

# Warwick Junction

## Durban, South Africa

An inclusive space for informal workers in a City seeking spatial justice



### History of Warwick:

Warwick Junction is the primary transport interchange in the city and in any one day this area accommodates nearly half a million commuters and between 6,000 and 8,000 informal street and market traders. Unlike many other cities in the Global South, informal traders are integrated into the very fabric of the inner city. There are multiple trading nodes and nine distinct markets, specializing in different goods: fresh produce, cooked food, traditional medicine, clothes, household goods and even music.

Given the confluence of rail, taxi and bus transport, this area has always been a natural market for street traders. During the height of apartheid however, informal trading was harshly controlled. By the mid-1990's nearly 4,000 traders were working in the area but it remained underserved and neglected. In 1996 the city council launched an urban renewal initiative – the Warwick Junction Project. The project was mandated to focus on, among other issues, safety, cleanliness, trading and employment opportunities and the efficiency of public transport. The area-based team initiated substantial capital works and established a number of operations teams to deal with issues as diverse as curbside cleaning, ablution facilities, child care facilities and pavement sleeping. Within three years a transformation was visible in Warwick Junction. The development process encouraged unprecedented levels of volunteerism as expressed through participation in community mobilization, public cleaning campaigns and community policing.

While infrastructure has continued to undergo upgrades, more recent work in the area has included occupational health and safety programmes, legal advocacy that looks to improve rights awareness, the assessment and development of improved tools, social work with various groups and the training of tour guides.

### Warwick by numbers:

- Between 6000 and 8000 informal traders
- 400000+ people passing through the area each day
- 9 markets and additional trading nodes
- An estimated 18000 jobs strengthened and stabilised
- By implication the livelihoods earned support a wider community of around 40000 people
- 10000 tourists and students visited on a Markets of Warwick Tour over last 8 years
- 6000+ ears of corn cooked daily at Mealie Market



Access a copy of our book '**Working in Warwick**' in the Resources section on our website:  
[www.aet.org.za/resources](http://www.aet.org.za/resources)

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### Asiye eTafuleni's Organisational Focus:

Asiye eTafuleni is a non-profit organization that aims to strengthen the social, environmental and economic value in Warwick Junction by continuing the local government's earlier work. AeT was founded in 2008 by Patrick Ndlovu and Richard Dobson- who were both previously involved in the Warwick Junction Urban Renewal Program. The organization now engages with deeper and evolving trader needs that have arisen as a result of their achieving the right to work in this space. The organisation does so in the following ways:

**Inclusive Design:** AeT brings communities together through inclusive planning and design processes to build a better, more sustainable urban future for everyone.

**Advocacy:** AeT works to increase the voice and visibility of informal workers within urban planning and policy processes and change attitudes and perceptions about informal work among policy makers, educators and built environment professionals.

**Urban Intelligence:** Research and local dialogue are used to gain intelligence about the urban environment and how informal workers and others operate in this environment.

**Education:** AeT provides opportunities for students, the public, tourists and built environment professionals to learn about inclusive development and the realities of urban informalities.

### Notable Practice

Warwick Junction is an area that is recognised for significant informal worker organisations and community structures. The presence of these organisations over the years has led to noteworthy collaboration and participation in the development of various proposals and the areas vibrancy.

The urban regeneration of Warwick Junction was a post-apartheid intervention that sought to dismantle the division of space- the process that was undertaken is relevant for other cities with spatial injustice challenges. It was a programme that supported informal workers through changes to by-laws and policy as well as responsive and innovative infrastructure that repurposed public space in order to support sustained livelihoods. This was made possible through continued local government support. While individual incomes are often still modest, traders support large families living in the poorest parts of the city. Traders provide essential goods and services to nearly half a million daily commuters. Together these incomes and activities contribute significantly to the urban economy.



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