

## **KWANYUSWA: THE RURAL TIDE MEETS THE URBAN SHORE**

The Valley of a Thousand Hills is the steeply dissected regions of hills and watercourses lying west of the city of Durban, formerly part of the KwaZulu homeland, and now designated as partly within the Durban Metropolitan Area. Thousand Hills, which includes the large Tribal Authority which is the focus of this chapter, is part of the peri-urban zone of dense, partly urbanized settlement which has changed and thickened the occupation of the districts of former KwaZulu located closest to Durban.

The tribal district itself lies on the extreme outer fringes of urban development, west of the Inanda Dam and north-west of Pinetown, about 35 kilometers by road from the Durban city centre. It is one of the largest of the various Thousand Hills Tribal Authorities, and occupies most of the central high ground between the Umngeni and Umlazi Rivers. To the south is emaQadini, another relatively advantaged Tribal Authority, to the east lies KwaNgcolosi, and north across the Umngeni is emaPhepheteni, a somewhat more remote TA. Further to the west and south are white-owned farms and small farming towns along the Durban/Pietermaritzburg transport corridor, now changing over to a tourism economy and a more suburban identity. Immediately south are the nearest towns of Botha's Hill and Hillcrest, growing rapidly with a developing tourist trade. Further south is the Shongweni area, with its economy of racing, horse farming, polo and tourism.

Based on the qualitative sample of 20 household case studies from the Hillcrest area, this report raises some questions about the impact of HIV/AIDS on the land tenure system, through its effects on the household as shown in the case studies. The following chapter, which comprises an overview of the different areas with respect to HIV/AIDS, households and livelihoods, attempts to develop an analysis based on the case data from the different areas.

### **The community: location, structures and service delivery**

Service delivery in the Thousand Hills area gathered speed in the early 1990s, and is now advanced in the central parts of KwaNyuswa. Because of its close links to the metro city and its unstable, often transient population, AIDS levels in the population appear to be high, and the area has a number of community-level AIDS services. At the same time, population densification has continued to roll over available land resources for residential use, and the older rural economy structured around household farming and stock raising is under considerable threat.

Though the community health workers and AIDS care workers were not much in evidence in the case histories, the Valley of a Thousand Hills also has access to a hospice and an orphan care facility located in the nearest town, which exist to help AIDS sufferers and AIDS-affected households. Staff from these facilities also give advice and try to help patients and their families to access grants and support services, and are reported as sometimes distributing food parcels to destitute AIDS-affected households. There is also a local clinic which caters for AIDS patients as part of the general population, and also gives blood tests.

The area also has access to hospitals in Durban and other nearby centres, and there are large numbers of private doctors in the area, particularly in Hillcrest, Pinetown, Durban and Isipingo, who treat patients with symptoms suggesting AIDS. In addition, patients from the Valley region have access to large numbers of local and out-of-district traditional healers and also Christian faith healers, who are very frequently consulted by AIDS patients and their responsible care givers. Transport to these different health services is by taxi, bus or private car. It is usually

readily available, but tends to be very expensive compared to transport for normal and healthy family members.

In relation to local government and services access, for the immediate future all but one of KwaNyuswa's component *izigodi* ward sections remain under rural, tribal organization. However, under the Municipal Demarcation legislation the metro region has already begun to swallow the tribally structured territories located to the south and west of the city, and the prospect is for further metro incorporation at some unknown point in the future.

This prospect is considerably less welcome to the people of the Thousand Hills region than might be anticipated. Rather than expecting any improvement in living levels, community members fear they will lose their relatively affordable support strategies partly based on the old rural land economy of home cultivation and natural resources collection. At the same time, they also fear losing the accessible system of local micro-governance which prevails now under a progressive but weakly structured chiefship, and becoming subject to metro urban taxes and charges.

### **The peri-urban zone: exchanges between the city and the periphery**

KwaNyuswa's peri-urban status depends on its urban transport advantages, in giving preferential access to Durban as the regional metropole. The peri-urbanization process in Valley of a Thousand Hills began to operate after the impenetrable indigenous bush of this very rugged area was opened by the pipeline maintenance roads built in the 1940s and 50s. This road development served the massive water pipes crossing the former African reserves, running east from the reservoirs and dams built in the area to supply bulk water for metro Durban. Partly as a result of road building, the elapsed time to walk to Durban from the Valley region shrank to one day from several days, and unskilled jobs in the metro area became much easier to reach. Access to the cash economy, as located in the urban metropole, was becoming easier, and beginning to affect the rural home-based production economy.

Bus services eventually followed, and for the larger population of the province's outlying rural reserves, the Valley became perhaps the main staging area for work in the Durban metropole. Migrant labour was redirected away from the Johannesburg area, and work opportunities suddenly came closer to the borders of the KwaZulu homeland. Monthly and weekly commutation appeared, and slowly began to replace long-cycle labour migrancy to the interior. Pinetown expanded as a sub-regional centre, offering more jobs.

For this category of urban-directed but non-metro migration, the main target was probably a quasi-suburban rather than metro urban choice of locality, one which would offer reliable, accessible and familiar rural institutions and land-based support options along with access to the city itself. Reliance on the cash economy and on wage earning increased, while the old land economy simultaneously hung on and continued to offer partial household support and a backstop to failures of wage income.

As these changes took place, in-migration out of the province's remoter regions allocated to Africans began to target the KwaNyuswa/ MaQadini area. From the vantage point of the new millennium, it looks likely that far more in-migration than was generally realized was flowing into the peri-urban regions when compared with the streams into the townships and shack settlements of the metro urban area.

The Durban peri-urban zone, the largest in the country in terms of its number of residents, was able to form because the old KwaZulu homelands approached close to the metro edge. This

factor allowed large non-metro populations to build up in a fairly orderly way on land politically assigned to African occupation, for the most part on their own terms, under their own institutions, with secure low-cost housing and land tenure, and independent of urban bad living conditions, charges and persecutions.

Since 1986, the rhythm of increasing metro labour absorption and the associated growth of the peri-urban zone have been disrupted by the downturn in the national economy. Flows into the peri-urban zone have probably decreased in relative terms, and there are signs that rural to rural migration may be rising. At the urban end of the continuum, it is reported that there is substantial elite out-migration from the established urban townships into the formerly white suburbs, but there is also an outflow from the established urban African population into the metro's peri-urban fringe, which includes KwaNyuswa.

### **Population movements and land in the peri-urban periphery**

New entrants are currently coming to KwaNyuswa from various coastal and interior areas, but also from the urban sector. In addition, migration is now arriving in KwaNyuswa from the metro sector itself. As recorded on the 1996 DBSA survey of migration patterns in KwaZulu Natal, mean income levels in the peri-urban zone averaged considerably higher than incomes in the shack settlements of the metro city itself, partly reflecting the advantages of the peri-urban economy in allowing well-resourced households to draw on both the urban and rural sectors for income in cash and in kind. In this light, an outward flow of urban-origin migration as well as inward flows from less advantaged rural areas will not be surprising.

KwaNyuswa's advantages in urban access and favourable institutional conditions are still probably strong enough so that peri-urban inflows exceed outflows. Accordingly, the KwaNyuswa area probably continues to experience net gains from in-migration out of remoter areas, since there is very little reverse flow to outlying districts. How far inflows from the urban core balance out-migration from KwaNyuswa into the metro city is not clear. The probability is that KwaNyuswa is still sending more residents into the metro core zone than it is receiving in return.

For HIV/AIDS, the implications are not fully clear. Research suggests that there are no large urban/rural differences in prevalence levels in KwaZulu Natal, so that interchanges between the city and its peri-urban periphery are not likely to affect the prevalence of AIDS. However, some of the more localized flows conceivably might: one prospect here is migration into the Valley of a Thousand Hills area from the Natal North Coast, an area with high population interchange and a strong flow down the coast from Mozambique which has been cited as one route by which AIDS has spread into the Durban Metro area.

In addition to its rural flows, in-migration is now coming into the formally rural KwaNyuswa TA from the metro. Families are reported to be arriving from the main Durban townships of Umlazi and KwaMashu, and also from KwaDabeka, a township on the outskirts of Clermont, outside Pinetown, where many KwaNyuswa families have gone to live. This migration stream represents relatively well-off households with assets. In addition to civil servants such as teachers, professional people and businesspeople are part of this flow.

The inward migration stream of the relatively poor seeking wage jobs is therefore meeting a new counterstream of the relatively advantaged outward migrants looking for less-served and safer places to invest resources and establish businesses. The two streams meet in the metro peri-urban

zone, but also to some extent coexist in the more outlying peri-urban areas on the edge of the metro shadow.

Both the KwaNyuswa and KwaDumisa chiefs or amakhosi are looked at as ANC-aligned but not strongly political, and both have been willing to let civil society organize groups and structures without attempting to insist that all local associations fall under their sponsorship and control. Respondents commented that this willingness to allow the public to form associations reflects a progressive commitment to public welfare and the advancement of the community. This situation differs from what is often found in outlying rural districts, where the chiefship usually tries to coopt or hold down civil society activity in order to keep tighter control.

### **Migration, local institutions and violence**

During the period of falling employment in the runup to the democracy elections of 1994, civil violence spread across the metro shacks and townships as the ANC youth struggled to expel the IFP from the urban African settlements. The ANC-aligned comrades youth movement was largely successful over the period of the late 80s to the early 90s, but at the price of a very large and unmeasured loss of life which has rapidly passed into the legend of the killing fields. Urban violence rapidly spread through the rural areas as well. Refugee processes on an enormous scale resulted throughout most of KwaZulu Natal.

KwaNyuswa escaped most of the violence till well after the peak of the urban disturbances, but then the most densely populated high-ground areas were hit by a very serious episode of post-political violence from local quasi-anarchist youth formations that had their origins in the ANC comrades movement. This outbreak of violence is worth briefly considering here, both because it reflects how close even a settled and peaceful area can be to the violent disintegration of civil order when institutions come under stress, and for what it says about the way social outlook and local institutions have been affected by in-migration and population turnover.

This period of violence and social breakdown at KwaNyuswa continued for many months during the early 90s. Because of the changes in the local community and polity which resulted from heavy and long-continued in-migration, this violence could not be contained from inside, and was mainly left to burn itself out. Over months, the youth campaign in the densely settled areas of KwaNyuswa apparently reached a point where violence was an end in itself, without ever passing through a stage of becoming rationally criminal. The toll of the dead is unknown, because no records were kept.

The chief and indunas were seen as able to do nothing. One effect of in-migration is a constant stream of outsiders who have few if any local social connections, and are not in a position to line up effectively behind individuals who may be recognized by the older local community but are unknown to them. Once outsiders dominate a settlement, what often emerges is a community with little social coherence and few if any effective institutions. There is likely to be no effective support for the alliances based on land-giving relationships which underpin the chiefship and represent the older structures of social control. Severely dislocated by the continuing inflow of strangers, the local traditional institutional structures at KwaNyuswa seem to have had no power in relation to the youth violence, which had become anarchic and apolitical. After a number of months, intervention from the national ANC and the police was finally secured, and the episode came to an end.

As calm spread through the area, the KwaNyuswa area took on a general reluctance to accept any kind of political activity. However, even before the episode of youth violence, there had been

only measured support for national politics, and the replacement of the IFP affiliation of the 1970s with a general ANC attachment in the 80s had taken place without any overt conflict. It is possible that any area with strong migration inflows which break up traditional institutions may be likelier to endorse the ANC, with its anti-traditional and more universalist values, than to support the IFP, which relies heavily on chiefship and old land-based alliance structures for its coherence. If so, then migration has probably been an important factor in the political transformation of the destination areas of KwaZulu Natal, and perhaps of other places.

However, the recent advance of the municipal demarcation process has been having surprising effects on the now-established identification of the KwaNyuswa community with the urban, universalist values of the ANC, and there are signs that anxieties over being brought into the metro dispensation are causing support to coalesce around the Valley of a Thousand Hills chiefships, and around a kind of conscious neo-traditionalism. This reawakening of support for and interest in the TAs may give them greater leverage in relation to efforts to maintain order in the land market and also in protecting AIDS-affected households from sharp practice and land snatching.

### **The household level: accessing peri-urban land**

For families wanting to move into the peri-urban zone from any direction, arranging entry is not difficult at KwaNyuswa. For most rural-born people in either area, land is obtained by approaching either a landowner in the community or someone from the TA, either an induna or the chief. In the past, either approach has been made with support from a local resident who serves as sponsor and vouches for the good character of the candidate, but cold approaches are not uncommon now.

The help of a sponsor is a traditional practice, and assists the TA authorities as community representatives with their responsibility to screen in-migrants and ensure that undesirable characters – violent or dishonest people, or those being pursued by enemies – do not gain entrance to destabilize peaceful communities. The baseline rural concept of a named residential community is a little similar to that of an urban gated neighbourhood – it entails a grouping with an active identity, which assumes mutual support, polices itself against unacceptable behavior by members, and excludes outsiders judged to be undesirable.

For most candidates looking for land, sponsors are likely to be network members such as relatives and friends, church members, workmates, or others. However, KwaNyuswa's informal land market is known for a process in which chance contacts – Nyuswa residents met on buses or in other public places – refer outsiders looking for land to local people who have land and are willing to sell. A similar pattern has begun to appear in other peri-urban areas, but most sponsors are still network members rather than strangers.

If the approach is made to an individual landholder, then the price of the land needs to be settled. Depending on size, location and aspect, informal land prices at KwaNyuswa can reach over R 5000 for the site alone: Vusumuzi M, the landholder in Case 2, priced his attractive site and very poor quality housing at R 8000, but failed to sell at that price.

The KwaNyuswa chief officially frowns on high prices, but essentially considers the formally communal and tribal land to be the private property of the sellers, and rarely if ever interferes in private price setting transactions. Charges made by the TA staff add anything up to another R 2000, though the chief claims the formal fee is much less. The price of the house if one is bought comes on top of the price of the land, and can be well over R 20 000 at KwaNyuswa: if the house

is an expensive one, there may be no separate charge for the land. How the transfer of these larger amounts are financed is not clear, but some are paid over in cash in a one-off transaction. Others may be bank transactions.

To validate the transfer, the neighbourhood is notified, and witnessed formal public placement follows, with acknowledgement of boundaries. The transaction is formally recorded in the record ledgers of the TA, so that the allocated holder of the land can be determined in dispute cases.

Jabulani J's dispute with his uncle (Case 18) illustrates the process. When he found his maternal uncle encroaching on his land, Jabulani J – a suspected AIDS sufferer – hastened to contact his official witnesses, who backed him as he went on to approach the tribal court. The court, including the chief, tribal councillors and indunas or headmen of the wards, found in Jabulani J's favour when the books were examined, and Jabulani and his mother were found to be the only recorded landholders for that parcel. The maternal uncle was told that he was not an heir to the land, and to vacate it and not to attempt further encroachment. For clearing his title to the land, this service cost Jabulani J R100 in court fees.

Under today's conditions, land as well as housing in peri-urban areas is usually considered to be privately owned, and the chief at KwaNyuswa regularly decides in tribal court in complicated land cases involving de facto private land rights. That is, the TA in effect guarantees tenure security in relation to the informal private land market, and the adjudication process is very accessible, as well as generally public and transparent. Until about ten years ago, nearly all land at KwaNyuswa was taken up and occupied, and therefore under ownership. However, with the concentration of population in advantaged areas and the concomitant depopulation of large parts of the outer hilly terrain, it is not clear whether open land is not now again available for re-allocation to outsiders willing to accept less well located sites.

At the same time that peri-urban TAs openly support the informal land market, and sharecrop arrangements are often encouraged, customary prohibitions surviving from the colonial administration discourage actual contract renting of agricultural land. This negative evaluation of land rental options has also been characteristic of South African national land administration, though a more experimental attitude has begun to emerge under the prodding of economists trying to promote a freer market approach to rural land.

It is not entirely clear why no strong informal rental market has emerged alongside the informal property market – and also why buying and selling of land for agricultural purposes has never emerged informally. However, the underlying conditions would appear to relate to the marginal situation of home farming in the older labour migrancy economy, together with the deliberate closing off of opportunities for African small scale commercial farming under the colonial and apartheid administrations. Another factor is the way rentals are perceived in rural tribal communities.

Under the negative historical conditions for African commercial production, the residential value of land has far exceeded its production value. Even today, informal land transfers are expected to be for residential purposes. To combat homelessness and dispossession, residential use has been the understood priority in the overcrowded African reserves, as all legitimately constituted families are assumed to have a basic right to land they need to live on, and from which they can draw their consumption needs. This basic human right has served to justify residential sales of land even while the accompanying allocation of production land has declined. Land transfers for the specific purpose of agricultural production have been excluded on the grounds that rich

families should not be enabled to promote economic differentiation and disrupt the community by buying up the land of the poor, unless they can show that they need it to live on.

At the same time, the demand for agricultural land access has never been strong enough to break through these administrative barriers, as residential demand was able to do in establishing the informal residential land market. However, another contributing factor is likely to be the slipperiness and instability of rental contracts aimed at commercial production.

If unproductive land is leased, and then becomes profit-making at a significant level, the formally allocated landholder tends to feel entitled to share in the profit once a reasonable contribution to household support is surpassed, and commercial success is evident. That is, the terms of the contract are felt by the party renting out to imply a sliding scale of compensation which rises with the value of the output, while the party renting in wants to insist that the original terms are binding as agreed on, since the difference in total production is entirely due to his or her efforts. Rental contracts in sugar areas are reported to break down regularly around this issue, and sharecropping arrangements also sometimes collapse due to disagreements about revisiting the terms of the shareout.

Under current conditions, TA structures do not feel themselves willing or able to try to guarantee or arbitrate land rental agreements as they do permanent land transfers. Rental transfers are particularly difficult to deal with on an unwritten, informal basis, since the interests of the two parties tend to diverge over time. At the same time, long-established reluctance by community land administrations to support land transfers that promote economic differentiation remains a powerful factor: profit-making land use has been discouraged on tribal land since colonial times as disruptive in volatile communities which value internal peace.

All these factors around temporary land transfers determine the terrain on which impoverished, disorganized and labour-short rural households of HIV/AIDS sufferers have to find worthwhile ways to use land, which is often the only resource remaining to them once they lose access to the job market. It is pertinent here that AIDS-affected households tend to be weakly structured, with marginal tenure standing and weak internal labour mobilization in a high percentage of cases. For weak landholders, holding the line against other households that compete or encroach aggressively is difficult, even when the issue is publicly agreed permanent land boundaries. For weak households to manage and maintain temporary arrangements aimed at ensuring an income stream, at a point when they are unable to mount their own production operation, is likely to be out of the question unless official policy measures in support can be brought on line.

### **The household level: cultivation and the economic base for AIDS sufferers**

The intense peri-urban demand for land almost entirely for residential purposes has had the effect of putting the KwaNuswa densely settled areas into a quasi-suburban relation with the metro city. That is, the majority of households support themselves mainly on the wage economy, either from inside the metro boundaries or from local jobs linked into the city. However, most KwaNuswa households still retain some kind of agricultural plot, usually an intensified garden plot with hand irrigation.

KwaNuswa's agriculture has declined seriously due to overcrowding in the advantaged areas of relatively flat land where the transport routes have been laid out, and most or all large fields in better located areas are now under housing. There is usually not enough land in a family landholding to accommodate any or all of the family's children and grandchildren. Most find sites for themselves, often at some distance from the parents and relatives, and others leave the

area. This process of dispersion of families in crowded areas breaks up local alliances of related people, and leaves the community less cohesive and more impersonal.

As the area has moved economically further into the cash economy, settlement has densified as agricultural land has been converted for residential use. Agricultural land use declined from the 1950s through the mid-90s as the size of landholding shrank and commitment to wage income eclipsed reliance on home farming. However, recently this trend is reported to have reversed to some extent as unemployment has continued to rise, and more and more households have found themselves cut off from wage income. As in other areas, land has become a more common fallback option for families losing their foothold in the cash economy.

Increasing crowding and the cash economy have reduced the size of agricultural plots. Preferences by women for small intensive gardens on the home plot have also been reported from more rural areas in the eastern seacoast provinces (cf Middleton 1997, Andrew 1991), but the shift to high-value garden crops on small plots as opposed to extensive production of staple maize is very marked in the peri-urban zone. In many or most cases in-migrant families do not receive a separate formal agricultural holding at all, and nearly two thirds of the households in the KwaNyuswa sample had migrated into the area from other districts. For many of these households, which have no separately allocated agricultural land, a home garden on their residential site is their only cultivation option.

This change in the relative placing of agricultural land use for household livelihoods has contributed to a series of linked social, demographic and economic changes. As land-based livelihoods options have become less central, residential land has become more important. Recognition of land rights for women has also advanced significantly, in keeping with what are widely seen to be government priorities. The TA appears to have been relatively alert in protecting the rights of women, though there are limits on what the TA sees itself as able to do when women's emergent rights conflict with established rights of husbands and heirs. Nor has it always protected weaker households in the community, though the case histories testify that the TA has successfully protected the land of disadvantaged households and/or of AIDS sufferers in known cases.

The households which have reliable and constant access to wage work are those which enjoy a decent standard of living, or reach what can be thought of as elite status in the local context (cf May, Carter & Posel, 1997). These households are disproportionately found among the in-migrant population, since it is mainly the households with significant economic resources that are able to first put themselves into the migration stream, and secondly meet the costs of migrating into the advantaged peri-urban settlements where prices are highest on the informal land market.

The poor, who are mainly the downwardly mobile families among the locally-born but also represent long-established in-migrant households that have become disorganized, are left to work out support combinations from the alternatives available to them. As in many or most less urbanized communities, most of these poverty-linked alternatives do not involve wage work – or, otherwise, they bring in only the most marginal and lowest paid jobs, including garden work or farm labour, or the low end of the part-time domestic service sector.

Many of these alternative support options, which serve as inferior substitutes for wage work, involve either cultivation or natural resources collection, both for food supply and for income generation. In addition to these, local casual labour and the poverty end of the microenterprise category are common alternatives for the very poor. Many households in the serious poverty category, which represented about 12 percent of the KwaNyuswa sample population in the 1995



LAPC survey, made use of a diversification approach to household support. That is, the poor often tried to employ several of the inferior support options at once, so as to insure against income failure and maximize their returns as far as possible (see Table 1).

However, not all support options were equally common for the poor. Local casual labour – which pays very badly but is capable of being accessed from home, without transport costs, on an ad hoc basis at short notice and for a limited time period – was probably the most common and least satisfactory form of support. Many impoverished households made use of agriculture or gardening to improve their access to food or income, but well-organized microenterprise operations were relatively rare.

With few exceptions, how far the poor can improve or sustain their support position by using the land-based collection and production options that are available to them is limited by the level of resources they are able to put in, and the relevant resources include management authority and skill. Most poor households have neither good quality able-bodied labour available to their support tasks, nor enough cash to capitalize a significant informal business operation. Many have little production land, or none. Loss of children's labour time into school attendance and schoolwork is another factor which cuts back the total labour available to poor households trying to cultivate or run businesses. As in more rural communities, diversion of children's potential work contribution often results in nearly the entire burden defaulting to the women in the family, who also carry a number of competing domestic tasks. However, beyond the diversion of household labour time to other competing uses, poor households facing social dislocation often have problems in deploying labour internally to best advantage, and may have unemployed labour time going unused.

Beyond shortage of land under conditions of crowding, the disappearance of cattle holdings among the poor living on the edge of the metro city not only takes away their most effective vehicle for savings, but also removes the option of free manure fertilizer. With land and labour doubtfully available, cost limitations for seed, inputs and delivered water then accumulate to affect the very poor severely.

The changeover from predominant staple maize to intensified vegetable production has been central to the changes in cost factors. Vegetables make a more useful contribution to the household economy of the poor than does staple maize, which can be bought out of the industrial economy at a more competitive price in many cases. But vegetables mean intensified production, needing much less land area but carrying higher costs and therefore higher risk.

For the first time in this recent series of interviews, poor households at KwaNyuswa have consistently cited the cost of seeds as a barrier to cultivation - while maize seed of well-adapted local varieties was historically saved from the previous year's crop, seed for common vegetables has to be store-bought in envelopes for each season. Reported costs are running from R 50 to R 100, a considerable amount for an impoverished household to invest.

Water for home irrigation is a second concern, which does more to raise costs than the up-front need for seed stock. With the drying up of rivers and streams across the country due to unwise cultivation of wetland sponge areas, the need for delivered water has also become a key agricultural concern. Local households are using both recycled domestic water and delivered piped water for the hand irrigation of vegetable gardens, and are making use of plastic pipes and sprayers. Delivered water is purified and priced for drinking use, and it is not supplied for the needs of home agricultural production: instead, DWAF tends to frown on using it for home cultivation uses. This is a policy emphasis which needs to be questioned in the interests of the

rural poor. Prices for delivering piped water to individual households can now run to R 1800 or more for the initial installation - a level well beyond most poor households and particularly those hit by AIDS - and even subsidized recurrent costs are difficult for these families to bear.

James L, a disabled household head who seems to be a TB victim (Case 4), was hanging on to his cultivation option against considerable obstacles, and said he aspired to put in delivered water so that he could cultivate more effectively. He ran a very small and weakly profitable microenterprise to raise the cost of seed, but he estimated the up-front cost of having water installed at R 1800, far more than he can afford. Up to the time of the interview, he had not been able to upgrade his cultivation.

None of the households in the KwaNyuswa case histories dealing with AIDS and chronic disease were able either to hire in more land or to hire extra labour apart from Rose Z, though the TA is favourable to hiring workers and is not very strongly opposed to quiet agricultural land rentals. All these cost factors combine to hold back effective use of cultivation strategies by poor families in the densely settled peri-urban districts.

Less casual work is probably available now in fetching firewood and carrying water than was formerly the case, though it is also possible that more well-off families are hiring cultivation labour than in the past. Local firewood and water resources of usable quality are now very scarce in reach of settled areas, and better off households increasingly rely on paid infrastructural services for the bulk of their domestic uses.

The overall effect is to cut back on the value of land access as an economic fallback option for households that are not able to draw enough income from the urban economy to support themselves on their direct earning options. It is possible, though direct evidence is lacking, that the poor at KwaNyuswa may be relatively or absolutely poorer than they were ten years ago, as a result of the economic and environmental effects of densification processes driven by urban access.

However, unemployment has seemingly led to an increase in relative poverty, which is affecting many households that were not originally part of the new poor category created when the old land-giving local aristocracy fell apart. Consequently, land-based support options are reported to be coming into greater demand as lack of wage jobs undercuts the support strategies of households previously able to live off wage income. Interview data suggests that interest in agriculture as a fallback option is on the increase. However, for many poor families, cultivation activity now seems to be out of reach, due to their limited access to all the production factors.

For the better off, the picture is different. Of this grouping, those who are locally born and have inherited land may also continue to exploit cultivation options, particularly vegetable gardening, and may sell their crops. Some households in this better-off local-born category, and particularly those with older male heads who have retired from wage work, cultivate crops with the intention of selling for income. The presence of this level of well off cultivation activity also helps to sustain a moderate market for tractor cultivation services, and also for casual agricultural labour. This demand for casual labour is increasingly taken up by the poor, though this market dates at least back to the 1950s.

Since authority in contemporary rural society flows to household members who provide income support to the household unit, men in this category of retired crop farmers use their crop production income to support their authority position in the household. Possession of an income allows them to retain their status as providers, so that they avoid being marginalized in their old

age, and can better retain their claims as senior decision makers against younger household members who are active in the urban wage markets.

Crops at KwaNyuswa are commonly sold around the neighbourhood by children of the household, along the roads inside the TA community or in the nearby towns, or otherwise locally at pension day markets taking place every second month. Some more committed producers have made a practice of hiring transport to bring their crops to the Pinetown or Durban markets, or otherwise have bought their own bakkies to provide transport. Interviews report that more people are now selling crops to street traders operating in Pinetown. However, transport costs remain a significant obstacle. Whenever crops have to be transported any significant distance, the cost of hired transport is usually high enough to wipe out most or all of the profit. Because of the relatively low volume of crops being produced for sale until recently, few organized routes into outside markets have been established for KwaNyuswa producers.

Some well-off older men born in the community continue to accumulate cattle, though the KwaNyuswa cattle herd appears to have declined precipitously since the early 1980s, due to the nuisance problems of keeping stock in a community which no longer has effectively demarcated land for livestock. Cattle also continue to be kept by some households in the surviving older kinship groups, who retain a nucleus of traditional rural values. For households in this category, livestock have enough monetary and social value to compensate for the problems of raising them in densely settled areas, where their wandering unherded into gardens results in frequent disputes and law cases in the tribal court. However, the overall level of stock husbandry in KwaNyuswa at present is low.

#### **Dynamics: social dislocation and the decline of the land-based aristocracy**

Household incomes at KwaNyuswa were relatively very high on average by the mid-90s (cf Cross 1997), though the poverty sector remained. These poor households were originally concentrated among the section of the population that earlier represented the old landholding aristocracy, but have since received more recruits from the category of earlier in-migrant households. Many of the senior landholding family groupings based on male-line inheritance failed to make the investment in education needed to take the step into reliance on the wage economy instead of on land resources, and consequently fell into disarray and poverty. Much of their land then became available to later-arriving, better-resourced in-migrating families, through the informal market process.

Because of high migration, the peri-urban population is usually very unstable, with households relatively shallowly rooted in their communities of residence and frequent on-migration taking place. This population instability has in effect opened up traditional institutions such as the chiefship to permit greater civil participation and more decision freedom and access to land and earning for women, a trend which seems now to have spread from this quasi-urbanized peri-urban region to more remote areas as the cash economy penetrates more intensively into the countryside.

#### **Dynamics: weak households as a factor in land relations and poverty**

However, this loosening of civil institutions has gone along with a breakdown of social cohesion more generally, and contributed to widespread social dislocation. Households and families have lost cohesion to a serious degree, and for at least 20 years a high percentage of households have had weak, non-standard structures, not based on married nuclear family connections. The rate of

formal marriage has fallen compared to more rural African communities, a sign of relative disintegration of social reproduction capacity in the community at large.

As a result, the KwaNyuswa population has come to include two elements: first a local-born population which includes a high share of weak households suffering from social dislocation and the effects of being superseded in authority positions by in-migrants, and second the relatively recent in-migrant population, which includes a high share of better off households. This in-migrant grouping concentrates on strong married households in part because of the filtering effect of the migration process itself: in order to mobilize the resources needed for a move households normally need resources - and also cohesion and discipline - and in order to qualify to obtain land rights the new outside households formally need to be able to show that they are structured around a married relation, though this requirement is sometimes bypassed.

In addition to a high rate of women-headed households, there are also many KwaNyuswa households comprising unmarried relatives, adult brothers living with sisters, or brothers on their own without any female relations. In such cases, land has been passed down by default inheritance, since such unmarried households do not qualify to obtain land rights, and single people do not have the standing even to hold land once they inherit it. This leaves tenure somewhat insecure for women-headed households and households of single people.

For any consideration of the effects of AIDS on land tenure, this category is important, because it is into this grouping that AIDS-affected households are driven by the effects of the virus. Within these weakened households, there often seems to be little mutual support capacity, so that families can comprise groups of weakly connected adults without a clear and respected head. Members of these families often do not pool their income effectively, take responsibility for each other, or help to support each other on a reliable basis. Households suffering badly from this kind of internal dissolution have little capacity for either short-term support or long-term accumulation.

The effect of HIV/AIDS on the trend toward damaged households is not accurately known, but is likely to have accelerated family breakdown, and left more land in the hands of families of unmarried adults who often do not have either income or labour capacity to use the land, or do not have internal discipline to be able to deploy the human resources of their families so as to run a cultivation operation.

Earlier research in the peri-urban zone suggests that the factor of land descending into the hands of weak women-headed households played a considerable role in the early development and expansion of the informal land market, since weak landholders are the ones most likely to feel that their tenure is insecure and that their best course is to sell the land and realize some cash before their land asset is lost to stronger neighbours. Difficulties for the poor in weak households in mobilizing the human and financial resources to put their land into production appear to be a contributing factor here, since land once out of production is at risk of being sold off cheaply in a distress sale the next time the household faces a crisis. However, the case data does not confirm high levels of distress sales among AIDS-affected peri-urban households, though some cases were recorded.

With the devastating combined effects of AIDS on household income and household labour capacity, the entry of large numbers of HIV/AIDS cases into the land and household equation in the late 80s and the 90s will have been likely to promote the processes of impoverishment around land which had already been started by population mobility triggered by urban job search. From the qualitative data, it is not clear how far HIV/AIDS has had the effect of putting land on the

informal market, by undercutting the capacity of already weak households to put together a cultivation operation, while at the same time drastically raising the household's need for cash.