

"My heart is black, and bleeding, and getting smaller; for no one remembers my pain here, or cares about it."

living happily ever after...

Beyond the issue of specific events, reconciliation and reparation processes do not address the imbalances and inequalities that we inherit from our contested past.

The continuity of violence and pain from before 1994 forms the ground for the on-going violence and pain we face today: community distress over AIDS and TB, gender violence, lack of housing, lack of resources and support for economic development. These all grow strong in the deep soil in our society's failure to recognize and resolve the hurts and suffering, the problems and needs, the situations that frame our lives, still, today.

We need jobs and income.
Our government says
"the people shall share",
but there is a gap in the
economy; the poor do not
get as much as the rich people.

And we still say, the people
shall share;
This is where we are today.

High class have it all – they
get the fruit.

Middle class gets some benefits.

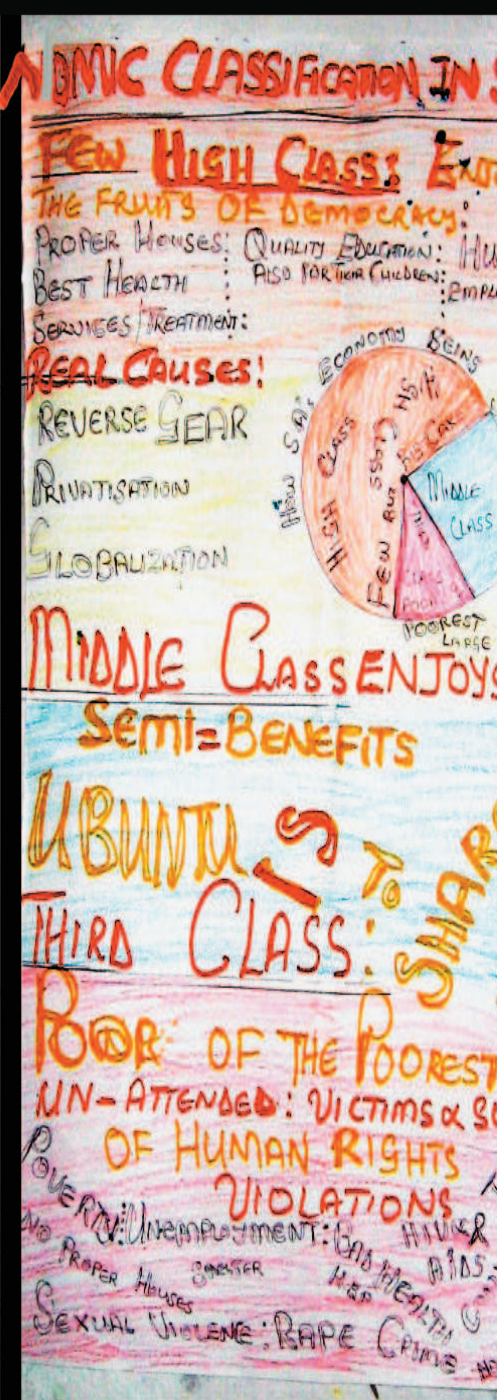
The third class, the poorest
of the poor, victims and
survivors of human rights
violations – they are not
attended to in our economy.

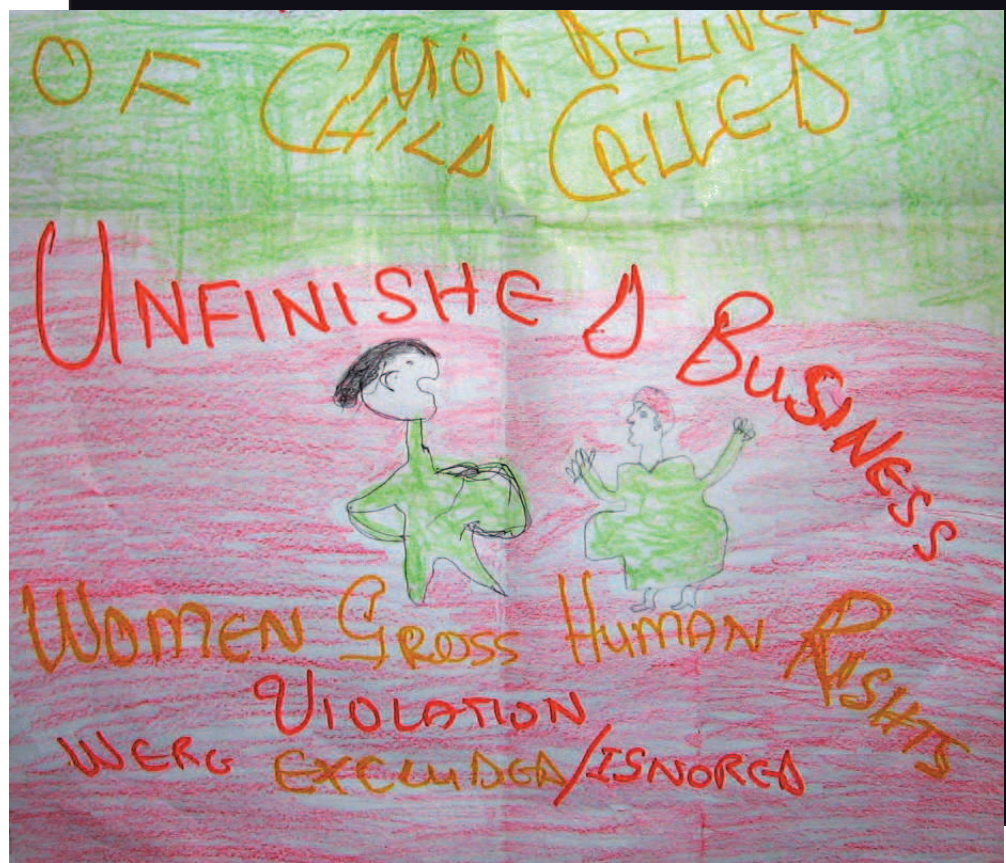
That leaves a huge gap in our
economy, between our society.

We are pleading for a closure
of this huge gap, asking for
ubuntu, asking to share.

We need to restore dignity,
promote trust.

What we look at here is the
way forward: open doors,
make these people hear us.





ten months pregnant with a child called “unfinished business”

The workshop looked at what participants now need, and want, to enable our community to come to terms with this history. Participants drew a tapestry of needs, of unrighted wrongs, of still high hopes for our democratic nation:

Reclaiming houses: In my picture I drew a house because houses were burnt during the violence; there are people who stay in shacks today because their homes were burnt down then. We want houses for those survivors who now stay in shacks.

A process was done to deal with people who lost their houses in the violence; but it happened while the problem of refugees and invasions still existed. Many people did not come back to reclaim their houses. Some houses were sold by SANCO, and the money went to people in Soweto, not by the people who were the real owners.

Government has also replaced lost houses with one-room houses with outside toilets. This is not acceptable – it was wrong before. Even if that was what had been there before. it is not right to replace houses with these.

Hospitals: We need treatment for people who were injured; still today, we need on-going treatment for the paralysed, the disabled, the mentally disturbed. We have sickness from that violence. We have people who were shot. We have people who cannot work and live normally.

The disabled need more care; we need a hospital dedicated to this. The current hospitals give us palliative care only; there are not enough physios for those in wheelchairs.

We need hospitals with equal treatment: at some places they judge you by how you look or dress. They leave you to last. Hospitals must give us all equal treatment.



Discrimination against victims: There are differences between normal people and those who are disabled; and those who have mental disturbance; those people need to be given special treatment. Most often when they go to the hospital, they are treated after the normal people, not before.

Also, we have victims with wounds inside, in their hearts.

Education : We need education for our children. During the violence children could not go to school, they were shot at, they never got certificates. Some tried to go back to school but were told they were over the age limit. Others were sent to other schools far away. At night there was no transport to come home, they were in danger from hooligans.

We all need further education – even adults – we have no skills or basic education. We need literacy even to sign contracts at banks. Many of us now have to sign things that bind us, without understanding them.

We want free education for all – at schools where parents do not have to pay. Education must really be free.

Justice for all: Justice must be done for all South Africans. Some other cases, we are told this is a minor case, it was dropped by the police. Other cases, they say to us at the police station we will tell you the date of the court case, but you are never told.”

In the TRC, other cases were left outside.

Most people inside were excluded from the TRC. The people inside were still fighting when the TRC was closed.

What we were crying about in our memorandum: why do they stop in 1990? For us the worst battles were after 1990. Those people (in the 90s) were fighting for us. They say now those people are stupid or mentally disturbed.

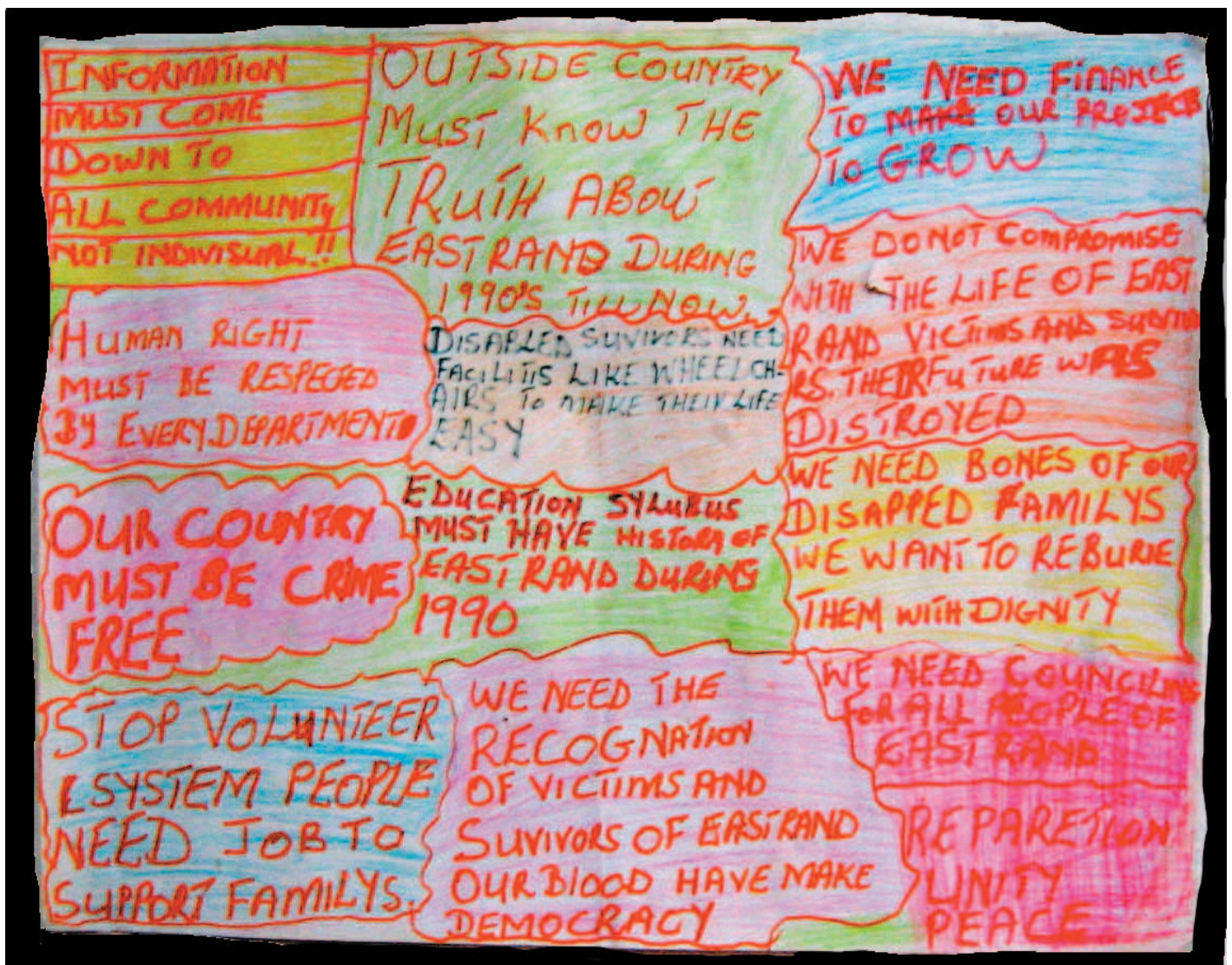
Some people here even say people who went into exile were cowards, they left people inside who were facing problems day and night. Yet today these people are excluded, the TRC is closed, you are not entitled to special MK pensions because of cut date of 1990. It is how it is.

And our burdens come not only from the past:

HIV and AIDS: to live with this issue we need to help each other, to educate each other, in sharing, giving support and care. If you are HIV positive they do not want you to be seen, they put you in a shack. You are just a rejected.... We need to be educated, to help each other and we need to stop spreading this disease.

Child and Woman abuse cannot be not only 16 days. We must be seen to deal with this every day. It is ongoing, it is still happening.

"The unfinished business of the TRC must be finished. Give reparations to those who who suffered. Soon we will be saying we have 20 years of democracy and we are still the same as all those years ago."



Khulumani says:

**We want education
for our children:
free education for
all.**

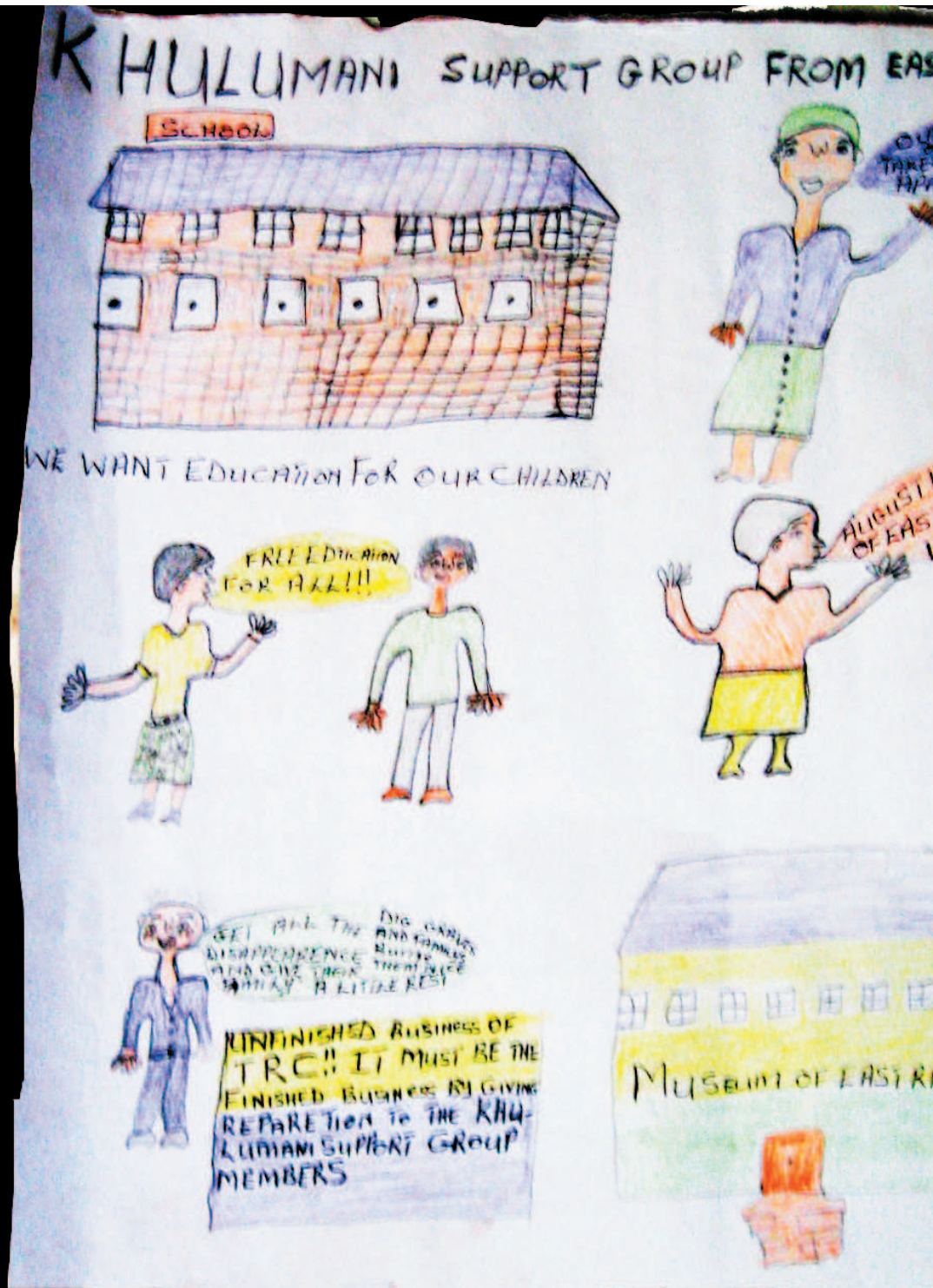
**Our families' blood
takes out the roots
of apartheid.**

**August 15 must be
the day we
remember the East
Rand Massacres of
the 1990s.**

**We need counselling
to continue... new
lives.**

**We need a museum
for the East Rand to
tell our true history.**

**Everybody must
respect human
rights; because of
us our country got
democracy; give us
reconciliation,
reparations, peace
and ubuntu.**

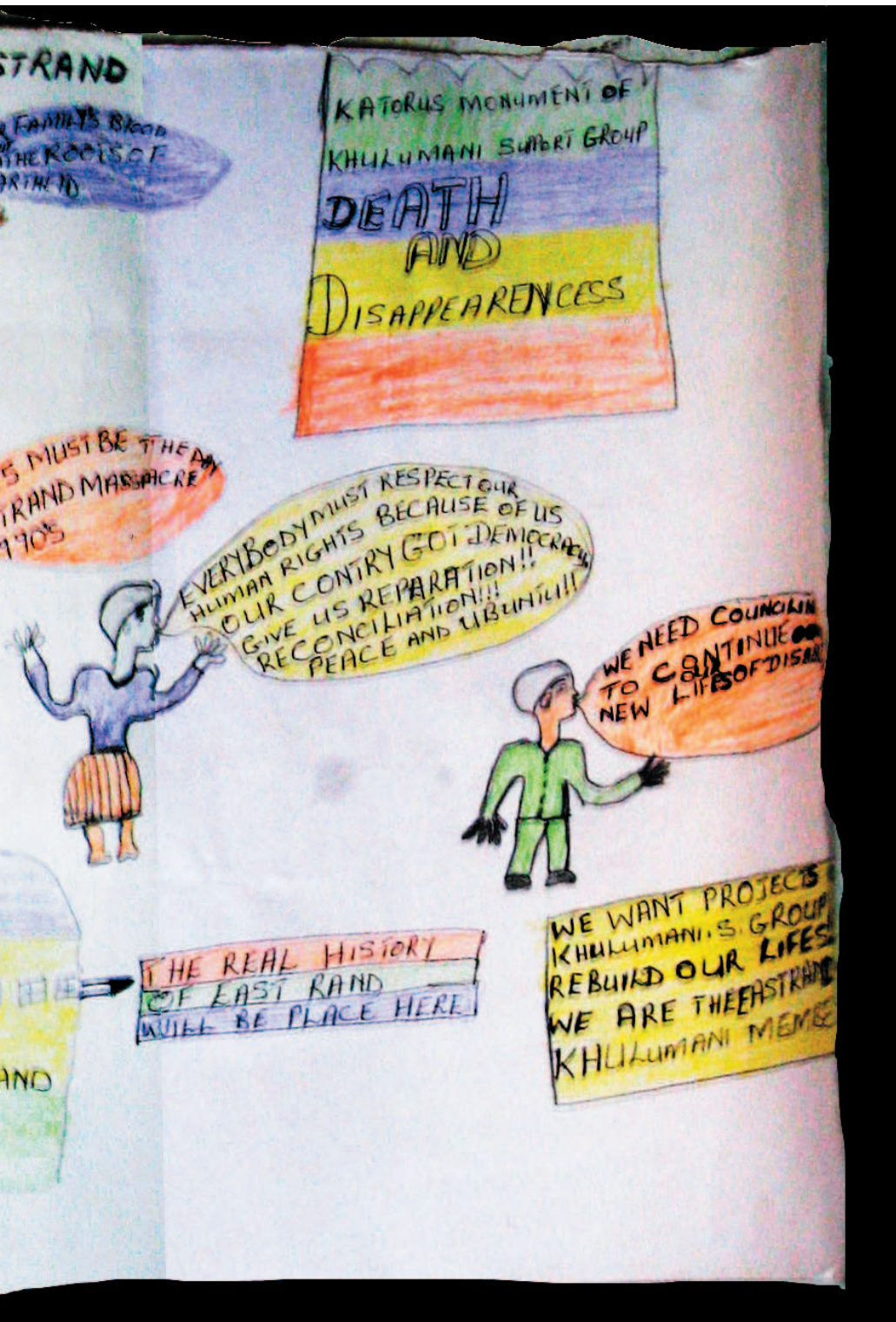


Remember us:

Khulumani members on the East Rand ask for a process to commemorate their struggles. They ask that August 15 be recognized as a Day of Remembrance for the East Rand political violence.

The first major clash in the violence in Katlorus occurred on August 15, 1990. Like June 16 and December 16, it should stand recognized as a symbol for a critical part of our history.

The East Rand Khulumani Support Group has collected literally thousands of names of survivors of violence, and of those who died. They ask for a memorialization process that involves these people. The project must speak to the survivors, and the community -- perhaps to build a museum, a remembrance parks, books, a mural of history: the whole range of heritage structures.



"Show people the real stories of the East Rand. Our voices must be heard, everyone must hear what we went through."

"We need to respect that we were still in the fight for liberation, still on that long walk; when we fought there, it was to defend our families, defend our lives, defend our gains."

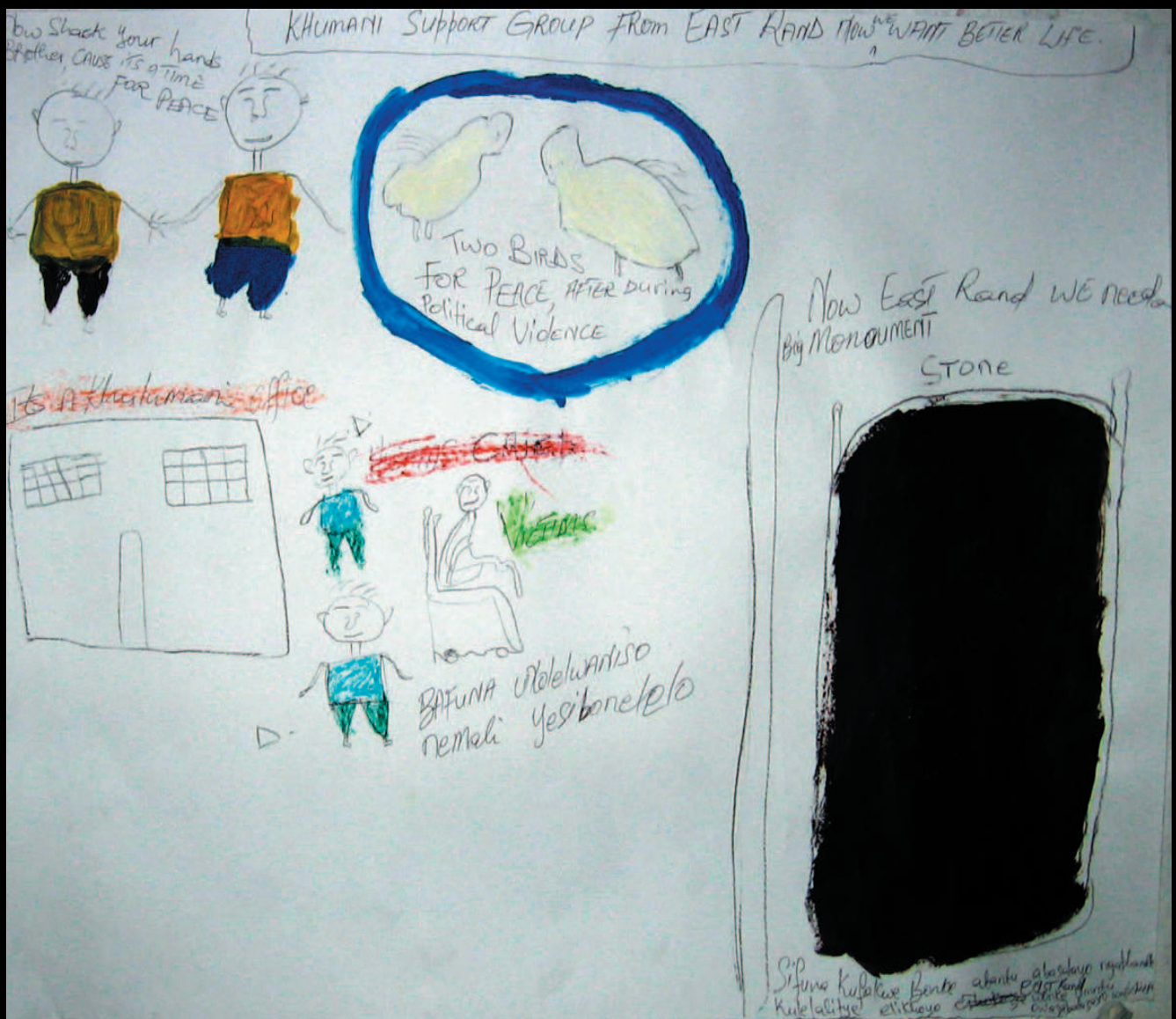
Respect us:

The South African government build a memorial to the violence in Thokoza. Yet that memorial has caused serious heartache: People feel that the scope, the intentions, and the details do not reflect the community's sacrifices and struggles.

At the launch of the memorial, the keynote statement from government portrayed the violence as a failure of the community itself, as almost a madness descending upon the people:

"Many of our sons and daughters, mothers, fathers and relatives died when one African fought another, when relatives turned on their own kith and kin, when it seemed as though we had embarked on a path of destruction.

When we did all these terrible things to ourselves, we took a position which



said that if I belong to the ANC than any member of Inkatha is my enemy and vice versa. For some time we lost our focus. We forgot what the real problem was and targeted those with whom we should have been walking towards freedom”.

-Thabo Mbeki, statement at the unveiling of the Thokoza Memorial, Oct 16 1999

Participants in the Khulumani workshop argue that the Thokoza Memorial makes no effort to explain the events which it commemorates. Workshop members insist this attitude indeed fails to respect the struggles, sacrifices, and understanding of this period within the community. They believe that the violence was wrought upon the people of the East Rand as a final effort to retain apartheid – to destroy the collective spirit that fueled the struggle for a democratic nation.

Some comments from the workshop:

“The Thokoza monument has 687 names (of those who died in the violence) on it today. Yet over 3000 people are known to have died on the East Rand in the 1990s violence -- many more have disappeared, others lost homes and possessions.”

“The victims and their families were not consulted. Some were never called to be asked whether their names, their father’s name, should be there. That same monument is not owned by us.”

“The violence was still going on when the monument was built. We were never consulted. We have never reconciled with each other. We don’t know what would make us to be reconciled with others, or with ourselves.”

“Only now we are saying we can speak to each other, through Khulumani. People think that Khulumani is about reparation only...”

Redress:

A recurring theme in the workshop is that few people know how to access the formal processes that were established, for redress, for policing, for courts and inquests. Many people see only the absence of remedy for their pain, not knowing what was done (if anything) by authorities. They were not involved in police investigations, prosecutions, inquests, even related TRC processes. This in turn feeds the belief that perpetrators acted with impunity and sometimes with government backing. It feeds a sense of powerlessness amongst victims and survivors.

Reconciliation:

The workshop underlined a gaping rift between the rhetoric of the country’s political leadership and the realities on the ground.

For Khulumani members, issues of pain and loss, of suffering, of survival, that make of the roots of their lives, have been by-passed, for years and even decades. Several of them said, even drawing pictures about what happened was a step in coming to terms with those events.

And many of the hard problems remain in real time, too. One workshop participant said she lives side by side, now, today, with people who quite possibly had attacked her and her family, forced her to flee her neighborhood – and she did not want them to know her story, from fear that they would still turn on her tomorrow.

Reparation:

Reparation remains a hugely contentious issue for people in Katorus (and elsewhere) – this has become a central campaign for Khulumani nationally. Workshop participants admit that ‘some people think we are only interested in the money’. But their stories make it clear that the violence broke up their a “normal” lives, brought them disaster, and they still today need assistance to get back on their feet .

One man described his family’s business depended upon a van: after the van was taken as loot by attackers, the family business never recovered. Others talked of losing all they had build and earned. People whose houses were burned out or invaded now live in a hostel, or in a shack. Not one of the participants in the workshop has been offered counselling. There is no support, physical or mental, to prepare them to deal with the next blow from life, no matter how unrelated it is to the violence.

*One government official
“.... told us she is not a victim or a survivor, she is a freedom fighter. We, we are still victims and survivors, because no one has redressed those wounds in our homes and our hearts and our families. In fact, we think she is a victor, not a victim, since she is getting the money.”*

“They want to turn our minds, for us to say we are happy even if we are not happy. We shame them.”

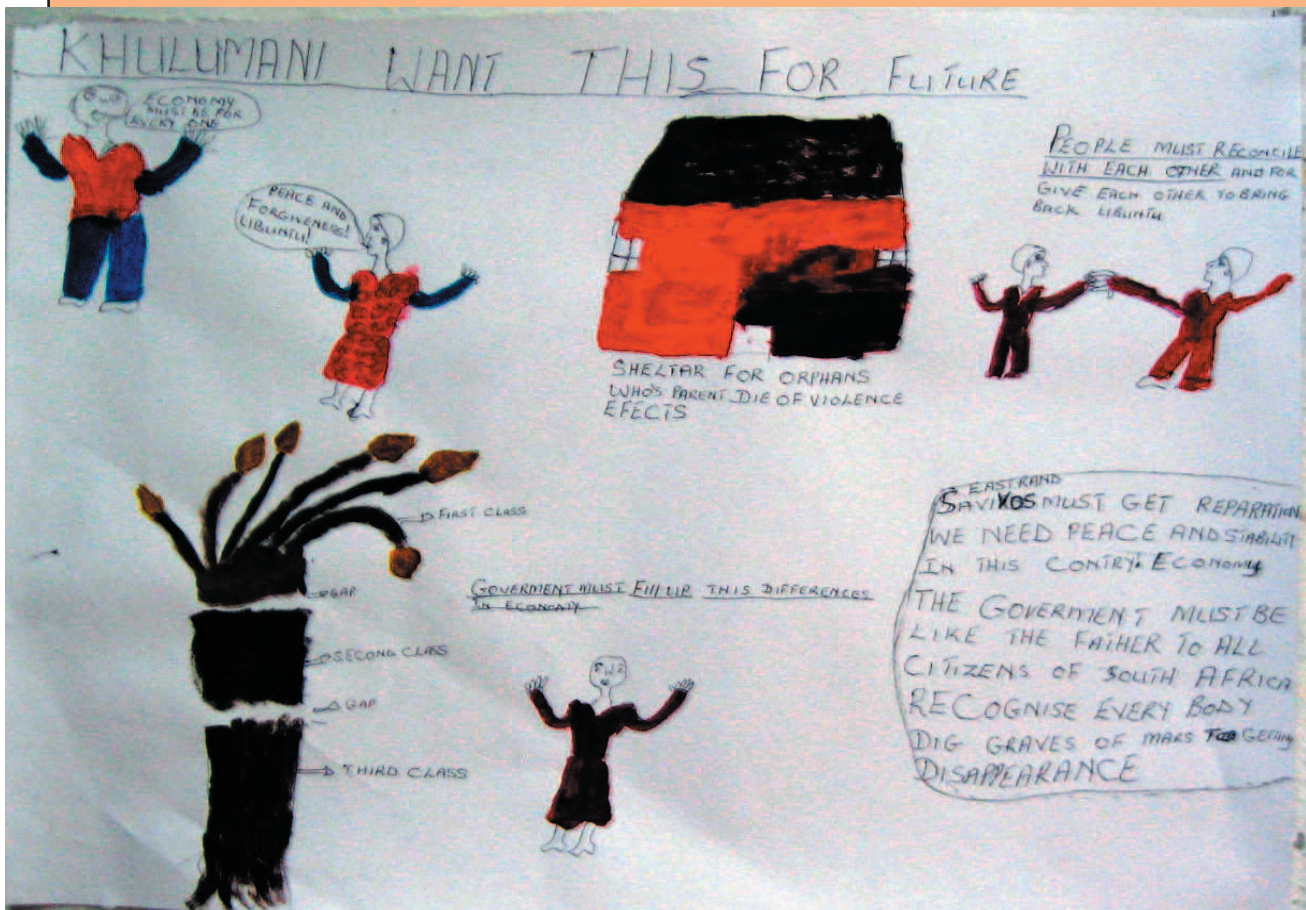
“We need counseling to continue with our new lives. We were shot, tortured, disabled; our minds need to reverse and start to think of the future. We need to reverse the past.”

“In the past some senior members of government have accused Khulumani of being interested only in money. These are some of the messages from we hear from our government, how government has dealt with these issues... they have covered it up, swept it under the carpet.”

Peace, security and comfort for all!

In the end, the workshop sounded a note of confidence and mutual support: that after all this, knowing where we are coming from, we can and do have hope for the future.

There shall be peace and friendship; security, houses and comfort. These are the lives we work to build in Katorus.



Katorus Stories has been produced by the South African History Archives and Khulumani Support Group.

Participants in the workshop from Khulumani Support Group East Rand:
NomaRussia Bonase
Dansile Mabenga
Dora Thango
Adelia Mabango
Francina Mtimkhulu
Michael Phama
Elizabeth Moloi
Themba Dube
Moffat Mahlangu
Judith Mavuso
Maria Hlope
"Julia N"*
"Catherine M"*

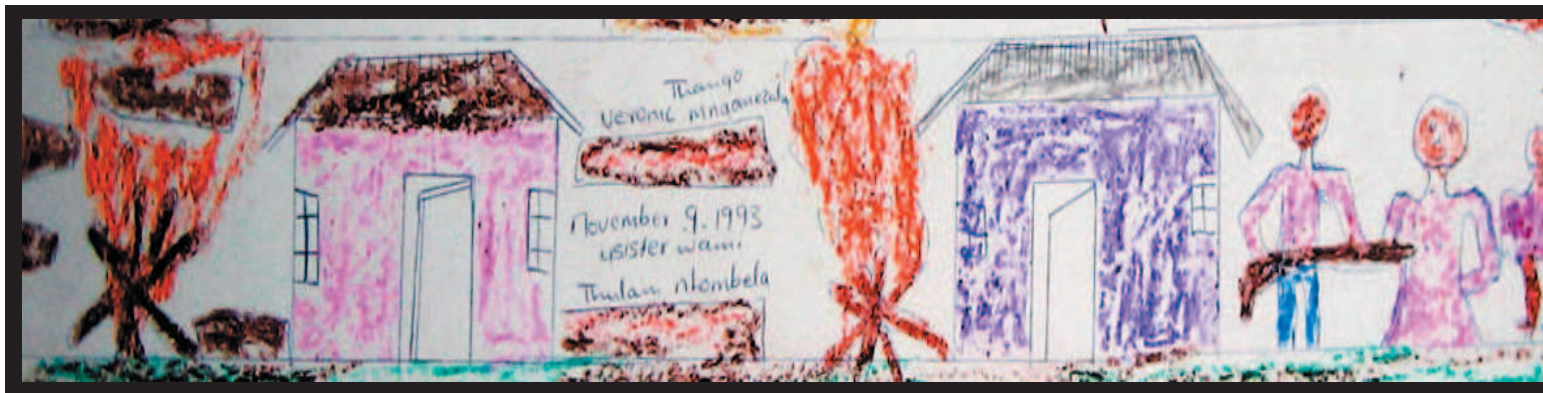
SAHA facilitators:
Judy Seidman
Piers Pigou

Additional research:
Michelle Coleman

Our thanks to the workshop participants, and particularly to NomaRussia Bonase as the workshop organiser.

The Katorus workshop has been made possible through a grant from the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation; with additional funds for printing from medico international.

Compiled and designed by Judy Seidman
Erkhululeni & Johannesburg, Nov. 2007





You go towards the future, the future comes from your past. You don't get the future without knowing the past.

Repect human rights:
because of us our country has democracy.
During the 1990s the East Rand was busy, blood was flowing in the East Rand. When this ended comes the democracy of South Africa.

There must be peace in this country.
My tree, the democracy tree: to enjoy the fruits of democracy we must have reparations, our hearts must be healed, we need peace.

And I say, the people shall govern.

