANC mayor Bheki Mtolo and the reinstatement of the former ANC-supporting mayor Andrew Ragavaloo.

Nevertheless, there has been progress. The Richmond Municipality achieved significant recognition in 2003 when it won an award for municipal service excellence. Sparks wrote in the Natal Witness (November 5, 2003): "Richmond scored well in all departments, the auditor-general commenting that its good governance record was simply "the best in KwaZulu-Natal". But what probably won Richmond the award is the council's initiative in launching a number of social upliftment projects. The centrepiece is a R5-million resource centre, the Masakhuzolo ("let's build in peace") Centre, with a science laboratory, library, computer facility and lecture rooms, that all the district's 38 schools can use. The centre is also open to the community for adult education."

Deputy President Jacob Zuma commemorated Human Rights Day in Richmond in March 2003. In a public address, he stated: "Today is a historic, and very important occasion for the people of Richmond, and this entire province. It is a day for us to celebrate the victory of the people of this town, who a few years ago, turned their backs on violence. I am also pleased that there is representation from different political parties at this gathering, which indicates the co-operation and collective spirit that will make this province succeed."

Zuma continued: "Richmond is now an example to the whole world that it is possible to move away from conflict and war, and restore peace and stability."

In an effort to restore such peace and stability to Richmond, ANC member of the provincial legislature Willies Mchunu met with prisoners who were convicted of crimes committed during the Richmond violence. They recommended that a peace process be revived in Richmond and called on Mchunu to work with a group of UDM aligned people led by Nkabinde's wife Nonhlanhla. In the largely ANC aligned area of iNdaleni Mchunu liaised with MaMkhize Ndabezitha who lost 11 family members in an attack on the day that Nkabinde was assassinated. Two five-a-side teams have been established with the view of creating peace between the Magoda and iNdaleni communities.

About this process, Mchunu said: "I have found an overwhelming support for a peace process. The fact is that both leaders of these groupings are female and there is a history of tragedy within their families. They both command the respect of these communities."

The process culminated in March 2004 in a meeting at which the prisoners addressed victims of the violence and their families, according to a report in the Natal Witness (March 5, 2004): "We are not proud of what we did. It was wrong and we beg for your forgiveness," said Mthembeni Khuboni, who is serving eight life sentences for the murders of Percy Thompson and others in a Richmond tavern.

Mchunu called for government to appoint a Truth and Reconciliation

Commission-like structure to investigate the years of violence. However, violence victims had mixed feelings about whether unsolved cases should be investigated or not.

Speaking on Human Rights Day Deputy President Zuma, while congratulating the people of Richmond on the success that they had achieved, also cautioned: "This province still remains unique and dynamic in its political make-up and this calls for a display of tolerance and mature leadership from all political parties, to ensure that the interests of the people are put first at all times."

Letter to the Editor, The Daily News  
From Andrew Ragavaloo, former Mayor of Richmond  
Published May 1, 2002

"I stood forlornly recently among the overgrown bushes that covered the unmarked rows of mounds that mark the graves of those who have been mowed down by mostly AK47 bullets.

The cemetery on the outskirts of iNdaleni, at Richmond, overlooks the sprawling township that looked serene and peaceful, with smoke billowing aimlessly into the darkening skies like candy floss.

It was here, not so long ago, that South African National Defence Force and South African Police Service searchlights panned the area at night in a vain attempt to prise out the faceless, cowardly hoodlums who terrorised and held our small, picturesque town under siege, with ruthless killings that would cause untold misery and pain for an unsuspecting community. A total of 120 people died over three years.

At the time, I could not have foreseen that I would witness first hand untold sorrow, misery, pain and destruction on a scale that boggles the imagination and brutalised the community.

Now in peace time, when the horror has passed by quietly and noiselessly in Richmond, let us again pause and remember those who have fallen.

Through carelessness and negligence we allow history to repeat itself because of power-crazed, greedy, unscrupulous and stupefied forces which may, once again, light the fires of destruction that this time could engulf us all in one final burst of savagery and bestiality.

Let us pray continuously for everlasting peace and solace as balm for broken hearts and souls. Let us learn again to live in peace, tranquillity and harmony. Let us be able to build a Richmond of tolerance and peace as a shrine to those who have died so tragically and terribly.

Let us learn to live until we die naturally by God's almighty and divine intervention for we never want again to walk the path we walked five years ago."

## 2. THE NEED FOR INTERVENTION IN RICHMOND

IPT's Khaya George, who has a background in mediation and negotiation, initially identified the need for people from the Richmond community to be trained in mediation. George said: "We often find that mediators or senior political leaders are called to intervene in disputes when it is already too late. By that stage violence has often occurred and there may have been some casualties. In effect, people feel the need for revenge before they are willing to talk peace. As a result we felt that it was important for people within the community to be trained to mediate in disputes. Empowering people with skills also raises their level of conscience."

Speaking in Richmond on Human Rights Day in March 2003, Deputy President Jacob Zuma stated: "The Richmond conflict has left many visible and invisible wounds and has traumatised many families. It has distorted the family institution, and has left behind widows, widowers and orphans, while many young people are languishing in jail for serious crimes. The huge task of post-war reconstruction needs to be tackled vigorously. This reconstruction will succeed if all key players and communities participate in development."

Richmond Mayor Bheki Mtolo emphasises that political parties are working hard in Richmond to restore normality to the town and its surrounds. "Our priority is changing the perception of violence that was linked with Richmond."

So much so that this is the first key issue identified in the municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP) which states: "Through innovation and dedication, the Richmond Municipality will provide its citizens with access to physical, social and economic development opportunities in a safe and secure environment."

The goals identified by the municipality include contributing to the healing process of people affected directly or indirectly by the violence and changing the perceptions of Richmond as an 'area affected by political violence' to an 'area addressing the impact of political violence'. The IDP states that the municipality will focus on promoting political integration and tolerance, as well as addressing the impact of the

violence on individuals and specific groups such as the youth.

The general election held in April 2004 fell during the period of the IPT intervention. At the time that IPT was starting to work on the project, the trainers recognised that settlements were still according to the old political party divisions and that the running of election campaigns could result in friction and possible disruption of the project.

Said George: “The fact that there is such a high unemployment rate in the Richmond area is a potential cause of violence related to the elections. People are battling financially and therefore holding political office is seen as a way out of their misery. The alternatives really are limited.”

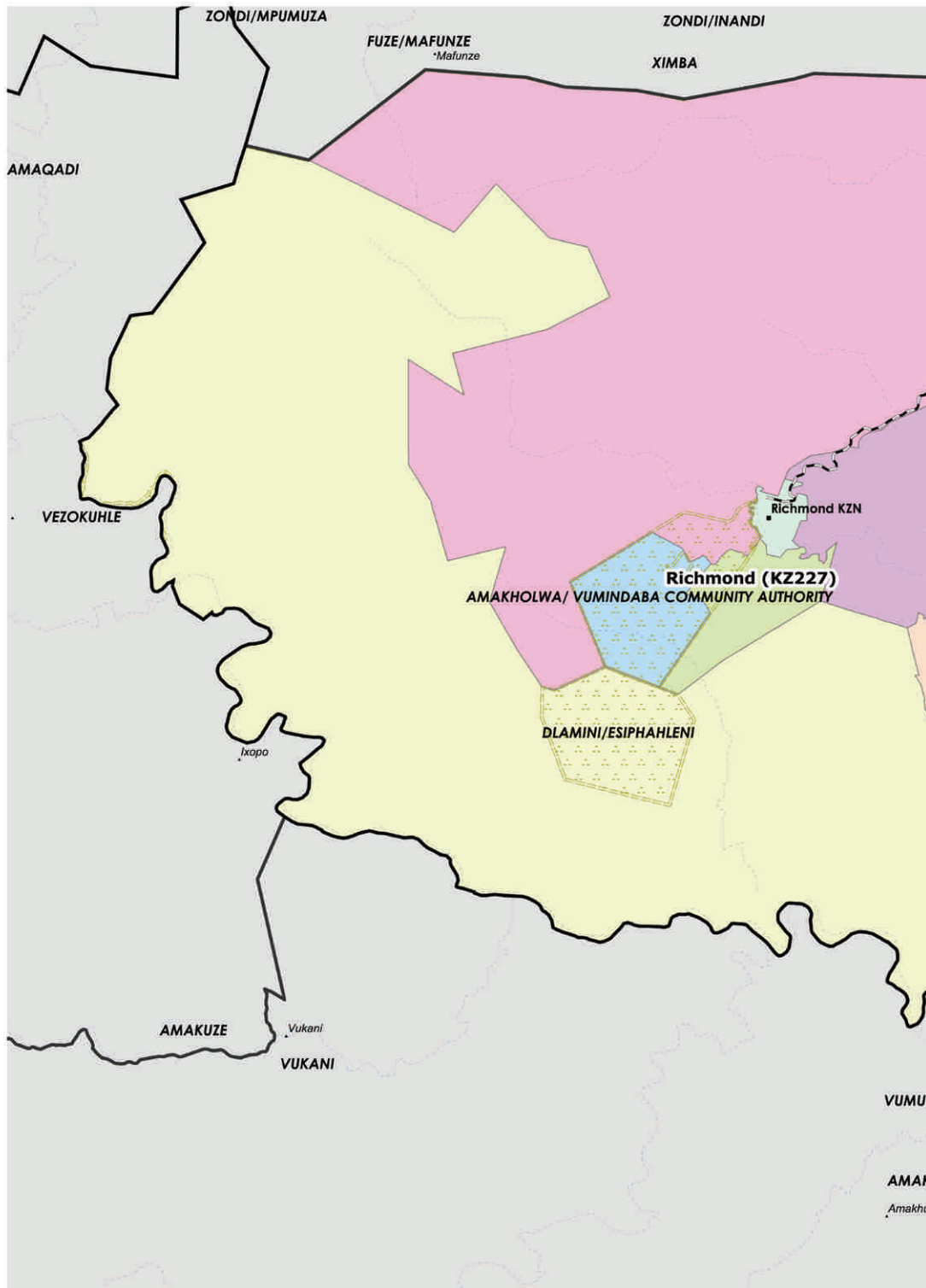
“In addition, development can result in conflict because people are again competing for the benefits of such development, whether it be through jobs or by receiving the resources provided,” said George.

a. The intervention facilitated by IPT

As a result of the needs expressed above, and considering the goals and objectives of the municipality, as well as the background of violence in Richmond, IPT considered that the community would benefit from the establishment of a pool of community mediators to deal with disputes. The establishment of such a team would empower the community of Richmond with conflict management skills and would help to deal with any conflict in its initial stages and enable the community to function independently of external expertise. In addition, IPT considered that the project would contribute to the sustainable development of Richmond because the pool of locally based community facilitators would be a resource to the community and, through their conflict resolution and peace building efforts, would contribute to an environment in which development and growth could occur.

b. Consulting with the people of Richmond

Speaking to the people of Richmond about the need for an intervention was an important initial step in the process undertaken by IPT. In these





# MUNICIPAL DEMARCATION LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

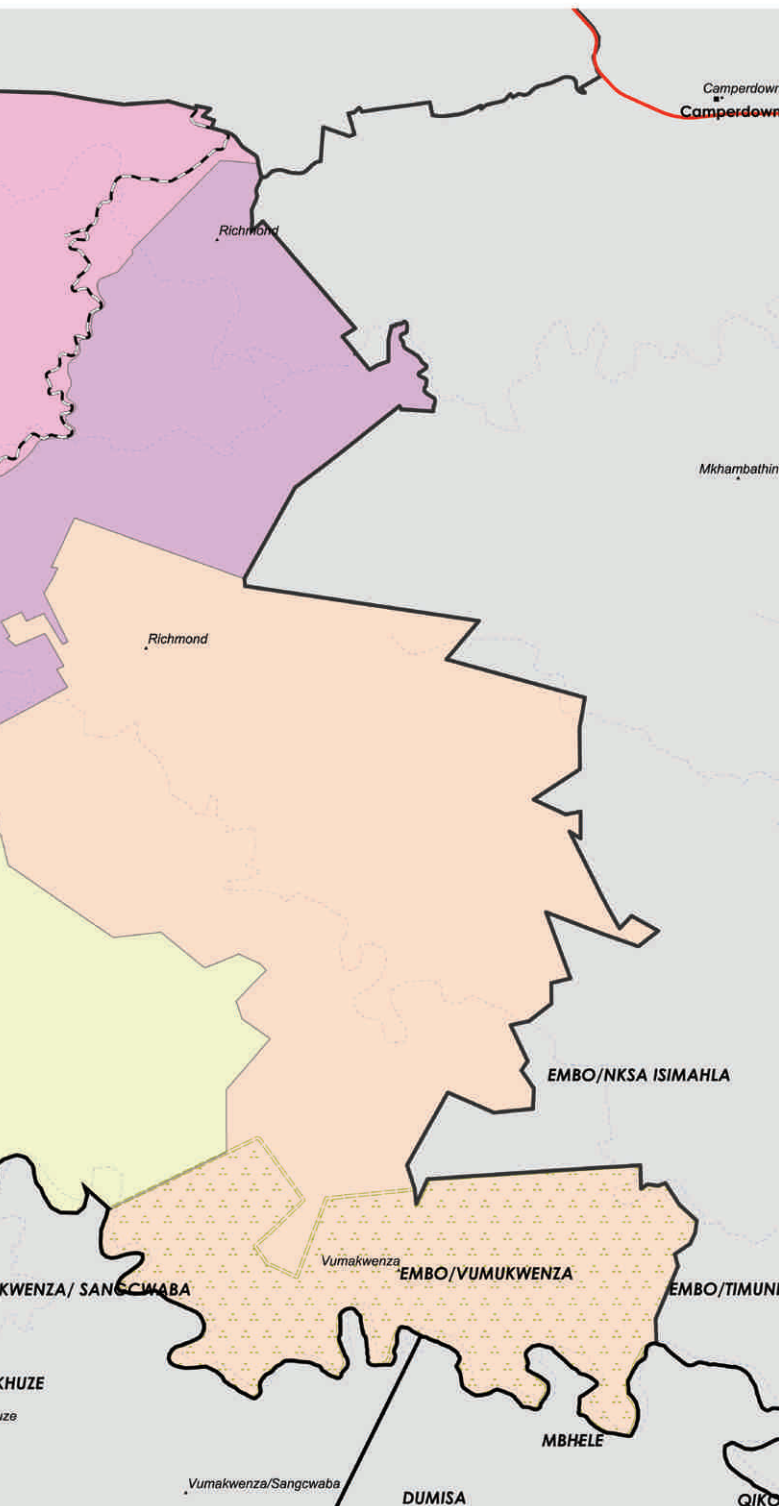
- Major Towns
- Towns
- Rivers
- National Roads
- District Councils
- Municipalities
- Roads
- Railways
- Traditional Areas
- Wards



Province :  
**KwaZulu-Natal**

District Municipality :  
**UMgungundlovu**

Local Municipality :  
**Richmond**



early discussions people considered a process of training conflict mediators as important for a number of reasons.

- “There are people who respond in unacceptable ways to different situations.”
- “There is a need for skilled people to help deal with the conflicts that arise from time to time.”
- “There are tensions in my ward. You know the history of Richmond, there is a need to change the mindset of people. The council is working on a mandate for delivery, but it cannot do that unless there is a strong foundation of peace.”
- “People do not forget easily.”
- “The violence has had a very negative effect on people because it is hard to forgive and people cannot forget. Every time people think of their situation they are reminded of their lost breadwinners.”
- “We need any form of training that we can get as a community because we are behind in a lot of things because of the history of violence that we have.”

c. Methods of dealing with conflict in the past

Until the time of IPT’s intervention ad hoc methods of resolving conflict had been used. In most cases this involved councillors and ward or development committees. However, one councillor stated: “We used development committees to deal with conflicts, but this has not been up to standard because the members of the community have not been trained. They need to be trained in conflict management, mediation and dispute resolution.”

Another councillor said that progress had been achieved so far by community members sitting down and discussing their differences.

Questioned about the benefit of participating in such a programme, one Richmond resident responded: “We can gain a lot. I don’t think there will be any more violence and fighting if people know what to do and know how to resolve conflict and how to manage a win-win situation.”

### 3. IPT'S INTERVENTION

#### a. Getting started

As the mediator training project got underway IPT was particularly concerned that all role players were consulted in an effort to ensure that the process was as inclusive as possible. Meetings were held with the Richmond municipality, which resulted in their support for the project, and because of their critical role in peacemaking it was decided to include councillors in the training workshops. Other stakeholders approached included the police, traditional leaders, church representatives, political party leaders, former councillors who were still regarded as community leaders, business people and representatives for the five-a-side teams that had been formed as part of an initial peace process led by provincial member of the legislature Willies Mchunu. The latter consisted of five people each from the ANC and from the UDM, although the participants had already decided that a team from the IFP should be approached to join the process.

Discussions were also held with representatives of former Richmond residents who ran away from the area during the height of the violence. Many of these people now live in the Durban areas of KwaDabeka, Clermont, KwaMashu and Umlazi.

Generally the people of Richmond were responsive to the mediator training proposed by IPT. However, as can be expected, some role players were more interested in the process facilitated by IPT than others. Representatives for the farming community, for example, seemed reluctant to participate in the programme because they did not see how the violence in Richmond affected them and questioned the timing of the project, given that Richmond was relatively peaceful.

#### b. Selecting mediators for training

Once the community at large had been consulted, IPT began the process through which people would be selected for the mediator training.

Extensive consultation was conducted with regard to the criteria that should be taken into account during the selection process. One community leader emphasised the importance of encouraging the selection of people who are likely to remain in Richmond for at least five years after undergoing training. The reason for this was that the skills learned should be used to benefit the Richmond community. Another leader said that it was important that not too many youth representatives were selected because they may not be taken as seriously as older mediators, who would be considered more influential.

Following this broad consultation process a set of criteria were agreed on. These included:

- Levels of literacy – Mediators must be able to understand material that is produced for the training process. The material was produced in English and isiZulu.
- It was preferable for mediators to be in employment because they were not going to be paid for undergoing training or conducting mediations. However, the high unemployment rate in the Richmond area meant that it was likely that not all participants would be employed. As a result it was emphasised that mediators needed to understand that there would be no direct material gain as a result of their involvement in the project.
- Participants needed to have a leadership profile and must be persuasive in order to be effective during mediations.
- It was preferable for mediators to have access to communication methods so that they can be contacted by the facilitators of the process, as well as by the community when assistance is needed.
- Some people felt that the areas of iNdaleneni, Magoda and Patheni should send more representatives than other areas because the most violence had occurred in those parts of Richmond. However, it was considered to be of significant importance that each ward in Richmond should be represented equally.

By the time the selection process was complete, 43 people had been selected for mediator training. In addition, IPT agreed to train councillors as a separate entity so that the public representatives would also have the skills required to undertake dispute resolution process.

The participants included those involved in the five-a-side peace process in order to create an inclusive programme rather than something that ran in parallel to the five-a-side process.

### c. Training

After the focus groups and consultation process defined some of the problems and needs of the Richmond community, IPT conducted a one day workshop for stakeholders and six two day residential workshops which were designed to provide potential mediators with the foundational skills of conflict management and negotiation. At these workshops the group members were given the opportunity to develop their own interpersonal skills and build an understanding of conflict theory.

The content of the workshops was developed based on the theory that the mediators would require strong communication and relationship building skills if they were to provide an effective mediation service in a highly adversarial environment. Role plays and case studies developed for the practice session were based on real life situations in the area such as the conflicting needs around a proposed water project and the common areas of tension between municipalities and traditional leaders.

Said facilitator Khaya George: “The participants were quite passionate about

### Participants in Mediator Training

1. Agrippa Mhlongo
2. Ben Ngcongco
3. Bheki Mtolo
4. Big Boy Mhlongo
5. Clint Johnson
6. David Basi
7. David Mchunu
8. Dumekhaya Phoswa
9. Eric Ndlovu
10. Fakazile Nzimande
11. Fundisiwe Mtolo
12. Gijima Nzimande
13. Hlaziya Mtolo
14. J. Ngubane
15. Jabulani Dlamini
16. Johannes Sibonelo Nxele
17. Joseph Mkhize
18. Julian Gwambe
19. Khonzuyise Nxele
20. Linda Shange
21. Mangisi Sindane
22. Mluleki Toto
23. Msawenkosi Mbongwe
24. Mziwandile Ngwenya
25. Mzwengani Mkhize
26. Nduku Khoza
27. Nikiwe Ndabezitha
28. Nokubonga Ngcobo
29. Nomusa Ngcongco
30. Nonhlanhla Nkabinde
31. Nozipho Ngubo
32. Ntando Kunene
33. Ntombizonke Phoswa
34. Pamela Moonsamy
35. Phumlani Mdunge
36. Pretty Nkabinde
37. Qikelela Mkhize
38. Qinisela Nxele
39. Rampathie Naidoo
40. Rebecca Thabethe
41. Reverend Cwazibe
42. Reverend Zungu
43. Richard Mkhize
44. Rita Khuluse
45. Scelo Ngubo
46. Sifiso Mkhize
47. Simphiwe Tenza
48. Sphiwe Henry Gwamande  
(passed away 2004)
49. Sphiwe Ngcobo
50. Sipho Ndlovu
51. Siphosethu Phungula
52. Sthembiso Latha
53. Thamsanqa Tshelembe
54. Thandiwe Ngcongco
55. Thomas Ngobese
56. Thulisile Dlamini
57. Wonderboy Mchunu
58. Zwelakhe Mbanjwa

the issues that we selected for the role plays. One could see that they knew about the issues and, importantly, related to them.”

During the course of training a number of issues emerged including the need amongst mediators for a fairly organised structure of mediators in Richmond and the concern that many of the victims of violence in the area would need some form of counselling support to allow them to deal with their trauma.

The workshops were held at a venue in Pietermaritzburg and the opportunity for participants to interact socially over meals and in the evening was considered a key aspect.

George states: “Many of them knew each other, but had not been visiting one another in Richmond recently because of the violence. They spoke a lot about the way things were before the violence occurred in Richmond.”

Expressing similar sentiments, one participant said: “We have fought, people have died and leaders have reconciled and we are tired of fighting. The only thing that we want is to see our town back to its normal state and we want development.”

#### d. After the first training sessions

After the first training sessions were completed IPT facilitators continued to support the trainees on a regular basis. They attended community meetings and held discussions with stakeholders who were not involved in the training in order to provide them with feedback about the mediation training process.

Although the mediators said that there were no serious disputes in which they could use the skills they had learned, they did find them useful in situations even involving family conflicts. Some of those who were involved in traditional courts in the Richmond area found that they could use their skills to mediate between victims and perpetrators in incidents reported to the court.

e. The second training sessions

The second training sessions were held in Richmond over one day and gave participants an opportunity to practice their negotiation and mediation skills. The focus on negotiation was intended to provide mediators with additional skills to allow them to facilitate a simple negotiation process with groups in conflict with one another.

These sessions also gave participants a chance to review the project and to discuss issues of concern to them. Many reported that they had experienced little opportunity to use the skills that they had learned within their communities, although most had used the skills in family and personal situations. Some also raised concerns about a lack of clarity and consensus around their roles and responsibilities in terms of the project.

f. Meeting with all the mediators

In response to the concerns raised by the participants a decision was taken to hold a meeting of all the mediators at a venue outside Durban. By this time some of the people who started the training process had been employed and were not able to continue their involvement, others had left for education reasons, while some had changed contact phone numbers and could not be reached.

This was the first time that all the mediators had come together at one time and it provided IPT with an opportunity to assist them to consider the future structure of the network of mediators, particularly in light of completion of the funding cycle.

Discussions on their role resulted in some mediators suggesting that, in addition to intervening in disputes, they should empower other community members with conflict management skills, help change the negative perceptions about Richmond and convene meetings and workshops.

The mediators also discussed some of the problems that they had encountered. These included difficulties relating to communication

due to the fact that not everyone had access to phones and cellular phone signals do not work in all areas of Richmond. In addition, there were resource constraints in that many of the mediators did not have access to money even for travelling to meetings or to the scene of disputes.

Many of these were difficulties that IPT had anticipated and tried to avoid through the selection criteria. Nevertheless, they appeared to be unavoidable.

The mediators decided to set up a nine-member committee with one representative from each ward, a representative from the municipality and a gender representative, who was selected as a result of all the other participants being male. Each representative took responsibility for networking with the mediators in his or her ward. In addition, a convenor was selected to take the responsibility of calling and chairing meetings of the mediators committee.

George emphasised that the committee must not be driven by IPT because it was important for the community to be part of the process of IPT phasing out its involvement. “We need to empower people to drive these processes while we are still there so that if anything goes wrong, we are still there and we can help,” said George.

The committee has met since it was elected and has also asked for assistance in compiling a constitution and terms of reference for the mediators which could be used as the basis for the functioning of the committee.

The committee has also taken the responsibility of receiving reports about conflicts that are taking place throughout the Richmond area. The committee can then make decisions about who to send to assist in the resolution of the conflicts.

g. The final training sessions

The final training sessions were geared at strengthening and building on the skills that the mediators had acquired during the earlier sessions.



It considered peer mediation and gave further consideration to the impact of feelings, thoughts and actions. In addition, the IPT facilitators assisted the mediators to identify different kinds of mediators (e.g. compromisers, avoiders, joint problem solvers) and consider the different kinds of conflict to ensure that the most suitable mediator is sent to resolve a dispute.

Role plays were used again as a means by which the mediators could practise the skills that they had learned.

h. Raising the profile of the mediators

IPT held a ceremony at the end of March at which the mediators were given certificates and t-shirts reflecting their status as mediators trained by IPT. This also assisted to raise the profile of the mediators ahead of the 2004 general election. Richmond's local community newspaper ILovu News covered the event in its April 2004 issue.

58 RICHMOND RESIDENTS  
TRAINED AS MEDIATORS

by Msizi Makhanya  
ILovu News, April 2004

More (than) 50 representatives from Richmond's community based organisations including ward councillors were recruited by Independent Projects Trust (IPT) early in 2002 and were trained as mediators in conflict management skills.

The project was designed to empower residents of Richmond and to help the community in dealing with the impact of the past. The project was funded by Joseph Rowntree and facilitated by IPT, Richmond municipality played a huge role in making the project a success.

At the agricultural hall on April 7, Khaya George, project co-ordinator handed out certificates to all trained members. He congratulate Richmond for participating successfully on the project during the two years. George thanked Municipal Manager, Sanele Nxumalo for co-operating and supporting the project during the two years training of ward councillors.

Deputy Mayor, Nozipho Ngubo said Richmond is making a mark in changing it bad image from the past. She said it was about time that the media reported good things about Richmond. "We are tired of negative stories that we read on front pages of newspapers about Richmond," said Ngubo.

The article also listed the people who had been trained as mediators and received certificates.

#### 4. THE 2004 GENERAL ELECTION

Eight of the mediators who attended the IPT sessions were given the opportunity to sit on a panel of mediators for the KwaZulu-Natal Election Forum, which was set up by a number of non-governmental organisations working in the province. Another mediator performed the role of presiding officer for the Independent Electoral Commission on the day of the election.

A survey conducted by Crisp Research, Facilitation and Training with 15 participants in the IPT intervention found that mediators played a major role during elections, at which time many fear the outbreak of political violence. Crisp's report states: "Mediators were employed by IEC for different roles in the election process. They were there all the time to observe, calm the situation and intervene where necessary and possible. To this end, there were no major conflicts and disputes between political parties during the election in Richmond."

## 5. EVALUATING IPT'S INTERVENTION

Fifteen mediators filled in a questionnaire to assist IPT to evaluate the training process. The comments regarding the usefulness of the skills learned were positive in all cases. In addition, an external evaluation was conducted by Crisp Research, Facilitation and Training. This consisted of telephonic interviews with 15 randomly selected participants.

With regard to the questionnaire, the following comments were received:

	Totally Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Totally Disagree
Training was helpful	13	2	0	0	0
Trainers gave me ways to handle conflict	13	2	0	0	0
Role plays were helpful	13	2	0	0	0
Use conflict management during community meetings and every day	12	2	1	0	0
Will and do promote conflict management training to other people. Project helps to build peace in Richmond	11	4	0	0	0

### a. Useful aspects of the training

Regarding the useful aspects of the training, one participant said that he now knows the proper approach to solving conflict, while another said that he had learned how to resolve conflict within the community and how to approach a person with a problem. A third participant learned to have perseverance or patience when faced with an angry individual and another found the training useful in assisting the mediators to look for the root causes of problems instead of the symptoms.

The report from Crisp states: “The majority said it uplifted them personally as well as helped the community to learn and understand effective approaches when dealing with people who might not hold the same beliefs as yourself.” In addition, participants reported that the killings in Richmond were perpetrated because of political intolerance and because people did not have the skills needed to deal with conflicts and disputes. “The leaders themselves were unable to handle the situation but now that they are trained, there have been positive results. They said the peace building process in Richmond was useful in that it united people of different political affiliations,” the Crisp evaluation states.

Participants also reported to Crisp that they were able to communicate more effectively with their families and that they had learned new approaches to deal with conflict situations other than resorting to violence. Some people said that the acquisition of the skills helped them to obtain jobs.

The Crisp report states: “The results show that skills provided to the participants did not only assist in maintaining peace and stability in Richmond, but also provided those who were unemployed with the opportunity to be employed by other organisations. The skills acquired empowered participants to deal with a diverse range of conflict and dispute in Richmond and even in their personal and family lives.”

#### b. Skills learned during the training

In response to a question about the specific skills that had been learned during the training, participants in the Crisp survey responded:

- Basic conflict management skills, including communication, assertiveness, problem solving and co-operative behaviour
- Mediation and arbitration skills
- People management skills
- Community development skills
- Facilitation
- Improved skills to negotiate community entry

c. Suggested changes to the training and criticisms of the project

Participants proposed that more training should be conducted and that more people should be involved. Some mediators also felt that they should have been grouped according to their level of education during the training process.

Some people responding to the Crisp survey reported that promises were made and not fulfilled. However, this dissatisfaction related to the funds accessed via a separate donor for the upgrading of schools.

d. Further help needed to build peace in Richmond

Responses to a question relating to the additional support that the mediators needed to assist in building peace in Richmond related largely to development issues, the alleviation of poverty and employment opportunities.

In addition, one participant said: "I would like us who have been trained to work together, come together and be an active group so that people will see and they will also do the same and there will be peace."

Thirteen of the 15 participants in the Crisp survey felt that it would be beneficial for more people to be trained as mediators. "If more people are trained they will acquire the same skills and as a result less conflict and violent incidents will occur. The people of Richmond will be empowered with skills to deal with their day to day conflict," states the Crisp report.

The majority of participants felt that more key figures in the community need to be trained because they are crucial for peacekeeping and are influential in the community.

It should be noted that the two mediators who said that it would not be beneficial for more people to be trained as mediators, did, however, suggest that the current mediators receive further training to better perform their functions. They also stated that if more people are trained there would be no disputes and no need to intervene, which would lead to a redundancy in service rendering.

Participants in the Crisp survey also provided a number of responses with regard to assistance that could be offered in order for the mediators to better perform mediating functions in Richmond. The responses included the following:

- A need for mediators to be formally introduced to the community so that people will be aware of them and utilise their services;
- A need for the role of mediators to be clarified within the community to address the perception that mediators align with certain political parties;
- A need to identify and develop youth centres where young people, in particular, will be educated in life skills and skills to deal with conflict;
- A need to use sport to unite the people of Richmond;
- A need for computer and telephone facilities for mediators to enable people to make contact when they are in need of mediation related services; and
- A need for assistance from external organisations to alleviate the poverty, which together with hunger, contribute to violence.

With regard to making the community more aware of the existence of the mediators, participants suggested that a community gathering or imbizo should be called where mediators would be formally introduced to the people of Richmond.

#### e. Future use of the skills learned

When asked how they envisaged using the mediation skills that they had learned, participants gave a wide variety of answers. Most said that they would use the skills in their community, but answers also included amongst their family members and at their place of work.

One participant said that her job is concerned with solving problems and advising on issues for the local constituency so she is able to use the knowledge she obtained from IPT on a daily basis. Another said that he regarded the skills as a “weapon” that he could use to solve the problems that he encounters regularly as part of the leadership role that he plays.

Participants told Crisp that mediators were not as effective in their roles with regard to mediating around bigger issues like intervening in political disputes, but many were handling petty problems, where they intervene within their families and are helping neighbours to deal with difficult situations.

“Community members now approach mediators when they are faced with dispute of any kind. Given the history of Richmond, many people were traumatised by the experiences and they need professional assistance to deal with their emotions. The mediators provide just such assistance and support so that the people can face the future and put the past behind,” the Crisp report states.

Participants also stated that mediators are needed to maintain peace, which will facilitate development. “Peace and development go hand in hand. Without peace there would be no development in any given community,” states the Crisp report.

Crisp did receive negative feedback with regard to the role of mediators in Richmond with one participant stating that mediators only intervene at a local level, such as within their families or neighbours.

f. Impact on the situation in Richmond

It is exceptionally difficult to ascertain the impact that training such as that conducted by IPT has had in Richmond generally. However, the peaceful environment continues in the village and its surrounds and IPT believes that the training of mediators, and the training of the councillors in mediation skills will assist in ensuring the speedy resolution of any conflict or disputes that may arise. It should also be recognised that large scale conflict often begins with a small family dispute, which escalates and gets out of hand. Also the notion of a “family dispute” is different in a rural community where family relations are often complicated.

Mediators were largely positive about the impact of the project training conducted by IPT. They stated that the introduction of mediators to the community of Richmond had an impact in helping people to deal with their feelings and putting the past behind them.

The Crisp report states: “The other impact is that the community at large have come to realise that, for the community to survive, there has to be peace and stability. More political tolerance is witnessed on a daily basis. They have come to realise that community development can never take place if people are not forgiving and the need to address no-go areas for the sake of community development and peace. People are learning other approaches to dealing with conflict or dispute rather than turning to violent acts as was the practice in the past. More people are recognising the need for mediators when faced with family problems. There is trust amongst the people of Richmond. People are now aware of the need to work together as a united community not in terms of political affiliations.”

Participants also reported that the training encouraged people to put their differences aside because of the variety of people involved. “The integration of people from all levels of education, background and political parties in the peace building process has helped people to tolerate differences. The people who were selected are influential people in one way or another. For example, the mayor, councillors, community members who are activists, faith based organisations and different political parties were trained together, which helped them to put their differences aside and work together to develop the community of Richmond. Training provided to these people has changed their attitude, behaviour and their perception towards each other [and] as a result their relationships have improved for the better,” states Crisp.

In addition, mediators stated that the relationship between the people of Richmond had improved since the project was implemented. The Crisp report states that participants found the project helped to improve the way people react and interact with others regardless of their political affiliation.

The evaluation from Crisp states in conclusion: “[Participants] feel the programme came at a time when the community and Richmond needed it the most. All of them felt that the people of Richmond needed to deal with their emotions in order to be able to forgive and forget and move on with their lives. The majority recommend that



more people need to be trained with this programme as it will benefit both the participants and the community.”

It is also obvious from media reports that there is currently a greater level of maturity regarding political processes amongst councillors than there was in the past. Jani Meyer and Wendy Nzama reported in the Sunday Tribune on April 18, 2004 that former mayor and now Speaker Andrew Ragavaloo and local IFP leader Paulus Vezi shared a joke outside an election polling station in Richmond. Ragavaloo said: “We have matured politically. People are free to talk.” Vezi said: “Everything has changed. People now understand politics. The IFP and ANC are working together.”

Similarly, Ragavaloo was quoted in an article in the Mercury (“Peaceful Richmond still paying for past violence” by Philani Makhanya, February 23, 2004): “We have achieved peace in Richmond and there is co-operation between leaders of different parties. The community has reached political maturity and there is tolerance in the political process. So much so that we don’t believe there will be violence as people have stood up against warlords who encouraged a culture of impunity. Today we don’t have no-go areas and people have pledged that we will never ever allow violence in Richmond again.”

Political analyst Adam Habib recognises the need for reconciliation-related work to continue in Richmond. He stated: “Making reference to Richmond, Habib believes reconciliation at a local level is critical to help the community of Richmond bring closure to what happened there. We also need to create integrated areas between the communities to eliminate no-go areas and deal with a them-and-us attitude among the people.” (Philani Makhanya. Mercury 23 February 2004 “Peaceful Richmond still paying for past violence”)

## 6. LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE INTERVENTION BY IPT

IPT believes that it is essential to consider a number of lessons that it learned during this process of mediator training in Richmond. It is hoped that these will assist in providing food for thought for future peace building projects involving community mediation and conflict resolution.

- a. The discussions that IPT had with stakeholders before and during the training process were invaluable. They enabled IPT to win the respect of a variety of sectors that play an impact on the peace and stability of Richmond. At all times extensive efforts were made to consult with, report to, communicate openly with, be accessible to and be even-handed with all stakeholders.
- b. The number of people that IPT trained was fairly limited. In addition, several of the participants left Richmond during the training period or failed to continue to attend the training programmes for a variety of reasons. It is suggested that in future a bigger group of people be trained to ensure greater representivity in all geographic areas, as well as interest groups even with an expected fall out of participants.
- c. The vastness of the area is reason for additional participants to be trained to ensure that mediators are able to travel relatively quickly to areas where disputes occur.
- d. IPT found that it was beneficial to conduct the training programme from its base in Durban because people in Richmond continue to be divided according to the areas in which they live and related affiliation to political parties. This has led to people being labelled as supporters of particular parties simply as a result of where they reside.

IPT was particularly encouraged by the response that it received from the people of Richmond. The facilitators found that people were largely welcoming, co-operative and sensitive. IPT hopes to be able to continue training mediators in Richmond in an effort to ensure that the current progress towards achieving peace continue and help to sustain an environment conducive to development.

Since 1990 when IPT began its peace building initiatives in KwaZulu-Natal, Richmond has been the focus of much of the conflict. By 2002, when IPT started to work on post conflict peace building in Richmond, the general perception was that some semblance of peace had returned.

However, there was dissatisfaction with the pace of development and the distribution of resources which some regarded as having the potential to disrupt the fragile peace. In addition, the people of Richmond said that it is a challenge to create a peaceful environment and to shift the mentality from one of confrontation to co-operation.

Speaking in Richmond on Human Rights Day in March 2003, Deputy President Jacob Zuma stated: "The Richmond conflict has left many visible and invisible wounds and has traumatised many families. It has distorted the family institution, and has left behind widows, widowers and orphans, while many young people are languishing in jail for serious crimes. The huge task of post-war reconstruction needs to be tackled vigorously. This reconstruction will succeed if all key players and communities participate in development."

For these reasons, IPT embarked on a project to train people from the Richmond community in mediation. This report documents the first phase of the project, which was funded by The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

