THE INKATHALO CONVERSATIONS

PHASE ONE COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

SUBMISSION INTO THE REVIEW OF *THE STREET PEOPLE POLICY, 2013 (Policy Number 12398b)* AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CITYWIDE STRATEGY

THE INKATHALO CONVERSATIONS:
PHASE ONE COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

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FOREWORDS

MELENE ROSSOUW

The preamble to our Constitution[1] lays down the foundation for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people. Our Constitution is hailed as one of the most progressive in the world. One of the reasons is that it strikes a balance between representative and participatory democracy. Our Constitution provides the South African citizen with the right and opportunity to get involved, during elections and beyond, in deciding upon matters that concern them or the society they live in, and to hold authorities to account. In the interest of democracy, public participation fosters more inclusive and legitimate decision-making through the involvement and input of its citizens. It enables civil society to contribute towards the quality of laws and policies of the country, and to monitor and influence governmental action from its conception to its implementation. It should also enable those members of society whose voices are traditionally less heard to make their needs and opinions known.

> *"The state cannot merely act on behalf of the people – it has to act with the people, working together to provide opportunities for the advancement of all communities." – National Development Plan 2030[2]*

The danger of not facilitating meaningful public participation holds a multitude of challenges such as poor governance and a lack of accountability, transparency, ownership, and responsiveness in democratic processes. Our 27 years of democracy has not lived up to the ideals of our constitutional order. This is evident in a myriad of cases before the Constitutional Court over the last two decades, dealing specifically with the lack of public and meaningful engagement in the development of laws, policies, plans, and strategies that have a direct impact on the lives of the people.

Through The Inkathalo Conversations platform, I believe that we have not only embarked on, but also co-created, a groundbreaking and sustainable process of public engagement in line with what our constitutional democracy envisaged. A process where every citizen, especially the minority, marginalised, vulnerable, and disenfranchised have the right to be heard. After all, they most often directly feel the effects of poorly constructed laws and policies in the harshest way. The suppression of the people's voices, their experiences and opinions in decision-making has had three major consequences. Firstly, it has tarnished the relationship of trust between the government and its citizens. Secondly, it has given rise to poorly developed policies, plans and strategies because they did not contain the perspectives and experiences of the people who are directly impacted by them. Thirdly, there has been no responsibility and ownership taken by the citizens for these policies, because they cannot see themselves reflected in them.

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[1] The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:
https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/constitution/saconstitution-web-eng.pdf

[2] National Development Plan 2030: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf

It is evident in the groundswell of revolt and activism that the people are not satisfied with the actions of government. No longer will they accept being treated as mere recipients of State largesse but as an active and equal partner in developing polices and finding solutions to the problems that emerge. The Inkathalo Conversations balanced the scales of power. It was the first pre-stakeholder engagement process dealing with the structural and systemic challenges impacting homelessness in the City of Cape Town. The comprehensive and judicious recommendations contained in this report should form the basis from which the policy drafters develop a more comprehensive, practical, and transformational Street People Policy.

Remarkable but not surprising was the consistent daily attendance, participation and written submissions received by ordinary citizens, people who have experienced homelessness, businesses, non-governmental organisations as well as various spheres of government. This has added a richness and depth to the discussions. The diversity of stakeholders contributed significantly towards knowledge and understanding of the sector, the challenges, lacunae and opportunities. What this process has also shown us is that if people have a genuine willingness, tolerance, and openness to grapple with some of the most complex challenges plaguing our society, we can find meaningful solutions as a collective.

Melene Rossouw

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LORENZO DAVIDS

On 4 October 2000, the Constitutional Court handed down a landmark judgement in the matter of the Government of the Republic of South Africa v Grootboom and Others. Irene Grootboom, a community leader from Wallacedene in Cape Town, along with other adults and children from the community found themselves on the receiving end of a forceful eviction, which rendered them homeless.

The court found that the State had a duty to ensure the fulfillment and attainment of a series of socio-economic rights, and in this case in particular, the right to housing and shelter. Judge Zac Yacoob found that the State had to fulfill the "progressive realisation" of section 26(2) of the Constitution, which imposed a duty on the state to progressively facilitate access to housing by examining legal, administrative, operational and financial hurdles and, where possible, lowering these over time. The Court ruled that housing should be made accessible "*not only to a larger number of people but also to a wider range of people.*"

Ms Grootboom and her compatriots extracted a landmark ruling from the Constitutional Court that compels government to attend to socio-economic rights as much as they do to their other duties, in particular, the needs of the unhoused and the homeless in this instance.

Ms Grootboom sadly passed on in 2008 – while still waiting for her house.

It is the legacy of Irene Grootboom and her relentless pursuit for adequate housing that forms the motivation for this report. It remains a story of epic tragedy that the plight of some 14 000 homeless citizens who sleep on the streets of our cities and towns at night, as well as thousands of others who live in backyard and informal housing conditions, remains intractably unsolved some 21 years later.

With leading academics, robust activists, health, housing and nutrition experts, and homeless people themselves all living side by side, it is astounding that no comprehensive and sense-making conversations were taking place to solve this problem. There have been plenty of kneejerk interventions, 'not in my backyard' (nimby) and classist engagements along with reams of newsprint on the homeless and housing crisis. Let us be clear: the homeless, their housing, health, work opportunities and nutrition requirements are inextricably linked in any solution that is to be considered in future. Addressing one and not the other is tantamount to putting tires on a car while the engine has not been placed.

What we do know is that over the years large sums of taxpayers' money have been spent on interventions that are not fundamentally going to change the diverse and complex plight of the homeless.

It is against that background that The Inkathalo Conversations was launched in August 2020. It was in response to an initial request from the City of Cape Town that an independent process be launched to conduct pre-public participation conversations with everyone – the homeless, the suburbs, the townships, the corporate sector and the government – to gather information about the homeless and their homelessness and the issues that affect us all as citizens, about this thing we call our common humanity.

The Inkathalo Conversations was premised on the ideals expressed in the Preamble to our Constitution: a common respect for all, a duty to do justice, a call to equity, a commitment to safety, and a determination

to practice inclusivity and to do the work of building the prosperity of all. The weeks of conversations were layered with emotion, intelligence, experience, and learning. The core discovery was that we have allowed a visible and rich common humanity to be marred and abused by blinkered and selfish behaviours, poor policy thinking, human rights avoidance, political accommodation of racism and classism, and deliberate exclusionary practices towards a group of people based on their living status.

This report is about human beings. People. Our neighbours. Our citizens. They have no homes. In addition, they often have no food or access to adequate health care services. However, it is also about our own journey of becoming 'unhuman' as we have encountered their presence and their behaviour. The most startling consequence of the negative views held by large sections of the citizens is how it has dehumanised – made them unhuman – that very group who assert their superior humanity over the one who seeks for food in their dustbins or sleeps in front of their business premises. The one group has been dehumanised by their poverty, having to resort to often unacceptable social behaviours to survive and gain recognition, while the other has been dehumanised by their privilege and abundance.

The Inkathalo Conversations was about listening and caring so that our common humanity can be reignited. But more than just that. This report is about firm recommendations and practical, concrete proposals that should be used to impact four areas: how government funds this challenge; how government develops policy on this issue; how government works with agencies to develop strategies to both prevent and solve the challenges surrounding homelessness; and finally, how they develop a new rights-based, caring and inclusive message and language for all citizens about all people who live, school and work in the City.

This report puts an end to the notion of 'getting rid of the homeless problem' and calls for an intelligent engagement at civic, city, provincial and national level to solve the issues and address the challenges that homelessness presents to our society.

Homelessness in Cape Town in particular is deeply linked to the indescribable trauma of forced removals. The injustice of seeing your home bulldozed as you stood on the sidewalk with your family and your possessions, having your family broken up and dispersed across the Cape Flats, and losing the community and identity with the people and things you valued, caused some to sink deep into the pavements of the CBD, unable to move on.

Today, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th generations of historically traumatised people are still on our city streets. Some still have jobs. Others have become alcoholics, schizophrenics and physically sick. In many Cape Flats families, it is common to talk about our uncles, nephews, and cousins who, due to trauma and injustice, opted to live on the streets in the CBD.

We have an opportunity to fix one of the most vicious Apartheid legacies caused by the Group Areas Act and to do justice to a community that carries the deep wounds of an injustice done to their grandparents and parents. That should be where the conversation about fixing Cape Town's homelessness should start.

Inkathalo is about a caring conversation that rediscovers a common humanity, rebuilds a mutual trust and reignites the enthusiasm to work towards a truly transformed country. For Irene Grootboom. For Danny Oosthuizen. For Siyabulela Gwegwe. For us.

Lorenzo A Davids
Lead Facilitator

REPORT OVERVIEW

The Inkathalo Conversations is a platform to advance and deepen who we are as a people, as a country and as a democracy. The first of The Inkathalo Conversations delves into the complex issue of homelessness in the City of Cape Town. The conversation was structured around a robust engagement methodology with the aim of facilitating dialogue among stakeholders. The stated outcome was to make direct and meaningful input into the decision-making process pertaining to the review of the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (City of Cape Town, 2013)*[3] and recommendations towards a citywide strategy to address homelessness in Cape Town.

Using the dialogical approach, a wealth of lived experiences surfaced through the narratives of those who have experienced homelessness as well as those working alongside homeless individuals. The understandings that emerged and the recommendations received for amending the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* and for developing a strategy that is founded on justice, have been documented in this report.

On 31 July 2020, the City of Cape Town, through the office of Councillor Zahid Badroodien, requested The Inkathalo Conversations to facilitate an independent 'pre-public participation process' that would provide recommendations that would improve the City's policies and strategies to address homelessness. The content of the first phase of the dialogues is contained in this Phase One Comprehensive Report and is shared with the public and the City of Cape Town. The Inkathalo Conversations Phase One began on Wednesday, 19 August 2020 and concluded on Wednesday, 23 September 2020.

The Inkathalo Conversations is guided by the preamble to the Constitution and its conversations are based on the duty to, "*heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.*"

Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

We, the people of South Africa,

Recognise the injustices of our past;

Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;

Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and

Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

We, therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to –

Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;

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[3] City of Cape Town Street People Policy (Policy Number 12398b), Revised and Approved: 04 December 2013 C24/12/13 https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Bylaws%20and%20policies/Street%20People%20-%20%28Policy%20number%2012398B%29%20approved%20on%2004%20December%202013.pdf

> **Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;**
> **Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and**
> **Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.**
> May God protect our people.
> Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika. Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso. God seën Suid-Afrika. God bless South Africa.
> Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika. Hosi katekisa Afrika.

PURPOSE OF THE PHASE ONE COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

The systemic nature of homelessness means that there are many interconnected parts. The systems approach used during the dialogues was intentional in its design to demonstrate the connectedness of individual parts. As such, this report seeks to:

- Document and present the conversations that took place through a systemic lens, with a deep appreciation for the interconnectedness of people, communities, and institutions;
- Reflect the system and reveal the tensions that exist within it, recognising the complexity of humanity, the society we have created, and the future we continue to shape;
- Tell the stories of those who are familiar with being silenced and have bravely offered their voices – believing and trusting that a better humanity can emerge from our collective reflections;
- Reference experiences and narratives against existing research and data captured in existing publications and reports, particularly case studies and experiences in Cape Town;
- Highlight challenges, concerns, and urgent justice actions in a deliberate pursuit of the constitutionally enshrined rights which the South African democracy offers its citizens; and
- Invite us all to hope and to dream again, by showing what is possible when we have "*faith in* [our] *power to make and remake, to create and re-create, faith in* [our] *vocation to be more fully human*" (Freire, 1968).

The Inkathalo Conversations is a platform for real stories to be heard and for those who hear them to develop a deep understanding in order to treat one another with love, humility, compassion and justice. Those reading the Phase One Comprehensive Report might find their own personal beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, judgements, and assumptions reflected or challenged in many ways. It is our hope that this report remains an invitation to read courageously and to engage meaningfully.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PHASE ONE COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

The structure of the report is depicted in Figure 1. The most prominent themes that emerged are grouped into eight core areas, referred to as **Emergent Conversations**. The size of each bubble in Figure 1 indicates the frequency with which certain topics have been raised in relation to one another. Within each theme, examples of embryonic solutions and promising new developments are presented.

Secondly, the report contains a number of **Special Features** – these represent specific issues, events and occurrences that have taken place because of a number of interconnected actions and their systemic consequences, which have surfaced in addition to the emergent theme, referred to above.

Thirdly, the report shares the stories of selected individuals experiencing homelessness. The section **Not a Single Story** portrays these individuals' varying pathways into their current circumstances, showing that homelessness does not have just one story and that our lives embody multiple themes.

Figure 1: Content Map of the Phase One Comprehensive Report

Emergent Conversations

Chapters present a systematic overview of what emerged through the Inkathalo Conversations.

1. "The Soul of the City": Society and Homelessness
2. Inter/Intra-Sectoral Connection and Collaboration
3. Interventions
4. Criminalisation of Homelessness and Institutionalised Violence
5. Socio-economic Drivers and Obstacles
6. "Houselessness": The Physical Nature of Homelessness
7. The Concept of Family, Home and Community
8. Resilience and Agency

Special Features

These features highlight specific issues, events or circumstances, which reveal many facets to home lessness.

- Strandfontein: A Window into an Everyday Crisis
- The Economy of Skarreling
- Homeless Tax

"Not a Single Story"

Homelessness does not have a single story. This series of short stories from streetless engagements depicts some of the many different pathways into homelessness.

Emergent Conversations

A detailed analysis and synthesis of the submitted data and inputs received reveals eight critical conversations that translate into eight chapters in the report. These chapters comprise personal narratives, sector presentations and publications, and research pieces.

Chapter 1: The Soul of the City – Society and Homelessness

This chapter captures some of the ways in which society continues to perpetuate harmful and discriminatory narratives, attitudes, and behaviours towards those who are homeless. It shows how homeless individuals navigate perceptions, stigmas, and derogatory treatment, and how these experiences impact on their own identities. Inputs received from suburban homeowners, community action networks, and faith-based groups reveal the dissonant narratives that exist among 'the housed' and the need for a new human narrative that reflects the rights of all, as depicted in the South African Constitution.

Chapter 2: Inter/Intra-sectoral Connection and Collaboration

This chapter describes the institutional landscape that seeks to address homelessness between levels, arms and agencies of government and between institutions. Through an understanding of various service delivery mandates, responsibilities, and institutional constraints, the systemic gaps and impediments to progress become apparent and are discussed.

Chapter 3: Interventions

This chapter analyses existing responses to homelessness. It looks at what is being done by government as well as the NGO sector in addressing homelessness. While it raises many of the challenges, shortcomings and criticism of interventions (including feedback from homeless individuals), it also provides insight into some of the very real constraints faced by those serving in this space, pointing towards opportunities for change.

Chapter 4: Criminalisation of Homelessness and Institutionalised Violence

This chapter details the abuse and injustice suffered by homeless individuals in the City daily. The accounts provided by homeless individuals overwhelmingly indicate that society and the State associate homelessness with criminality. This informs the State's response to those experiencing homelessness, executed mainly through security and law enforcement agencies. Ironically, the harassment, denial of justice, and in some cases, outright violence experienced by homeless individuals, in turn render them the victims of crimes committed against them. This violence and injustice have been amplified by events such as the City of Cape Town's Strandfontein Homeless Camp in 2020.

Chapter 5: Socio-economic Drivers and Obstacles

This chapter describes the ecosystem surrounding homelessness. It analyses the challenges associated with building sustainable livelihoods within a system burdened by poverty. Low economic growth, high rates of unemployment, spatial inequality and the social malaise in many Cape Town communities are just some of the macro-challenges that influence personal circumstances. However, the chapter surfaces unexpected tales of resourcefulness and ingenuity within the homeless ecosystem that reveal a hidden world of economic opportunity.

Chapter 6: Houselessness – The Physical Nature of Homelessness

This chapter delves into the challenges of a life lived without shelter. It investigates safety and ownership, privacy and ablution, and the psychosocial implications of constant insecurity. It explores the tensions that exist in providing housing to the homeless in the context of a broader South African housing crisis, while presenting emergent local models and promising international examples.

Chapter 7: The Concept of Family, Home and Community

This chapter unveils the diversity of familial experiences among homeless individuals. It details stories of trauma, loss, abuse, and neglect, as well as insight into well-functioning families and valued childhood memories among the homeless. It became evident that the concept of family, home and community is a sought after and popular notion with homeless persons, with many associating such family concepts with groups of people experiencing homelessness, faith-based communities, shelters and even prison.

Chapter 8: Resilience and Agency

This chapter explores the tensions between vulnerability and the inner strength, volition, and capabilities of people who are so often considered helpless. Navigating complex personal and social identities, individuals use their agency in various ways, whether constructive or detrimental. The resilience and potential of individuals and collectives on the street are documented through meaningful stories of courage, activism and self-organising.

Special Features

The three Special Features include incredible stories of the entrepreneurial spirit of homeless individuals (*The Economy of 'Skarreling'*), some of the more nuanced challenges associated with surviving and exiting homelessness (*Homeless Tax*), and inspiring accounts of active citizenship arising from surprising places *(Strandfontein: 'A window into an Everyday Crisis')*. The latter Special Features section presents the story of the City of Cape Town's Strandfontein Homeless Camp intervention as told by those who participated in The Inkathalo Conversations. It must be noted that this account cannot do justice to the Strandfontein story. It became evident from the stories told by both homeless individuals and sector-based organisations that a deeper inquiry is required and that an intentional process for individual and collective healing is needed.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are compiled largely from the written and oral submissions made by participants in Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations, while some recommendations are informed by the synthesis of emergent conversations. While Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations sought to provide recommendations into the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* and the development of a strategy, the recommendations received may have meaningful implications for various stakeholders at National, Provincial and City level, as well as for Civil Society organisations, communities and individuals.

The recommendations are grouped as follows, and are further categorised under each heading:

- Recommendations at an Ecosystem Level;

- Recommendations into the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* and Development of a Strategy; and
- Recommendations for Interventions/Programmes.

The recommendations ask, 'how might we respond?' The word 'might' is itself an invitation to re-imagine – an appreciative inquiry into the praxis of homelessness and an invitation to think critically about what is emerging in the system in a new way by using creative, critical and problem-solving mindsets.

The recommendations also serve as thought pieces to provoke, challenge and stimulate our collective thinking. While the report intends to invite new thinking about the concepts, practices, and structures that constitute the current ecosystem, it also seeks to question the intentions of these thinking frames in the hope that we will continually seek to strengthen, undo, and re-commit ourselves and our efforts towards the common good.

OUR HOPE

It is our hope that the Phase One Comprehensive Report will serve the call in the preamble to the Constitution to "*heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.*" It is our hope that this report ignites the hearts of the readers to compassionate action and a lifestyle of justice. It is also our hope that this process and this report deepen who we are as a people, as a country, and as a democracy – and most importantly, invite you to be a part of that same journey.

It is our hope that the various roleplayers and stakeholders in the sector will take time to digest the report and provide their input and comments, which can be collated into a second phase response to the report.

This report is a collation of inputs made by a wide variety of people and so it is to be expected that terms and institutions are referred to differently by the presenters and participants. We have standardised the references where to do so would not change the nature and tone of the actual words used, but for purposes of clarification we provide the following explanations.

- The City of Cape Town is sometimes referred to as the 'City'; the word 'city' is used when not specifically referring to The City of Cape Town.
- The Department of Social Development and Early Childhood Development, a department in the City, is sometimes referred to as 'the Social Development Department', while the Western Cape Government's Department of Social Development is referred to WC Department of Social Development.
- 'The Constitution' refers to The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.
- There are a multitude of ways to refer to people experiencing homelessness. The City uses the term 'street people' in many of its policies and reports and presentations and we have kept these references. We prefer the terms 'homeless individuals', 'individuals experiencing or who have experienced homelessness' and have used these terms. Where people who have experienced homelessness self refer as 'drifter' or other such terms, we have not changed their words.
- References to 'Law Enforcement' are to a specific agency of the City of Cape Town tasked with enforcing the City's by-laws; 'law enforcement' speaks to the act of enforcing the law, which is a function of the agency, Law Enforcement, as well as other agencies mandated as such, like SAPS, private security firms and CIDs.

The Inkathalo Conversations was made up of a series of dialogues, conversations and discussions; we have used all of these three terms in our report to describe the different settings in which information was gathered.

INTRODUCING THE INKATHALO CONVERSATIONS

The Inkathalo Conversations: In Conversation about Homelessness

The Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote in one of his works titled *Politics*, around 330BC, that, "*it is evident that the form of government is best in which every man, whoever he is, can act best and live happily.*"

In its pursuit of building safe, just, equitable, inclusive and prosperous democratic societies across the world, The Inkathalo Conversations works to advance forms of government in which all members of society can "*act best and live happily.*"

Aristotle further believed that, *"the true forms of government, therefore, are those in which the one, or the few, or the many, govern with a view to the common interest; but governments which rule with a view to the private interest, whether to the one, or the few, or of the many, are perversions."* In the age of disruption and the 'far-worse-off-normal' during and after COVID-19, the majority of the world's population will continue to face vulnerabilities across a range of issues. From growing unemployment to food scarcity and

corruption, it has become a matter of duty to stand together as a collective of good people from diverse persuasions to build the country of our dreams.

Part of the reason Aristotle's over 200 writings advance democratic systems is that he believed in "*the wisdom of crowds.*" It was quite a remarkably modern idea for his time. About the criticisms he received on the concept of democracy – crowds deciding on the form of government they want – he wrote, "*If the people are not utterly degraded, although individually they may be worse judges than those who have special knowledge, as a body, they are as good or better.*"

Even at our worst – we remain "*we the people*" to whom the preamble to our Constitution refers. Even at times though utterly degraded, we are still better when we stand as a collective in our pursuit of a just, equitable, inclusive, safe, and prosperous democracy.

In our commitment to build a robust and engaged democracy based on soundly reasoned values, we do so with a view to those who will come after us. It is in the nature of democratic public life that criticism is what fortifies democracies from quietly migrating to becoming oligarchies, fiefdoms, and totalitarian states. If the voices of criticism are silenced, democracy as an institution dies a slow, agonising death. In the words of Paulo Freire (1968), "*To glorify democracy and to silence the people is a farce; to discourse on humanism and to negate people is a lie.*"

As facilitators of citizen movements and of public and civic life, The Inkathalo Conversations believes that deep, frank, respectful, and contested conversations are important to preserve democracy. The greatest work of public service is to show those that do not believe that such engagements hold the ideals of democratic dialogue and constitutional values as primary cornerstones. For it is only when we embrace our critics that we are true democrats. It is only when we stand alongside our adversaries to build a safe, equitable, inclusive, just, and prosperous democracy that we can claim any greatness.

In Doris Kearns Goodwin's 2006 book, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, she explores the extraordinary array of personal qualities that allowed Lincoln first to appoint, then to win over, men who had previously opposed him, and reveals how Lincoln's bold and brilliant actions helped him steer the USA through its darkest days. Democracies are stronger and at their best when they have a 'Team of Rivals' whose humble brilliance and unbowed contestation inspires our narratives and works to hold our democracy in their careful hands to nurture its growth and to protect all its people.

The Inkathalo Conversations is a call to a conversation to work together in diversity, to respect each other, to heal the hurts and to build our country. It does not ask of us to insulate ourselves from criticism. For on the journey to build this country, it is the voices of our critics, more than those of loyalists, that we should heed.

The Inkathalo Conversations is a call to dialogue, defined by Paulo Freire *as "the encounter between men* [and women]*, mediated by the world, in order to name the world.*" He speaks of dialogue being a horizontal relationship founded upon love, humility, faith, hope and critical thinking. Freire said, "*Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people… Dialogue further requires an intense faith in humankind, faith in their power to make and remake, to create and re-create, faith in*

their vocation to be more fully human (which is not the privilege of an elite, but the birth right of all)" (Freire, 1968).

We do this work of holding The Inkathalo Conversations because of our deep love for the other – for every citizen, for all the people who live in this great land.

The word Inkathalo originates from the Xhosa phrase that means, 'to show deep care for someone who is crying and showing deep emotion while crying*.* It is a word that reaches out to the other – it is filled with empathy and concern for the other's wellbeing.

The Inkathalo Conversations is about being human towards what we see in front of us – of being moved by the other's tears so that it compels us to act, to do something that will stop their tears and bring light and sunshine to their eyes once again. Taking broken stories and turning them into conversations of hope and inspiration, it looks towards a bright future in which care and concern will become the standards for normal life. Finally, The Inkathalo Conversations is about justice – it is about making sure that the things that caused hurt, pain and suffering are removed, and that justice prevails – a justice that makes people smile and not cry. Because we love all, The Inkathalo Conversations is not about destroying and hurting – it is about building and healing.

It is where the story of the other is received without judgment, where we uphold the idea that, *"at the point of encounter there are neither utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know"* (Freire, 1968). It is about holding conversations that dry the tears of the nation and replace them with the joy of a better future. Therefore, we speak with care about the individual and the state, about the neighbourhood and the corporation, about the street and the office block, and about the suburb and the township.

The purpose of holding The Inkathalo Conversations is to hold conversations that demonstrate care –we listen with care, we speak with care, we ponder with care. Therefore, this is The Inkathalo Conversations – a conversation to advance and deepen who we are as a people, as a country, and as a democracy.

We will stand against all perversions of democracy and we will work to ensure we can all – every citizen – "*act best and live happily*."

A Statement on Human Rights and Justice Concerns Raised during Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations

> "…*Denunciation is impossible without a commitment to transform, and there is no transformation without action"* (Freire, 1968).

The reader of this report will be met with social justice and human rights violations that emerged during The Inkathalo Conversations. As a platform for dialogue and not official inquisition, The Inkathalo Conversations denounces the activities and violations described, and recognises the need for structured investigation and formal inquiry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Inkathalo Conversations would like to acknowledge and thank the following people for their significant contribution towards the process as well as the compilation of this report:

- Those who have experienced and continue to experience homelessness in the City of Cape Town, who remain the ultimate experts on homelessness.

- The individuals who have experienced homelessness and who participated in The Inkathalo Conversations by sharing their stories, as presenters and as participants in the Focus Group discussions.

- The individuals who have experienced homelessness and who participated in The Inkathalo Conversations by attending and being part of the audience that engaged in the dialogues.

- All who presented at The Inkathalo Conversations (listed in Part II), giving of their time to prepare, present and participate in this process.

- Representatives of stakeholder organisations and members of the public who attended The Inkathalo Conversations and enriched the engagements.

- The members of the Voluntary Advisory Council (listed in Part II) who offered their time, effort, support and heartfelt commitment to this process, and who served as wells of knowledge and pillars of accountability.

- Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for Community Services and Health: Councillor Zahid Badroodien and his office, for the invitation to provide input into the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* review and development of a strategy. A vote of thanks is given for their ongoing engagement, openness, and support.

- The City of Cape Town for availing the Claremont Civic Centre for use by The Inkathalo Conversations in August and September 2020.

- The organisations who convened, facilitated, and resourced The Inkathalo Conversations, namely Women Lead Movement and The Community Chest, as well as their dedicated staff. A special vote of thanks to the Project Director, Ms Colleen Brocker.

- Special thanks go to the Lead Facilitators of the process, Ms Melene Roussouw and Mr Lorenzo Davids.

- The members of the Design Team (listed in Part II), who gave of their time to listen deeply throughout the dialogues, to capture the conversations, and to compile this report.

- The specialist editors of the Phase One Comprehensive Report, Ms Zenariah Barends and Ms Caryn Gootkin.

PART II: CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

The definition of 'homelessness' is unclear and varies across the socio-global context. This section explores some of the myriad of definitions, from international perspectives expressed in research and by global networks, to those reflected in local (city-level) policies, to definitions provided by those experiencing homelessness in Cape Town.

In a study conducted by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and quoted by Bassuk et al (2020), a homeless individual is defined according to criteria which include someone who "*lacks a fixed night-time address; who lives in a place not usually designated for regular habitation such as a car, abandoned building, or park; those residing in emergency shelters, transitional housing, safe havens, and hotels/motels; those who are evicted and unlikely to find housing within 14 days; and unaccompanied youth or families who have been precariously housed and are unlikely to find housing owing to chronic disabilities, physical or mental health issues, substance abuse, domestic violence, or child abuse*" (Bassuk et al., 2020:248).

The United States Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act extends their definition to include "*those at imminent risk of homelessness (14 days to leave a stable residence and no place to go); families who have either not lived independently in permanent housing for long periods or have moved frequently; those who will likely continue to experience housing instability owing to factors such as domestic violence, disability, or employment barriers; and those who are considered homeless by other federal agencies such as the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Labor, and Justice*" (Bassuk et al., 2020:249).

The Institute of Global Homelessness defines homelessness across three broad categories:

- people without accommodation;
- people living in temporary or crisis accommodation; and
- people living in severely inadequate and insecure accommodation.

Their expansion on each of these categories, as well as their focus areas as an organisation are depicted in Figure 2 to follow. What is notable is the demarcation of their mandate to a selected set of circumstances. This sets a precedent for differentiation across the description of homelessness and exemplifies an approach to concentrating efforts based on context, expertise, and availability of resources.

Figure 2: Categories of Homelessness, The Institute of Global Homelessness (2015)[4]

People without accommodation	People living in temporary or crisis accommodation	People living in severely inadequate and insecure accommodation
1A People sleeping in the streets or in other open spaces (such as parks, railway embankments, under bridges, on pavement, on river banks, in forests, etc.)	2A People staying in night shelters (where occupants have to renegotiate their accommodation nightly)	3A People sharing with friends and relatives on a temporary basis
		3B People living under threat of violence
1B People sleeping in public roofed spaces or buildings not intended for human habitation (such as bus and railway stations, taxi ranks, derelict buildings, public buildings, etc.)	2B People living in homeless hostels and other types of temporary accommodation for homeless people (where occupants have a designated bed or room)	3C People living in cheap hotels, bed and breakfasts and similar
		3D People squatting in conventional housing
	2C Women and children living in refuges for those fleeing domestic violence	3E People living in conventional housing that is unfit for human habitation
1C People sleeping in their cars, rickshaws, open fishing boats and other forms of transport		3F People living in trailers, caravans and tents
	2D People living in camps provided for 'internally displaced people' i.e. those who have fled their homes as a result of armed conflict, natural or human-made disasters, human rights violations, development projects, etc. but have not crossed international borders	3G People living in extremely overcrowded conditions
1D 'Pavement dwellers' - individuals or households who live on the street in a regular spot, usually with some form of makeshift cover		3H People living in non-conventional buildings and temporary structures, including those living in slums/informal settlements
	2E People living in camps or reception centres/temporary accommodation for asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants	

Helvie and Kunstmann (cited in Hendricks et al, 2015) suggest that a new definition needs to be developed, noting that even this might not apply in the same way to all developing countries. Gideon (2015), who researched homelessness in Cape Town in 2015, used the following categories to expound on the phenomenon of homelessness:

- characteristics of people who find themselves homeless;
- pathways to homelessness;
- the individual and societal perceptions;
- the homeless culture;
- interventions regarding homelessness; and
- the extent of the social concern of homelessness.

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[4] The Institute of Global Homelessness (2015): https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/05/CASEY_Louise_Paper.pdf

A *Street People Dialogue* draft report authored by the City of Cape Town's Department of Social Development and Early Childhood Development in 2019, defines homelessness in accordance with researchers Tipple and Speak (2005). They describe a home as, "*a place where a person is able to establish meaningful social relations with others through entertaining them in his/her own space, or when the person is able to withdraw from such relationships.*"[5] The City's report also refers to a definition by Cross and Seager (2010) defining 'street people' as, "*people who live a public life on the streets of the city... frequently homeless, sometimes mentally ill, and often have a bohemian lifestyle.*"[6]

In addition, The City of Cape Town's *Street People Response Frequently Asked Questions*[7] (FAQs) makes a distinction between 'street people' and individuals who are 'homeless', asserting that *"not everyone who finds themselves on the streets is homeless."* The FAQs further classify homelessness into three categories, namely: chronic homelessness, transitional homelessness and episodic homelessness, which the City defines as follows:

> *"Chronic: Those who are homeless for a longer period of time, often with serious substance abuse or mental health issues. This is the least common type of homelessness.*
>
> *Transitional: People who stay at the shelter for only a short period of time due to a catastrophic event, usually younger people who are forced to go to a homeless shelter for a short time. This is the most common type of homelessness.*
>
> *Episodic: Those who are frequently in and out of homelessness, usually younger, and due to abuse, unemployment, mental illness, medical problems or family circumstances.*
>
> *Subcategories of these classifications include: people who have experienced a breakdown in family relationships and left the home as a result; 'day strollers' who migrate to areas where economic opportunities exist (including street children); parolees who settle in public open spaces; people with mental illnesses, and people who have been left destitute and are rough sleeping." – The City of Cape Town, 2020*[8]

This introduces the term 'rough sleeping', which is not defined in the *FAQs* nor the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* but is a term commonly discussed internationally. 'Rough sleepers' have been defined as "*people sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks*

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[5] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/223260517_Definitions_of_homelessness_in_developing_countries
[6] https://repository.hsrc.ac.za/handle/20.500.11910/4346
[7] The City's Street People Response: Frequently Asked Questions, 2020:
http://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Procedures,%20guidelines%20and%20regulations/Street_People%20FAQs _English.pdf
[8] The City of Cape Town, 2020:
https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Procedures,%20guidelines%20and%20regulations/Street_People%20FAQ s_English.pdf

or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'bashes')." (BBC News, 2010[9])

Definitions provided in publications and policies released by the City of Cape Town are as follows (as provided in the written submission by Yvonne van Niel, a researcher and participant in The Inkathalo Conversations):

Table 1: Definitions provided in City of Cape Town Publications and Policies, as presented by a participant of The Inkathalo Conversations (Yvonne van Niel)

Term	Definition	Source Document
Street Adult	Any person who is over the age of 18 years and older who, for any reason, finds themselves living and working on the streets. Street adults are further sub-divided as follows: Adult: 18 years - 55 years Aged person: 60 years and over	City of Cape Town Street People Policy (Policy Number 12398b), Revised and Approved: 04 December 2013 C24/12/13
Street Child	A child who because of abuse, neglect, poverty, community upheaval or any other reason, has left his or her home, family or community and lives, begs or works on the streets; or because of inadequate care, begs or works on the street but returns home at night.	City of Cape Town Street People Policy (Policy Number 12398b), Revised and Approved: 04 December 2013 C24/12/13
Street People	People, who for any reason use the outdoors as a place of abode for a lengthy period. Cognisance is taken of the fact that the definitions of 'child', 'youth' and 'adult' for legal purposes are contained within the Criminal Procedures Act and the justice system. The term, 'street' includes all areas, open spaces and river banks.	City of Cape Town Street People Policy (Policy Number 12398b), Revised and Approved: 04 December 2013 C24/12/13
	"A person who overnights on the street regularly becomes a street person. A day stroller just comes to the area specifically it's not a person that sleeps there."	City of Cape Town Media Briefing - Street People Research 2014/5 Mayoral Committee Member Social Development Department: Suzette Little Researcher Social Development Department: Lynn Hendricks
Street Person	An individual, who for any reason uses the outdoors as a place of abode for a lengthy period. The term 'street' includes all areas of open spaces and river banks.	City of Cape Town Street People Enumeration 2018/19: Social Development & Early Childhood Development
Day Stroller	"A day stroller mainly sleeps on the street for one day and sometimes it is difficult. It is like a sleep-over; they say they just going to sleep by the friend on the street and return back home."	City of Cape Town Media Briefing - Street People Research 2014/5 Mayoral Committee Member Social Development Department: Suzette Little

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[9] BBC News, 2010: https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-10929761#:~:text=As%20it%20stands%2C%20rough%20sleepers,parks%2C%20cars%2C%20derelict%20boats%2C

Term	Definition	Source Document
		Researcher Social Development Department: Lynn Hendricks
	Children and unemployed adults who come on to the streets during the day for the purpose of supplementing their income and go back to their community at night.	City of Cape Town Street People Enumeration 2018/19: Social Development & Early Childhood Development

James Abro, author of *Facing Homelessness* (a personal memoir of homelessness and recovery), said: "*Let's get one thing straight: There is no such thing as 'the homeless'. There are only individuals experiencing housing displacement and the reasons* […] *are as unique and varied as there are stars in our sky.*" (UN Commission for Social Development, 2020[10]).

Those who have experienced homelessness also have their own identifiers and labels for how they describe themselves; this is not to say that the homeless do not adopt societal definitions, or grapple with a range of other descriptors, especially in the local context. The definitions and acceptance of terms by those who live on the streets of Cape Town are insightful. While an overwhelming majority of people who are homeless and who presented at The Inkathalo Conversations refer to themselves as human beings ('just like other people'), a Claremont-based homeless woman explained, "*it's just people that, how do they call themselves, here in Cape* [Town] *they say we drifters or 'bergie' or whatever, I refuse to use 'bergie', the word.*" A formerly homeless woman also refused to define herself as a 'bergie', defining herself as a 'drifter' or 'homeless'. Yet another homeless individual distinguished 'bergies' as people who live in the mountains.

QUANTIFYING HOMELESSNESS IN CAPE TOWN

At the time of The Inkathalo Conversations, no reliable data regarding the number of homeless individuals within the City of Cape Town could be sourced. During The Inkathalo Conversations, stakeholders raised several sources quoting different numbers. U-Turn, an organisation that participated in the conversations, indicated that a study to be released in 2021, *The Cost of Homelessness[11],* would once again attempt to quantify the ever-fluctuating number of individuals experiencing homelessness in the City of Cape Town.

A written submission made by Yvonne van Niel, a researcher who asked to present her own work at The Inkathalo Conversations, explored some of these sources and their numbers, noting the challenges associated with the enumeration of those experiencing homelessness.

> "*The nature of the population that was being enumerated is one that is considered a moving target. Persons sleeping on the streets do not always sleep in the same places every evening and thus identifying locations was a challenging task. Fieldworkers uploaded pictures to their WhatsApp*

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[10] UN Commission for Social Development, 2020: https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/soc4886.doc.htm

[11] https://homeless.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/THE-COST-OF-HOMELESSNESS-CAPE-TOWN-_Full-Report_Web.pdf

research groups to inform other of counts they may have already done." – Yvonne van Niel, Researcher

The following data was provided by Yvonne van Niel as part of her research into City-published enumeration records:

Table 2: City of Cape Town Street People Enumeration Data, as collated by a participant in The Inkathalo Conversations (Yvonne van Niel)

City of Cape Town Street People Policy (Policy Number 12398b), Revised and Approved: 04 December 2013 C24/12/13	City of Cape Town Media Briefing - Street People Research 2014/5 Mayoral Committee Member Social Development Department: **Suzette Little** **Researcher** Social Development Department: **Lynn Hendricks**	City of Cape Town Street People Enumeration 2018/19: Social Development & Early Childhood Development
Year: 2013	Year: 2014/15	Year: 2017/18
100 000 to **200 000** street people in South Africa's urban and rural districts.		South Africa consists of approximately **200 000** absolute street people.
City of Cape Town estimated that approximately **7000** people live on the streets.	Report estimated that approximately **4862** people live on the streets.	City of Cape Town reported **6175** homeless individuals.
Gender Distribution: no data	**Gender Distribution:** Male: 79% Female: 21% Unknown: 0% Other: no data	**Gender Distribution:** Male: 64% Female: 28% Unknown: 8% Other: no data
Age Distribution: no data	**Age Distribution:** 18-25: 8.4% 26-35: 40.4% 36-45: 34.1% 46-55: 11.7% 56-65: 3.0% 66+: 0.2% <18: 2.2%	**Age Distribution:** 18-25: 7.3% 26-35: 33.7% 36-45: 29.0% 46-55: 8.6% 56-65: 2.5% 66+: 0.2% <18: 18.88%
Profile of those living in shelter: no data	**Profile of those living in shelter:** - Female 26-35 - Not living in Cape Town - On streets 0 – 6 months - Reason: Lost house, drug use, and nowhere to go - Means of survival: Grant, part-time jobs, and helping in shelter	**Profile of those living in shelter:** 78% Male - Adults - Predominantly coloured

APPROACH

A qualitative, dialogical methodological approach was applied to this pre-public participation process in order to gain a systemic perspective and the interpretive understanding of the participants' lived reality (Babbie & Mouton, 2005; Creswell, 2014; Delport & Fouché, 2011).

Homeless individuals narrated many of the lived experiences reported in this document, and while this was not part of a research study, these narrations framed the process within grounded research. The dialogical approach of this process is outlined in the section to follow. However, what is important to note at this stage is the approach. The dialogical approach was underpinned by the values of the South African Constitution, with specific reference to the portion of the preamble that envisions that our work as citizens is to *"heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights"* (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*).*

Using this dialogical approach, the narratives of the often-marginalised individuals who have experienced homelessness as well as those working alongside homeless individuals surfaced lived experiences, understanding, and recommendations for amending the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* and developing a strategy that is founded on justice, as well as to inform the next phase of a public participation process.

An outcome of this approach is that many of the narratives, terminologies, typologies and features may vary across the stakeholder groups consulted, depending on mental models, experiences and contexts. However, these experiences, narratives and typologies have been compared to existing research and data captured in various reports, more particularly case studies and experiences in Cape Town. True to the grounded research approach, this report attempts to show existing patterns and comparisons.

METHODOLOGY

PRE-PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Public participation is a common procedural instrument used in shaping policies (Bobbio, 2019). Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations has been described as a 'pre-public participation process', as it takes place prior to the official public participation process typically associated with local government's policy and strategy reviews. It seeks to facilitate a participatory form of engagement, planning, and policy development in line with democratic principles and action.

As such, this multi-stakeholder engagement project was specifically designed to facilitate conversation, to invite meaningful dialogue and recommendations from stakeholders addressing homelessness, and, in particular, to draw rich qualitative inputs, insights, and recommendations from those who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness in the City. Designing a pre-public participation process was critical for the following reasons:

1. The Inkathalo Conversations aimed to embody the democratic values contained within the Constitution (see *Guiding Values* and *Objectives*, to follow), whereby citizens would be given the opportunity to be heard.
2. To be able to produce a comprehensive report detailing the first phase of The Inkathalo Conversations.
3. To be able to offer the outputs of the process as recommendations to inform the City of Cape Town in its response to the issue of homelessness, before the legislated public participation process commences as part of the review of the *Street People Policy, 2013*.
4. To offer publicly informed recommendations into the proposed development of a new strategy to address homelessness in the City.

In this process, individuals experiencing homelessness and stakeholders working in the homelessness sector formed part of shaping the process and, in so doing, offered rich learnings and insights regarding their experiences and challenges.

The geographic focus of this pre-public participation process was the Cape Metropolitan Municipality (the City of Cape Town), and the subject matter centred on homelessness in the City of Cape Town, as well as a variety of topics within the homelessness ecosystem. The first phase of the process identified specific stakeholders in order to ensure crosscutting inputs from the following sectors:

*   Those experiencing or having experienced homelessness;
*   Research and academia;
*   Human rights and advocacy;
*   Shelters, services, and intervention programmes serving the homeless;
*   Substance use;
*   Community action networks, rate payers' associations, and city improvement organisations;
*   Faith-based organisations, community-based organisations and non-governmental organisations;
*   Local and Provincial Government;
*   Law enforcement agencies; and
*   Housing.

A list of the participants and their organisations (where applicable) is provided under *Role Players and Roles*.

GUIDING VALUES

The Facilitation Process sought to espouse and maintain a set of values that informed the nature of the engagement process. The Inkathalo Conversations was introduced with the following statement:

Our processes are premised on and orientated towards **human rights.**

The process places the emphasis on **equality**, **equity**, **human dignity**, and **freedom** of people.

We have an unambiguous commitment to **justice**.

We fully embrace the values of our **democracy**, as enshrined in the Constitution.

The facilitation engagement subscribes to a fully **transparent** process.

We believe that in order to ensure an **equitable** process, the **dominant voices** in the room must belong to those who live on the streets and not to those who come to talk about those who live on the streets.

We value **humility** and make a commitment to being **non-judgemental** and **inclusive** in our approach and in all engagement processes.

This process and its methodologies will at all times be framed and guided by these principles and with a respect for all stakeholders and participants.

These values were communicated throughout the process and all stakeholders were encouraged to respect and uphold these values for the benefit of the process and its participants.

OBJECTIVES

The main aim of Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations was to encourage public dialogue on homelessness in the City of Cape Town. This was done with a view towards making direct and meaningful input into the decision-making processes pertaining to the review of the existing City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* and recommendations towards a proposed citywide strategy to address homelessness in Cape Town.

The Objectives of The Inkathalo Conversations

To facilitate dialogue on homelessness in the City of Cape Town among diverse stakeholders, and specifically those who live on the street.	To encourage a broad range of diverse views, inputs, and recommendations from the public and to synthesise these into a report that is made public.	To design and conduct an inclusive, equitable, transparent public participation process that enables an environment conducive to all members of society experiencing that their human rights and dignity are honoured.
To provide recommendations in the form of innovative concepts, relevant research, practice models, interventions and solutions that seek to improve the livelihood of people who live on the street.	To seek to understand the ecosystem surrounding street people and to contextualise their common challenges.	To provide raw data and recommendations into the City's *Street People Policy* review processes and the design of a strategy.

ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

As an emergent and first-of-its-kind process, the engagement methodology was adapted as The Inkathalo Conversations unfolded in order to remain true to the values and objectives set out. The engagement process was designed to span two phases:

- Phase One would involve in-depth interviews and Focus Groups with selected stakeholders from 19 August to 23 September 2020, culminating in the Phase One Comprehensive Report.
- Phase Two was initially intended to receive open submissions from the public at large; however, the form and extent of Phase Two will be informed by the outcomes of Phase One, to be communicated subsequent to the release of the Phase One Comprehensive Report.

Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations was conducted using a variety of engagement methods:

- **Public meetings**:
    - Public meetings were held in the Claremont Civic Centre from 2 September to 23 September 2020 as per the implementation schedule.
    - The participants listed in the section to follow were invited to present their recommendations at the public meetings, in written or oral formats. These presentations and accounts were filmed and audio recorded.
    - These meetings were open for public attendance, subject to COVID-19 regulations for public gatherings.
    - In total, 57 participants presented (some presenting together or as part of a panel), of which 20 were experiential experts, having experienced or currently experiencing homelessness (excluding those participating in Focus Group discussions).
    - The comments and insights provided by these presenters have informed the content and structure of this report and were incorporated into relevant sections throughout the text.
    - Recommendations made by participants were gleaned from the presentations and have been incorporated as part of *Part IV: Recommendations from Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations*.
- **Two workshops** were held with a selected group of stakeholders:
    - Workshop 1: The Funding, the Facilities, and the Future – this workshop was held with shelter heads and selected NGOs providing shelter to those experiencing homelessness.
    - Workshop 2: Homelessness Ecosystem – this workshop was held with civil society stakeholders providing services to those experiencing homelessness.
    - These workshops were filmed and audio recorded.
    - Comments recorded during the workshops informed this report and have been incorporated into relevant sections.
- **Three Focus Group discussions** were held with approximately 30 individuals in various stages of transitioning out of homelessness as well as some who are currently experiencing homelessness:
    - Focus Group Discussion 1: What do homeless individuals expect from Government?
    - Focus Group Discussion 2: Understanding Homelessness – this Focus Group explored the question, what do people not understand about homelessness?
    - Focus Group Discussion 3: Family Matters – this Focus Group explored the nature of family and community as experienced by those who live on the streets.
    - These Focus Group discussions were filmed and audio recorded.
    - Comments recorded during the Focus Group discussions informed this report and have been incorporated into relevant sections.

- **Two street-level engagements** were conducted by the Lead Facilitators together with members of the implementation team, during which the team visited sites where homeless individuals reside:
  - Street-level Engagement 1: The team met with a community residing in Van Riebeeck Park.
  - Street-level Engagement 2: The team engaged with a community living next to the Bellville Bridge and visited the Bellville Haven Night Shelter, as well as the MES facility. The team attempted to visit the Paint City Safe Space but were not permitted to enter.
  - The street-level engagements were filmed and photographed.
  - The stories captured during the street-level engagements are recorded as part of the Special Feature section.
- Written submissions were accepted during the public meeting period. These inputs have been incorporated into the report, with recommendations listed in Part IV. The written submissions will be submitted to the City as an electronic Annexure.

SYNTHESIS AND COLLATION OF DATA

All audio files recorded during Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations were interpretively coded by the Design Team, using the software Atlas.ti. From this basis, key themes and sub-themes were identified and patterns analysed. Based on the frequency of code results, the following major themes emerged.

As a process that commits itself to integrity and inclusion, it is important to ensure that the voices of those who are most directly affected by homelessness are adequately included. To this effect, the following statistics provide comparative insights into the inputs received from both people who experience homelessness and those who work in the sector, which have informed the emergent conversations captured in this report. The figures to follow show which topics or emergent conversations were most frequently mentioned by participants, differentiating those with the experience of homelessness, from those with experience of working in the sector.

Figure 3: Prominent conversation topics that emerged from those who experience(d) homelessness

Frequency of major codes (or prominent topics) among those who experience homelessness
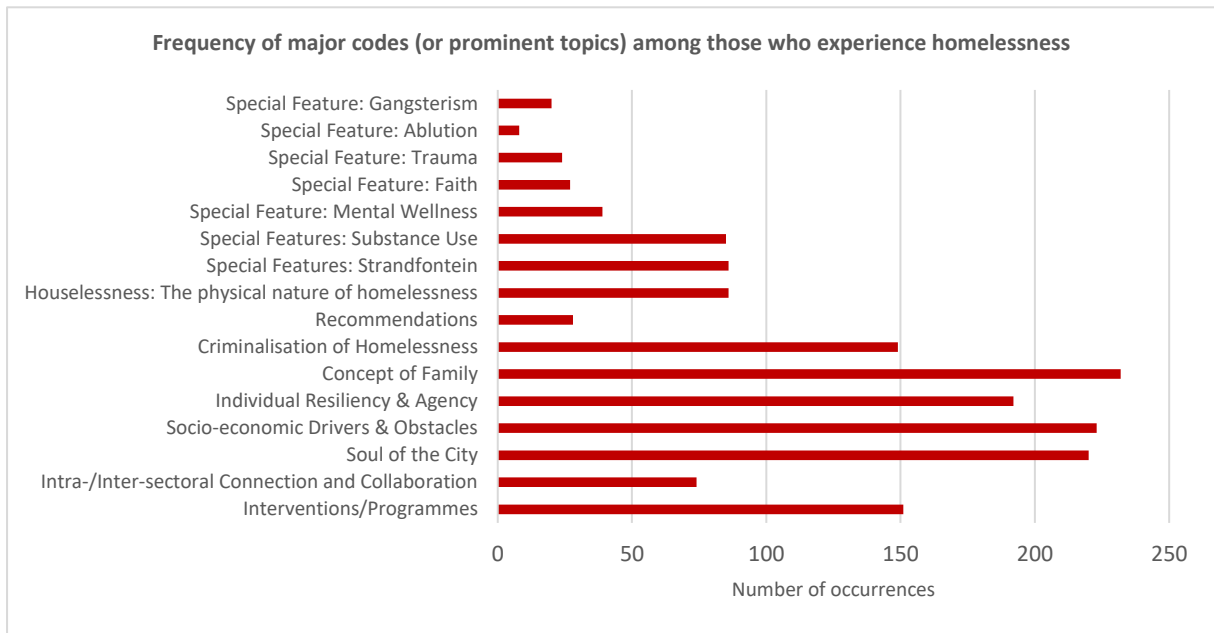
Figure 4: Prominent conversation topics that emerged from stakeholders who work in the homelessness sector

Frequency of major codes (or prominent topics) among those work in the sector
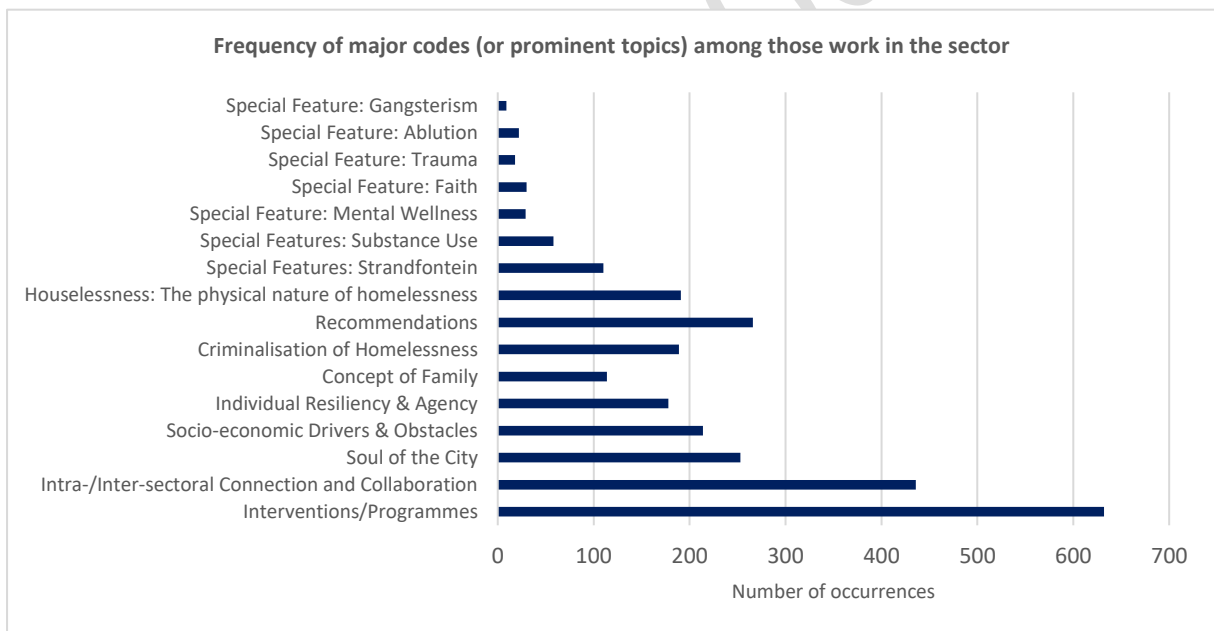
The top eight most prominent (or coded) themes became the main headings within this report, labelled 'Emergent Conversations,' while some of the remaining major themes have been featured as 'Special Features.'

Figure 5: Frequency of the emergent themes as raised by homeless individuals and those who work in the sector
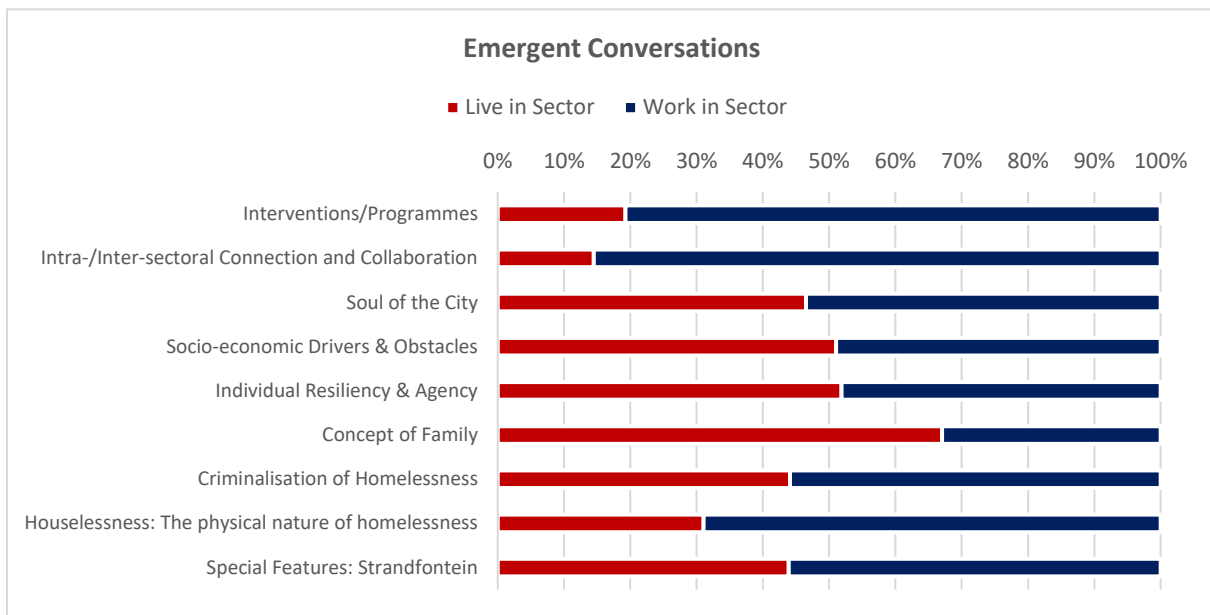
A STATEMENT ON INTEGRITY AND ETHICS

The following considerations sought to establish integrity in the process and its outcomes:

- The Inkathalo Conversations has been created to separate the identity of this process from the underlying organisations led by the Lead Facilitators and other stakeholders.

- The Implementing Team worked with the Lead Facilitators to ensure that each stage of the pre-public participation process upheld the values mentioned above and the integrity and transparency of all processes. In order for The Inkathalo Conversations process to remain independent, no remuneration was requested nor received from the City of Cape Town for work done during this process. All participants and facilitators, detailed below, engaged in this process on a voluntary basis.

- The team has documented all procedures, implementation plans, engagements and all verbal and written submissions. Where agreed processes were required to change, such deviation and reasons were documented and communicated with those who observed the integrity of the process.

- The unabridged, unedited written submissions in their raw form have been compiled to ensure all submissions are shared with the City without alterations by any of the participants, facilitators or stakeholders.

- Evaluation of the process and its outputs have been incorporated in the form of a 'member check', where a selected group of participants reviewed this document prior to its publication to ensure that the process has achieved its objective whilst maintaining the values outlined above.

- Participants and attendees at the public meetings convened as part of The Inkathalo Conversations were informed that all proceedings were video and audio recorded, and that their contributions would be used to inform a comprehensive report and set of recommendations to be made publicly available and submitted to the City of Cape Town.

ROLE PLAYERS AND ROLES

The key role players in The Inkathalo Conversations are the people who live and sleep on the street. Other role players include the other participants in the process such as forums, agencies, NGOs, members of the public, the process facilitators, the Voluntary Advisory Council (VAC) and the Research, Writing and Design Team (Design Team). These role players and their roles are explained hereafter.

Participants in the Process

Any person who provided a written or oral submission, as well as the facilitators and members of the VAC, were participants in the process. In addition, non-participant members of the public who constituted the audience attended The Inkathalo Conversations.

The participants during Phase One were the following individuals:

Table 3: List of Participants in Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations

Full Name	Sector/Organisation	Role in The Inkathalo Conversations
Melene Rossouw	Women Lead Movement	Lead Facilitator
Lorenzo Davids	Community Chest	Lead Facilitator
Colleen Brocker	Civil Society (Community Chest)	Project Director, Presenter
Yolanda Pietersen	Civil Society (Women Lead Movement)	Project Liaison Officer
Ali Adams	Experiential expert	Presenter
Andrea Couvert	Friends of Trafalgar Park	Presenter
Ashley Potts	Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre	Presenter
Brinley Hector	Experiential expert	Presenter
Nosipho Magade	Experiential expert	Presenter
Caryn Gootkin Tasneem Hoosain	Civil Society (Souper Troopers)	Presenters
Isa Jacobson	Community Action Network (Seaboard CAN), Sea Point For All	Presenter
Cindy Barnard	Experiential expert	Presenter
Beulah Donovan Labika Lucien Lisa	Experiential experts/ Claremont Street-Based Individuals)	Presenters
Councillor Zahid Badroodien Councillor Ncumisa Mahangu	Local Government (City of Cape Town)	Presenters
Akhona Siswana Lorenzo Johnson	Civil Society/Housing (Development Action Group)	Presenters
Grizelda Grootboom	Civil Society (EXIT!), Experiential expert	Presenter
Ian Veary	Private (Social Worker)	Presenter
Ilse Maartens	Civil Society (MES)	Presenter
Janice King	Civil Society/Children (Western Cape Street Children's Forum)	Presenter
Joane de Goede	Civil Society (U-Turn)	Presenter
Kevin Alexander	Civil Society (Project Hope)	Presenter
Kevin Pillay	Civil Society (Ubuntu Circle of Courage), Experiential expert	Presenter
Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge	City of Cape Town Law Enforcement (Displaced Peoples Unit)	Presenter
Meshack Tshantsha	Experiential expert	Presenter
Peter Wagenaar and Lesley Wagenaar	Civil Society (Mini Meltdown)	Presenters
Richard Bolland	Civil Society (New Hope SA)	Presenter
Rudy Basson	Experiential expert	Presenter

Full Name	Sector/Organisation	Role in The Inkathalo Conversations
Stacey Doorley-Jones	Civil Society (STAND)	Presenter
Dr Stephan de Beer	Academia (University of Pretoria)	Presenter
Theodore Sass	Academia (University of the Western Cape)	Presenter
Tina Brandt	Experiential expert	Presenter
Yvonne van Niel	Research	Presenter
Warren Conrad	Civil Society (The Hope Exchange)	Presenter
Quinton Adams	Civil Society (The Shack Builder)	VAC Member, Presenter
Saarah Salie	Provincial Government (Wesgro, Western Cape War Room)	VAC Member, Presenter
Dr Heidi Sauls	Research	VAC Member, Presenter
Shehnaz Cassim-Moosa	Local Government (City of Cape Town)	VAC Member, Presenter
Peter Solomons	Civil Society (The Hope Exchange)	VAC Member
Jesse Laitenen	Civil Society (Street Peoples' Forum, Streetscapes)	VAC Member, Presenter
Hannes van der Merwe	Civil Society (Street Peoples' Forum, Straatwerk)	VAC Member, Presenter
Karen Cain	Civil Society (Street Peoples' Forum)	VAC Member
Vivien Pluddämen-Hobbs	Civil Society (Street Peoples' Forum, Social Worker, Streetscapes)	VAC Member, Presenter
Jonathan Hopkins	Civil Society (Street Peoples' Forum, U-Turn)	VAC Member, Presenter
Anda Mazantsana	Civil Society (Homeless Action Committee), Experiential experts	VAC Member, Presenter
Carlos Mesquita		VAC Member, Presenter
Chantel Sampson		VAC Member
Lance Fish		VAC Member, Presenter
John Hufkie		VAC Member, Presenter
Phindiwe Ndzunga		VAC Member, Focus Group Participant
Monwabisi Sijaji		VAC Member, Presenter
Caroline Powell	Civil Society/Faith-based Organisation (The Warehouse Trust)	VAC Member, Presenter
Francois Bruwer	Civil Society and Business (Fisantekraal Centre for Development, Vriende van Durbanville)	VAC Member, Presenter
Pat Eddy	City Improvement Organisation (Cape Town Central City Improvement District- CCID)	VAC Member, Presenter
Wilma Piek	City Improvement Organisation (Voortrekker Road Central Improvement District - VR CID)	VAC Member, Presenter
Reverend Annie Kirke	Civil Society (More Than Peace), Human Rights Monitor	VAC Member, Presenter
Derek Ronnie	Private (Mediator and Conflict Resolution Practitioner), Civil Society (More Than Peace)	VAC Member, Presenter
Focus Group Participants	Focus Group Participants (Experiential experts) & Residents from various shelters	Participants

The Lead Facilitators

The Lead Facilitators of the first phase of The Inkathalo Conversations were Ms Melene Rossouw and Mr Lorenzo Davids, as announced by the City of Cape Town on 5 August 2020. Their shared role was to facilitate the pre-public participation process, which included the following activities:

- Conducting interviews, Focus Groups and workshops with selected stakeholders.
- Chairing public meetings where oral presentations were made and ensuring an inviting, inclusive, and conducive public meeting environment.
- Briefing other role players, stakeholders and participants on the process.
- Providing inputs to the report.
- Reviewing, editing and commenting on draft and final reports.

- Finalising the report for submission.

The Voluntary Advisory Council

The Voluntary Advisory Council (VAC) is a voluntary body made up of people from multiple sectors. The VAC was strategically selected as a panel of experts in their respective fields, to assist the Design Team and Lead Facilitators in making recommendations towards the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* and Strategy.

Members of the VAC, based on their roles and experiences in the sector, have gained many learnings about homelessness, interventions, solutions, challenges, opportunities, linkages, etc. Thus, the role of the VAC was to share their learnings with The Inkathalo Conversations, while also learning from the process. With their knowledge and networks, VAC members were to raise awareness of the process among relevant stakeholders, in order to include their voices in the process. The VAC members include stakeholders from NGOs, CBOs, the 'Local Networks of Care', various arms of Government, etc. Members of the VAC served as voices equal to every other voice in the public participation process.

Table 4: Members of the Voluntary Advisory Council and their respective organisations (where applicable)

Full Name of VAC Member	Sector/Organisation
Quinton Adams	Civil Society (The Shack Builder)
Saarah Salie	Provincial Government (Wesgro, Western Cape War Room)
Dr Heidi Sauls	Researcher (Western Cape Government)
Shehnaz Cassim-Moosa	Local Government (City of Cape Town)
Peter Solomons	Civil Society (The Hope Exchange)
Jesse Laitenen	Civil Society (Street Peoples' Forum, Streetscapes)
Hannes van der Merwe	Civil Society (Street Peoples' Forum, Straatwerk)
Karen Cain	Civil Society (Street Peoples' Forum)
Vivien Plüddamenn-Hobbs	Civil Society (Street Peoples' Forum, Social Worker, Streetscapes)
Jonathan Hopkins	Civil Society (Street Peoples' Forum, U-Turn)
Anda Mazantsana	Civil Society (Homeless Action Committee), Experiential experts
Carlos Mesquita	
Chantel Sampson	
Lance Fish	
John Hufkie	
Phindiwe Ndzunga	
Monwabisi Sijaji	
Caroline Powell	Civil Society/Faith-based Organisation (The Warehouse Trust)
Francois Bruwer	Civil Society and Business (Fisantekraal Centre for Development, Vriende van Durbanville)
Pat Eddy	City Improvement Organisation (Cape Town Central City Improvement District - CCID)
Wilma Piek	City Improvement Organisation (Voortrekker Road Central Improvement District – VR CID)
Reverend Annie Kirke	More Than Peace, Human Rights Monitor
Derek Ronnie	Private (Mediator and Conflict Resolution Practitioner), More Than Peace

The Research, Writing and Design Team ('Design Team')

The Inkathalo Conversations Phase One Comprehensive Report has been compiled by the Research, Writing and Design Team ('Design Team'). The Design Team was strategically selected for their diverse skill sets, with experience in engaging with multiple stakeholders from different sectors. The team was responsible for:

- The design of the pre-public participation process, in conjunction with the Lead Facilitators.
- Ensuring the integrity and effectiveness of the process, as well as its output.
- Attending public meetings (at least one team member was present at every session).
- Collating written and oral submissions.
- Compiling and presenting the Lead Facilitators with the draft Phase One Comprehensive Report.

Below is a list of the team members as well as their primary role during the process:

Table 5: Members of the Research, Writing and Design Team

Name	Role	Qualifications
Colleen Brocker	Director of The Inkathalo Conversations	BA Social Work (USB)
Deney van Rooyen	Lead researcher, capturer and writer	Sitting for MPhil in Inclusive Innovation (UCT GSB) BSc Civil Engineering (UCT)
Lynn-Joy Isaacs	Researcher, capturer and writer	MA in Child and Family Studies (UWC) BA (Hons) in Psychology (UWC)
Catherine Dodge	Researcher, capturer and writer	Sitting for MPhil in Inclusive Innovation (UCT GSB) PGDA (Post Graduate Diploma in Accounting (UCT) BBusSci Finance with Accounting (UCT)
Ashley Roman	Researcher, capturer and writer	Sitting for MPhil in Inclusive Innovation (UCT GSB) BA (Hons) in Psychology (UNISA)

Comment from the Design Team

Apart from being introduced to those participating in The Inkathalo Conversations, the Design Team's purpose was explicitly stated at the start of and regularly throughout the process. The Design Team spent a significant amount of time collectively practicing self-reflexivity throughout the process. Applying this 'self-aware analysis of the dynamics' between the team and the individuals participating in and moderating this process was a critical element in upholding the team's commitment to making clear how its position had an impact on the process of The Inkathalo Conversations (Silverman, 2011).

The Design Team members recognised their individual biases and assumptions about the topic and spent a considerable amount of time debriefing after each session. This was important as none of the team members were considered 'insiders' of the homeless community. In addition, reflexivity practices were employed during the process when engaging, presenting and interpreting the data.

Declaring the team's 'outsider' role during this process helped to support a greater sense of consciousness and integrity regarding the team's involvement in this process and the documentation of what emerged during the first phase of The Inkathalo Conversations.

Being conscious of these biases, our intention was to place the lived experiences of homeless individuals at the centre of this report. During these conversations, the hope was to harness the experiences, intersections, learnings, institutional knowledge, insights etc., and reflect all this back to the individuals who both interact with and construct the system. In order to do this, there needed to be deep listening, a listening with intent and a kind of listening that reaches beyond oneself and the utterances in the room. This was necessary because the length and depth of the collective experiences, learnings and knowledge

that was gathered, is set to inform new pathways of thinking and conversations that would reimagine a just world for the homeless.

While this is the intention, there will be limitations and this report will reflect some of those limitations in how it captured voices, experiences and authentic realities.

IMPLEMENTATION AND TIMELINE

Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations was implemented according to the schedule below:

Table 6: Activity Schedule for Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations

THE INKATHALO CONVERSATIONS: PHASE ONE ACTIVITY SCHEDULE	Engagement Type
Week 17 August 2020	
• Mon 17 Aug: Preparatory activities • Tue 18 Aug: Preparatory activities • Wed 19 Aug: VAC Briefing Session & Bus Tour • Thu 20 Aug: Preparatory activities • Friday 21 Aug: Preparatory activities	Preparatory Activities VAC Briefing & Bus Tour
Week 31 August 2020	- VAC Session
• Mon 31 Aug: No activities • Tue 1 Sept: VAC Session – Engagement Process & final inputs into Design and Methodology • Wed 2 Sept: Conversations with selected stakeholders • Thu 3 Sept: Conversations with selected stakeholders • Fri 4 Sept: Conversations with selected stakeholders	Conversations Conversations Conversations
Week 7 September 2020	- Focus Group
• Mon 7 Sept: No activities • Tue 8 Sept: Focus Group 1 with 40 individuals who have experienced homelessness • Wed 9 Sept: Conversations with selected stakeholders • Thu 10 Sept: Conversations with selected stakeholders • Fri 11 Sept: Street-level conversations with selected stakeholders (area TBC) • Sat 12 Sept: Workshop: Understanding the Homeless Ecosystem (Shelters & Staff)	Conversations Conversations Conversations Workshop
Week 14 September 2020	
• Tue 15 Sept: Design Team Synthesis Session • Tue 15 Sept: Workshop: The Funding, the Facilities and the Future (Shelter Heads) • Wed 16 Sept: Conversations with selected stakeholders • Wed 16 Sept: Focus Group 2: Understanding Homelessness • Thu 17 Sept: Conversations with selected stakeholders • Fri 18 Sept: Street-level conversations with selected stakeholders (City Centre) • Sat 19 Sept: Workshop: Leadership Conversations – Values, Theories and Practice (Shelter Heads)	Synthesis Session Workshop Conversations Focus Group Conversations Conversations Workshop
Week 21 September 2020	
• Mon 21 Sept: Conversations with selected stakeholders • Mon 21 Sept: Focus Group 3: Family Matters • Tue 22 Sept: Conversations with selected stakeholders • Wed 23 Sept: Conversations with selected stakeholders • Thu 24 Sept: Heritage Day • Fri 25 Sept: No activities	Conversations Focus Group Conversations Conversations - -
28 September 2020 onwards	-
• Report Compilation, Review and Publication	

LIMITATIONS

Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations made use of a dialogical process to undertake a qualitative study into the growing problem of homelessness within the City of Cape Town. During the design process, consideration was given to the limitations of the process, with the Design Team working alongside the Lead Facilitators and the Voluntary Advisory Council to address or mitigate the impact of these limitations. At all times, the priority remained an unwavering commitment to amplifying the voices of the marginalised, while maintaining a high level of academic rigour in conducting data collection, analysis and compiling the report.

Qualitative research is by nature time consuming and labour intensive. Some key limitations identified by the Design Team while conducting interviews included:

- Individual interviews are time-consuming, thus limiting the number of participants. As such, the opinions expressed by participants may not be representative of the population and may allow for rare phenomena to be shown as statistically significant.
- The interviews present a large quantity of data to interpret – this may result in limitations regarding the analysis and comparisons of the data set.
- The selection of participants may unconsciously result in a sample bias.
- Time constraints may limit the depth of information collected.
- Data interpretation may be subject to conscious and unconscious biases from the Design Team. To this effect, kindly consult the positionality statement by the Design Team in *Guiding Values*, noted after their introduction in the *Methodology*.

Ethnographic field research was conducted in the form of the street-level engagements. During this process, the Design Team and Lead Facilitators observed and interpreted the phenomenon of homelessness from the perspective of the participants. Key limitations to these engagements include:

- A limited number of researchers to reduce the disruption to the communities.
- Due to time constraints, street-level engagements were limited to three sites and findings may not, in all cases, be applicable to other communities.
- Information gathered during street-level engagements is subject to interpretation by the researchers present and therefore subject to personal biases.
- Video and voice recordings were collected, however during street-level engagements comprehensive data collection is a challenge.

Three separate Focus Groups were conducted with a variety of stakeholders, giving researchers an opportunity to engage with participants in groups. Key limitations to these engagements include:

- Participants may not express their opinions honestly in public, particularly when their opinions may contrast or conflict with that of another participant or the group at large.
- Focus Groups were conducted with a limited sample size therefore findings may not be representative of a broader population.

- Conversation may be dominated by more vocal participants, leading to dominant representation of certain views.
- Facilitators may unintentionally influence the response of participants through their own comments, questions, interpretations or biases.
- In larger focus groups with up to 30 participants, the depth of engagement may vary with every participant.

In addition, desktop research sought to inform this report with inputs from previous studies (particularly in the local context), publications, reports, policy documents, news articles, press releases, and other media. Key limitations to this media consultation include:

- No comprehensive literature review was undertaken, as this initiative focused on the dialogical process. Academic research was obtained through keyword searches, and a few relevant studies were selected based on the themes emerging during The Inkathalo Conversations.
- Additional public publications/documents referenced by participants were pursued to a reasonable degree, taking into account the time limitations of the process.
- In addition, where participants made certain claims that required verification, a reasonable effort was made to source substantiative and/or referenceable information in the public domain.
- Due to the timeframe during which Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations took place, the report consults media published up to and including September 2020 only.
- It must be noted that this report cannot guarantee that links provided to online sources will remain active or will contain the referenced information if accessed at a later date.

PART III: EMERGENT CONVERSATIONS – PHASE ONE OF THE INKATHALO CONVERSATIONS

The most prominent themes during The Inkathalo Conversations Phase One have been grouped into eight core areas (chapters) or 'Emergent Conversations.' The chapters present a systemic overview of what emerged through The Inkathalo Conversations. The recommendations in the report give an overview of these sections, drawing from the indepth presentations held during Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations, along with direct and interpretive recommendations made by participants in the process.

CHAPTER 1: 'THE SOUL OF THE CITY': SOCIETY AND HOMELESSNESS

Contents

1.1. INTRODUCTION

"I never thought that I would open a bin and look for food, in [a] *short period of time; the effect that it has. I never thought that I will park a car, and ask for money, and someone just wind his window…, and look at me – the look says it all..."* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"We are unreconciled as a city… what is happening in suburb after suburb is this disconnect between what it means to be humanity, who we are as a human family… we have a spirit, we have a heart, we have a soul, and it is sick and it is broken and we need a spiritual healing together…" – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

The City of Cape Town's strategic focus areas include its goal to be both "*a caring city*" and "*an inclusive city".* However, the stories that emerged during The Inkathalo Conversations reflect a different reality for many of the City's residents, particularly for those who have experienced homelessness. Personal accounts from both those experiencing homelessness and those who journey with them provide insight into some of the societal attitudes, perceptions and treatment of homeless individuals.

Inputs received from suburban homeowners, community action networks, and faith-based groups reveal the dissonant narratives that exist among 'the housed'. This chapter explores some of the tensions in engaging power and privilege to treat others with dignity and respect. It brings to light that an attitude of 'not in my backyard' is found even in well-meaning interventions, and explores some of the challenges of charity and responsible giving campaigns in the City. In the context of COVID-19 and community responses to support homeless individuals, this piece explores the dilemma that faith-based organisations and houses of worship in particular experience in authentically expressing their ethos.

The impact of language on and formats of engagement with those experiencing homelessness cannot be ignored. This chapter shows how homeless individuals navigate perceptions, stigmas, and derogatory treatment, and how these experiences impact on their own identities and perceptions of themselves. A Focus Group discussion with homeless individuals surfaced the pain of societal rejection, the hope that a better life is possible, and an inner conflict in beliefs and biases even among those with shared experiences of homelessness. This paradox calls us to engage more deeply in dialogue with ourselves and with each other in order to realise the potential of every person.

Finally, this piece discusses the notion that homeless individuals should simply 'go back to where they came from' and explores the barriers that exist in communities across the City of Cape Town. Many individuals find themselves in danger both in the City and in their communities of origin. From threats of gang violence (discussed in Chapter 5) and the lack of services and economic opportunities in many urban areas (also discussed in Chapter 5), to the trauma associated with dysfunctional and abusive family systems (discussed more in Chapter 7), this begs the question: 'back to what?'

Importantly, the chapter presents an invitation to reflect both personally and collectively on how we can all pursue transformative actions aligned to the spirit of the Constitution. Those reading this might find their own personal beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, judgements, and assumptions reflected in some of the homeless individuals' experiences of society. This chapter documents some of the ways that society

continues to perpetuate harmful and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours towards those who are homeless.

In approaching this chapter, we hold fast to the commitment of the Preamble to the Constitution (1996) and the words etched in the Vision Statement of the *National Development Plan 2030*[12]:

> *"We are inevitably and intimately implicated in one another… We are safe, not so much because we are guarded, but because of the strength of our belonging."*

1.2. SOCIETAL NARRATIVES, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIOUR

Throughout The Inkathalo Conversations, it became evident that homeless individuals often receive unfavourable and even degrading treatment that seems to stem from societal attitudes, perceptions, judgements, and assumptions about homeless individuals. It was not only homeless individuals who provided accounts of these experiences; the housed also raised numerous concerns about the narratives that arise in community messaging groups, in conversations between people, and in the actions of homeowners towards homeless individuals in their neighbourhoods.

> *"The underlying treatment of the homeless in the city is a belief that 'they are not like us.' This epitomises the relationship of the City and its officials, as well as the various ratepayers' associations and CIDs – they view their territory as sacrosanct, and this 'other' comes into it in much the same way as a cockroach or a rat might, and with cockroaches and rats you call the exterminators; with homeless people you call the police or Law Enforcement."* – Isa Jacobson, Seaboard CAN

From feelings of invisibility and lack of acknowledgement, to being looked upon with disdain, judgement, and assumptions of why the individual had become homeless, the *"danger of the single story"* (Adichie, 2009)[13] became a prominent feature of what could be wrong with our attitudes, beliefs and behaviour toward the homeless in the City of Cape Town.

> *"The… thing that I want to tell people is that, in life, give each and everybody a chance, or even if it's not a chance, listen to what* [they] *want to say. That's what I wanna ask the people – it's not nice coming to somebody when you wanna talk, even greeting him, and then he's putting me one side."* – Meshack Tshantsha, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

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[12] National Development Plan 2030: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf

[13] Adichie, C. (2009).

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en

"The fact of the matter is, homeless people are seen when people decide to actually see them…" – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Don't class any person out there – you're pointing a finger at someone; how many fingers are pointing back at you? Just give the homeless that respect, that dignity what they deserve…" – Kevin Pillay, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

TO BE HUMAN

Reflecting on the book *A Human Being Died that Night* (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2004), a member of Souper Troopers (Caryn Gootkin) expressed that a perpetrator of violence, though seemingly 'a good person' in other areas of their life, can treat someone badly when they have become convinced that the person they are acting towards is not a human being.

"They think they're better than us, that we're nothing, and they treat us like dogs…" – Individual who has experienced homelessness during Focus Group Discussion 2

"The idea of common humanity… gets eroded. When somebody is making a comment about a person who's living outside in their area, they are, it feels in that moment, able to divorce themselves from the idea the that this is a human, and a person…" – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

Disparate treatment of the poor and unhoused appeared to be pervasive, both in communities and among public servants.

"You are being treated like a second-class citizen; it's scary, it's terrifying…" – Man who resides in a shelter during Focus Group Discussion 1

"With my experience, in the past being homeless, I've been very disturbed and something that I've been taking oh so serious: people on the street need to be respected like any other individual… that has never been improved… our civil servants in uniforms, where do they come from to speak like that to homeless people? The man with the suit and tie comes down the road, they'll change 'sy hele dinges' [changes his whole demeanour] *… Now he worships this man in the suit, but he was so rude to Errol* [homeless man]*, for example, sitting here and looking dirty."* – Woman who resides in a shelter during Focus Group Discussion 1

Some of these attitudes and behaviours were partly attributed to how we have been socialised by our families and society. The multigenerational context must be considered as a powerful contributor to how individual lives unfold (McGoldrick et al., 2016; Walsh, 2016). During a Focus Group engagement, a homeless individual shared:

"I came from a very good home, background... my mom taught me don't do this, don't do that or you're going to become homeless… that's what her parents taught her… even I taught my daughter at one time… I was like 'don't touch the man, otherwise…' It was just that ignorant thinking of mine… It is something that gets carried on from parent to child…" – Individual who has experienced homelessness at Focus Group Discussion 2

"I think it's stereotyping… the society we grow up in, people they used to talk that 'oh the beggar', it grows up with him that everyone in the street are bad people... the society we grow up in, we're taught that the beggars are so and so and so… when you see someone is asking you for help, and he really need help, and you think, 'hayi, die man is a skelm' [no, this man is a criminal].*"* – Individual who has experienced homelessness during Focus Group Discussion 2

We cannot turn a blind eye to the legacy of Apartheid – its dehumanising effects and devaluing culture has remained entrenched in many institutional and social systems, as well as in the psyche of many people and communities. The socio-economic repercussions of Apartheid persist 27 years into democracy, with embedded divisions by class and race, and perpetual poverty and inequality that keep millions on the economic periphery. The origins of homelessness in Cape Town are rooted in the forced removals and deliberate socio-economic exclusion of black and coloured groups during Apartheid. Persistent prejudices in our society contribute to some of the societal attitudes that homeless individuals experience, such as rejection, distrust and inhumane treatment.

*"Homeless people are being made as if they are the problem. Those being homeless is not the problem. Homelessness is a by-product of inequality and poverty and the city's inefficiency in dealing with the root of the problem. It is true**,** homelessness is a social ill, but the homeless person should not bear the brunt of that social ill, but we point the* [fingers] *to the homeless person that they need to change to fit back into society. I believe that every sphere of our society needs to change their approach in dealing with the challenge of homelessness especially street homelessness."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Homelessness in the City of Cape Town has been one of the most dehumanising actions that has plagued our society since the birth of apartheid, and continues to plague us today, even though we find ourselves under a new dispensation." – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

The desire for dignity and respect, for being seen as an individual and recognised for being human, is often met by simply being heard or acknowledged.

"Respect, respect, respect – that's the core of feeling secure." – Woman who resides in a shelter during Focus Group Discussion 1

"We're all the same, we all have feelings; it doesn't mean that you a government official you can treat me bad, you have to treat me with the same dignity I have to treat you with as well." – Individual who has experienced homelessness during Focus Group Discussion 1

"…I eventually felt that moment when I started engaging with people, then I felt that I'm also human now, because I can share, I can talk with people. But that was something that was very scarce in my life, I never used to talk with people because people were never listening to me. And for that mere fact that people didn't listen to me… I felt 'what is the use om nog saam met mense te praat as mense jou nie aandag gee nie' [what is the use of speaking to people if people are not giving you attention]*… When I met Lorenzo that's whereby I started feeling that I'm also human,*

because he started to listen at me, and then we started speaking…" – Meshack Tshantsha, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Of course, to paint everyone in society with the same brush is to perpetuate the very stereotypes and stigmas that lead to marginalisation and rejection. During the conversations, many participants raised the paradoxes and tensions that exist within society and in the City:

"We get many different kinds of residents in the city – you get the resident who on the one side wants to be able to help, house, give as many opportunities of care to an individual; but at the same time there are many communities – and they won't use… these words – who want homeless people gone, they want homeless people hidden, cleaned out of their streets…" – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

"You become invisible to some, that judges you, or you become very visible to those which, I think want to make themselves feel better about themselves…" – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

This pointed many to the idea that awareness and engagement exercises are critical in dismantling stigmas, promoting inclusion, and deepening our collective and individual humanity. Many participants suggested that far-reaching awareness campaigns may be used to introduce a positive and more humane narrative around homelessness and the individuals who experience it, while others advocated for interactive interventions that establish meaningful relationships and change perceptions based on personal experience:

"Awareness – I would like that to improve… society, civil servants, they need to be made more aware of who we are, so that they can look at us, and look at me, from a different perspective…" – Individual who has experienced homelessness during Focus Group Discussion 1

"Design a sustained campaign, a monthly Inkathalo Conversations… develop a training manual on homelessness… train schools, RCLs [Representative Councils of Learners]*, churches, NGOs and businesses… The final report needs to be part of a wider and broader grassroots campaign… to the extent that people will buy into it... If you look at the Instagram campaigns, everyone is talking about* [Black Lives Matter]*… We need to look at an Instagram campaign and a PR* [Public Relations] *campaign on homeless*[ness]*… and we have to design it… to ensure that it adheres to principles of critical mass and that, I think, is how we will promote this cause."* – Quinton Adams, The Shack Builder

"We started showing the people what kind of people we are; we not the people that people think that we are. But the mere fact that we engaged with them, we having programmes with them, and then we show them that we are people…" – Meshack Tshantsha, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Throughout The Inkathalo Conversations, many of those who recognised that they were engaging with homelessness from a place of privilege, grappled with their use of language. Expressing a desire to communicate respectfully towards and about those who experience homelessness, while at the same time being mindful of the danger of defining people by their circumstances, some stakeholders offered their thoughts on contextualising and aligning language to create a unified narrative.

Figure 6: A contribution presented by Francois Bruwer during The Inkathalo Conversations
as a proposed dynamic process to create a unified narrative and vocabulary

'NOT IN MY BACK YARD'

Participants in the conversations shared experiences of antagonism felt by both homeless individuals and the housed who showed compassion towards them, in suburban neighbourhoods.

> "I will tell you, we always try to avoid them [society], because we know they don't like us." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Many of the degrading or even dangerous experiences relayed by homeless individuals took place during their daily 'skarreling' activities. 'Skarreling' is a form of economic activity for homeless individuals (described in detail in the *Special Feature: Economy of 'Skarreling'* in this report). Although it is a broader survival activity, it often includes the action of scratching through waste bins or dumping areas in search of food or discarded objects to either use, recycle or resell as a form of income. It is in the responses to 'skarrelers' where the hostility of individuals and communities are displayed, as described in some of the examples below.

> "My concern is about what happens in the suburbs where skarreling is actually 'outlawed' and it's enacted by residence associations, neighbourhood watches and CPFs, where persons are physically removed from the area… I have had umpteen fights with our neighbourhood WhatsApp groups… Collectively, can we not change that narrative?" – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

A woman identifying herself as a 'drifter' relayed an experience of 'skarreling' in Sea Point in 2018. A resident in the street stopped her from going through the bin, offering instead to bring her something from within her house. While she waited outside, a neighbouring resident (who is reportedly a City of Cape Town Councillor) shouted at her from his balcony, "*ja bergie, what do you want here*?" She reported that he made threatening remarks and released his dogs to chase her away. The resident who had shown her kindness advised her not to run away from the dogs, but to open a case against him should they injure her. The woman's remarks about this engagement with the Councillor were, "*he don't want people like street*

people skarreling (in) that area, on the bins, he's open the dogs, he chase the people with dogs." When reporting this treatment at the Sea Point police station, she reported that the police captain dismissed her experience, suggesting that she goes back to the area to fight with the Councillor herself.

Also in Sea Point, it was recorded that residents who dispose of their solid waste place broken glass on top of the waste, so as to deter any 'skarrelers' from searching through the bins, or to make this activity dangerous for them.

> *"In Ocean View Drive, where you've got two gentlemen that have decided that, when they put out their bins on a Sunday night for Monday – now they've got the option, either lock their bins if they don't want people skarreling in their bin, or keep it until Monday when the truck comes – they put it out specifically on Saturday or Sunday, in the evening, and so when people go skarrel, if they don't know… that you are going to go into broken glass for I don't know how many levels, so that you cut your fingers whilst you're trying to skarrel. That's purposely done. Another one that throws bottles at you, on your head, if you're outside of his property – he waits, looks on the camera, and he starts dropping bottles. You know, you get that type of maliciousness as well."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Homeless individuals cited the practice of 'skarreling' as necessary recycling, and expressed the wish that residents in suburban areas would view it in this same light, elevating the way people look at 'skarreling', as opposed to being angered or offended by it. Negative narratives are perpetuated by state institutions and other actors who are unaware of these initiatives and their effect. Thus, the perceptions and stigmatisation levelled against homeless individuals are ill-informed and warped – their enterprising activities are in fact productive contributions to society.

> *"If the city can provide bicycle lanes for the rich people then surely they can support homeless people in their recycling endeavours. But we are told that we are a nuisance when actually we are providing an important service to society and the earth – the entrepreneurship is not acknowledged or supported."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Community-based interventions that seem to have the sole objective of clearing homeless persons out of certain neighbourhoods were called into question:

"The whole approach, unfortunately, is shouting: 'rid Sea Point and the surrounding areas of homeless people', not 'help them'… hence your 'reintegration, reunification, referral' [model], that moves them out of your area. Why are you not advocating for shelter space in the area…?" – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness, in response to a stakeholder presentation.

 "It's actually heart-wrenching for me… Poverty is ugly – people don't want to have to look at poor people, sick people, ill people, and our city is trying to create this image for a glossy brochure, to sell tourism, but the reality of the fact is that, faced with the levels of unemployment and inequality, we're going to have this beautiful glossy brochure, but we're also going to have to have stark realities, and it's about where do those two meet." – Ian Veary, Social Worker

Sea Point residents Peter and Lesley Wagenaar took the initiative to cook meals for those experiencing homelessness during Level 5 and, later, Level 4 of the COVID-19 lockdown. For several weeks, they fed over 200 people per day from their Mini Cooper, parked on Beach Road, Mouille Point. During this time, they received complaints from neighbours and fellow ratepayers, were reported to authorities and accused of drug peddling. They further received threats and harassment from law enforcement agencies, and their Mini Cooper was eventually torched by some who opposed their service to homeless individuals.

> *"We heard a few little murmurs on Facebook… some friends had alerted me to some really heavy stuff… The ramping up on social media continued, and eventually one morning at 3:40 a.m. I was woken up… I looked through the window, saw that the car was in flames… I'm actually very saddened by the person that's perpetrated this… that your mind goes to this level of violence because we're feeding homeless people… we can replace the car, but to change hearts of stone is gonna take a lifetime."* – Peter Wagenaar, Sea Point resident/Mini Meltdown

> *"COVID was actually a godsend for people like us, who actually believe in a more humane attitude to homelessness, because it became really evident that there wasn't enough – there wasn't enough shelter, there wasn't enough food – because people could see it, and it was harder for the anti-homeless lobby to spread their narrative…"* – Isa Jacobson, Seaboard CAN

The 'not in my backyard' condition was also evidenced by the initial responses from the Strandfontein community to the City facility. The Strandfontein community brought an urgent application to the Western Cape High Court seeking the closure of the temporary shelter at the Strandfontein Sports Complex.

> *"As we got into that main road, there were people at… Shoprite or Checkers… standing queue… and as we walked in I knew we were not welcome in this area, because these people started showing signs and screaming as the bus went past… We did not feel welcome when we arrived at Strandfontein, the area, at all; we didn't know at that stage that they (the Strandfontein community) had a legal case against the City already."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

It was alleged that initial legal interventions by the community were not out of concern for the human rights of those within the facility, but rather in opposition to the location of the site. The court initially criticised Strandfontein community groups for attempting to evict the homeless. However, as time progressed and the cause of homeless individuals within the camp became known, members of the Strandfontein community sought justice on behalf of the homeless.

A CRISIS OF FAITH

During The Inkathalo Conversations, a member of the audience asked, "*Where is the church*?" This alluded to the expectation that exists in some segments of society that leaders and communities from churches and houses of worship have a moral obligation, or even divine mandate, to respond to the needs of homeless individuals. It must be noted that faiths other than the Christian faith were underrepresented during the first phase of The Inkathalo Conversations and that a deliberate effort will be made during the second phase to include essential perspectives from other faith communities.

> *"The religious community especially (Christian churches) needs to evaluate their approach to homelessness and try to reach out in order to better understand street homelessness. I notice that instead of being an institution that is welcoming and inviting, and a place of rest for the needy, the church has failed many and excluded the marginalised of our society."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Although a large proportion of civil society organisations have faith-informed ideologies, it became apparent that religious groups and their members continue to grapple with how to engage their call to serve humanity.

> *"I've often experienced fellow Christians asking, 'what shall I do?', as if they don't know…"* – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

Hannes van der Merwe, manager of the Straatwerk Outreach to the Destitute, quoted the following Biblical text as a model for a 'Godly perspective' on homelessness and the 'Godly expectation' of the Christian:

> *"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen… Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe them, not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"* – Isaiah 58:6-7

He went on to say that, *"The Godly expectation is that the community does this – not the State, not the City – (but) the community."* – Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk

From this basis, van der Merwe makes a compelling point regarding the role of the community in discovering its humanity, thereby rehabilitating the soul of the city. He removes the onus of this task from government as the sole party responsible, highlighting the fact that institutions often operate beyond a level of personal engagement. He pleads with communities to invite homeless individuals into meaningful relationship and economic activities, even suggesting that individual families identify homeless individuals to care for. A Safe Space service provider also supported this approach:

> *"Find a family in the local community that can take care of a street person – that can also assist you with your problem buildings, your shelters – it did work* [years ago]*…"* – Jantjie Booysen, Ubuntu Circle of Courage

This echoes a call to deepen our collective expression of the concept of 'ubuntu.' 'Ubuntu' originates as part of the Zulu phrase 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu,' which means, "*a person is a person through other people*" (The Guardian, 2006[14]). De Beer (2015) asserts that "*ubuntu itself is homeless and displaced as a way of being human together*" – a lack of care and cohesion within our society, evidenced by the prevalence

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[14] The Guardian, 2006:
https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2006/sep/29/features11.g2#:~:text=According%20to%20his%20explanation%2C%20ubuntu,a%20person%20through%20other%20people.&text=Ubuntu%20is%20that%20nebulous%20concept,humanity%2C%20you%20and%20me%20both.

of homelessness, undermines our ability to be truly human. He recognised how this 'homelessness of ubuntu' is reflected in the local urban political economy, in institutions, and even in faith communities.

> *"… 'Love your neighbour' is a common sermon – (but) it's not contextualised."* – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

COVID-19 put many institutions and organisations under urgent pressure to respond, in many cases putting their ability to act in line with their social purpose to the test. Upon the announcement of lockdown regulations in response to COVID-19, communities of faith grappled with how to respond effectively. Stakeholders shared their challenges in opening houses of worship to accommodate those living on the streets for the duration of lockdown. According to accounts, very few houses of worship in Cape Town were availed for this purpose, as discussed in the comments to follow.

> *"Using the Central Methodist case study…*[people] *have this fear that their properties will be overrun, their neighbours will be overrun, their spaces will be taken away… why does that fear linger when there are so many good models which exist that disprovs that fear?"* – Lorenzo Davids, Lead Facilitator: The Inkathalo Conversations

> *"It's a false narrative, and it was one that played out massively in 2020 in Cape Town… a church did say to me… 'we have attempted to create safe space for people who were living outside in the grounds before…and they refused to leave'…that was maybe back in 2012… but that was one example… on the whole, that's not the example. …If you remember 2008, the displacement of people because of community violence… something like 80 churches opened their doors, for a determined amount of time… worked very very effectively… across the city (during the time of violence against foreign nationals)… but it was a story of deep… conversion for the church. And that seemed to have been forgotten, when this all happened, there was just the memory of one church, with a very different set of circumstances… that had struggled to get people to move on from their building…"* – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

> *"…When we were talking with policymakers during lockdown, (the response) was 'no, no, we're not going to use the churches, just look what happened in the Central Methodist square with the refugees'… in 2008, 80 churches opened their doors, in 2020, 3 or 4 churches opened their doors – that's a very big difference… is it because now it's not foreign nationals but it's homeless people?"* – Jon Hopkins, U-Turn

NARRATIVES ABOUT GIVING

There are many examples of kindness and generosity that seek to help the homeless. Many initiatives seek to help, including community action networks, soup kitchens, and active citizens, as displayed in the now well-known story of the 'Mini Meltdown'. However, many community-based initiatives come up against obstructive narratives. Examples are provincial and local governments' public charity campaigns, which encourage the public to give to formalised structures as opposed to giving directly to homeless individuals. This is done without contextualising the hugely inefficient and insuffient support that is available to homeless people.

Narratives around giving to the homeless are propagated through a variety of charity campaigns. Both provincial and local government advertise charity campaigns in the public domain. The messaging and language in these campaigns reveal some of the attitudes that exist in the city:

Western Cape Government 'Give Responsibly' Campaign:

"You feel compelled to help, but what's the best way to make a lasting difference in a homeless person's life? A handout might make the person begging from you to stop, but by giving money you encourage homeless people to avoid shelters and choose a life of begging on the street. By donating to a shelter you can change the life of a homeless person in a meaningful and lasting way." – Western Cape Government

Figure 7: Western Cape Government Giving Statement[15]

Why shouldn't I give money to street people?

Giving money directly to a homeless person doesn't help to change their situation. The money might be used to buy food but for those dependent on drugs or alcohol, it will be a means to continue their addiction. The addict, in most cases, is using the drugs and alcohol to help them cope with their situation and by giving money you are keeping them in this cycle.

How can I help?

If you would like to assist someone living on the street, you can help them in the following ways:

- Refer them to their nearest shelters for adults or children under 18
- Contact the Department of Social Development (DSD) hotline on **0800 220 250** to find out how to donate to registered Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and shelters which render services to people living on the streets. Information on registered NGOs can be obtained by visiting any of our regional and local offices, or by contacting our DSD hotline 0800 220 250.

City of Cape Town 'Give Dignity' Campaign

"The objective of the campaign is to encourage residents to give responsibly – by donating items at drop-off points, not giving money to homeless people – in order to not perpetuate the cycle for people living on the street. To educate the public, business-people and tourist sector around the phenomenon of street people." – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

Figure 8: Give Dignity Initiative[16]

About the Give Dignity initiative

The City of Cape Town is running an initiative to raise awareness around the plight of people living on the street. The initiative emphasises giving those in need a hand up rather than a handout. Instead of a cash handout, which often increases the risk of prolonged homelessness, we encourage you to make a donation.

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[15] Source: https://www.westerncape.gov.za/general-publication/homelessness-0
[16] Source: https://www.capetown.gov.za/Campaigns/give%20dignity

A member of a community action network commented on the impact of this narrative, raising the insufficiency of the state-provided services that these campaigns refer to:

"The narrative of 'ignore the people, simply give your money to a shelter' – they are telling the public that in doing so you are discharging your social justice obligation, you've done your bit, you've supported the shelter and the shelter will take care of the people. We know that's not true, but that is what allows people to believe that they are doing right…" – Isa Jacobson, Seaboard CAN

From his own experience, a formerly homeless individual remarked the following in response to the City of Cape Town's Social Development and Early Childhood Development Department presentation ('City of Cape Town's Social Development Department presentation'):

"How can you say people mustn't give to people on the streets? Who gives you the right? Are you going to give them food? Are you going to give them a place to sleep? No." – Oliver, an individual who has experienced homelessness, in response to the City of Cape Town's Social Development Department presentation.

The CCID's 'Show You Care' campaign has deliberately deviated from the government's messaging, reporting that they did not want their giving efforts to be confused with the City's strategy. They provide clarity on the organisations and partners that receive the funds raised through their campaign, encouraging much needed transparency and accountability in the realm of public donation initiatives.

Figure 9: CCID Show You Care Campaign[17]
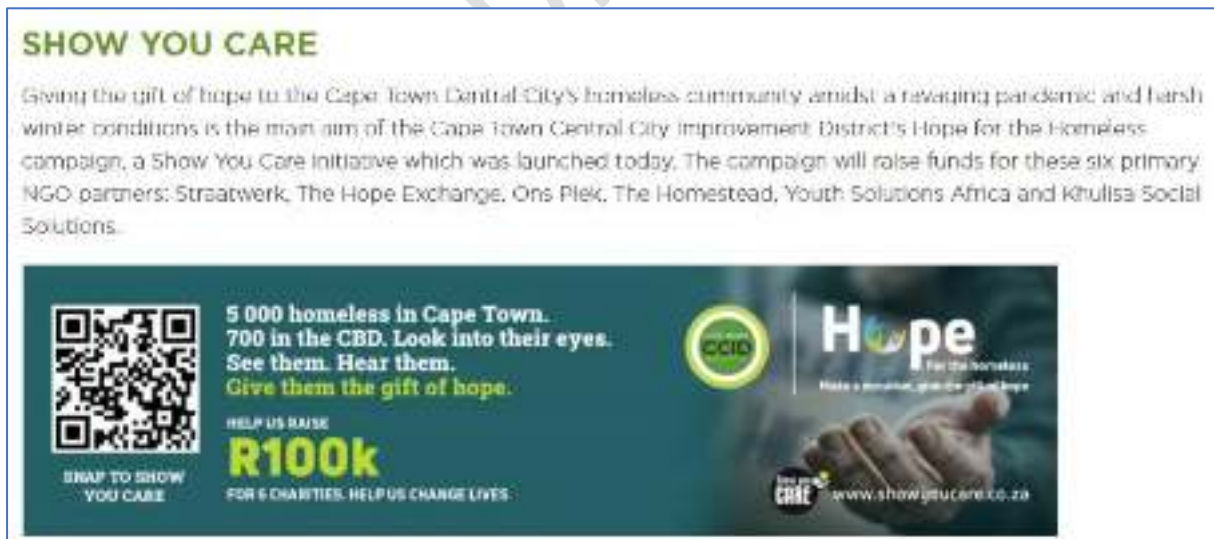
Figure 10: CCID Brochure[18]

Although their campaign emphasises a human touch, encouraging those who seek to help homeless individuals to*, "Look into their eyes. See them. Hear them*", a focus on NGO-based giving may come across as a duality in CID's messaging.

WHEN STIGMAS BECOME SYSTEMS

> *"I'd like to see the end to policies that dehumanise people, that segregate people, that make people feel that they're not part of society… I'd like to see policies being made that actually make people's lives better. My opinion is that if a policy doesn't make your life better then that policy is actually illegal... I'd like to see my human rights being secured."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness, during Focus Group Discussion 1.

> *"The policy lacks humanity; you don't see that humanity coming through."* – Warren Conrad, The Hope Exchange

At a wider systems level, some of the harmful narratives and attitudes pertaining to homeless individuals, are further perpetuated by how policies are drafted and written. The systems, processes, and protocols that give life to a policy's resource, capacity, and communication infrastructure, are often designed around the inherent attitude and beliefs of the broader society.

As an example, one version of the City of Cape Town's Social Development Department intervention process shows their protocol as being triggered by a "*complaint*" (see the figure to follow).

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[18] Source: https://www.capetownccid.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/campaigns/Show%20You%20Care%20brochure.pdf

Figure 11: City of Cape Town Social Development Department 'Programme Work Flow', as presented by Councillor Zahid Badroodien at The Inkathalo Conversations
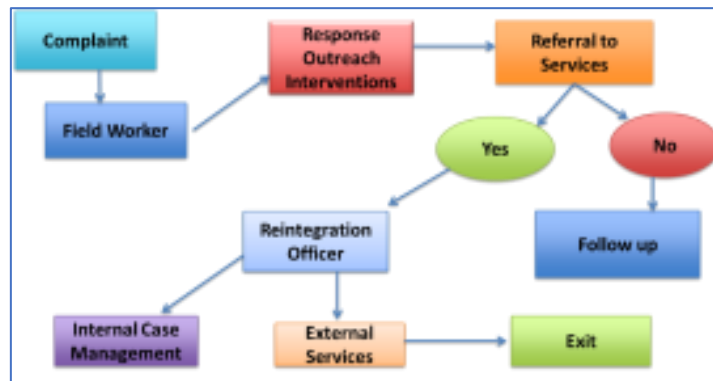
"…the City receives the complaints from the residents; this is through a number of ways… through the city's website… call in to the call centre, that then gets referred on to a number of different nodes that reach then the Street People team." – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

This illuminates the lens through which homeless individuals are viewed by the system, a point that was raised by stakeholders at The Inkathalo Conversations as well:

"The introduction of your presentation was clear that homeless people are seen as a vulnerable group… and then it went on to talk about how fieldworkers are deployed… that chart began with 'complaint'… when that's the starting point, we already have an insight into the ideology, the heart of the response… Who's making the complaint, and what is the complaint?" – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace, in response to the City of Cape Town Social Development Department's presentation.

In addition, while the City of Cape Town allows for public complaints about homeless people to be received via a telephonic/online system, there is no mechanism for homeless people to complain of abuse against them:

"I wondered do homeless people ring up to complain about the fact that somebody, a Law Enforcement officer or member of the community has assaulted them, has threatened them, has torn down their home… or is it people in the community who don't want homeless people there in their neighbourhood?... I wonder, do you have a concern hotline? Can I as a citizen ring up and say, 'I'm really concerned, there's someone in my neighbourhood who needs access to a field worker or drug support worker'… can we start with concern?" – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace, in response to the City of Cape Town's Social Development Department's presentation.

During the conversations, the City acknowledged that this language was problematic, but that while complaints are received, some residents do express concern about homeless individuals who require access to care:

"I agree with you… the presentation showed exactly some of the faults that the original policy may have. Daily I receive phone calls from concerned residents about homeless people who need to

access care… it's not just complaints, concerns are also an important part of that." – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town, in response to Reverend Annie Kirke (above).

"The general public of Cape Town… report to a hotline, complaints about homeless people… The nuisance by-law is used and a waste management by-law, and for me it's very indicative... I tend to think of it as a metaphor. If people are going to use the waste management by-law to deal with homelessness, what does that say about how they see people affected by that?" – Ian Veary, Social Worker

Many of the City's institutional responses to COVID-19 were raised in the discussion, like when homeless individuals were rounded up on the streets and relocated to the City's various 'Safe Spaces', such as Culemborg and the Strandfontein facility.

"When this lockdown came in, Strandfontein issue came about, that is where everything start... fighting with the authorities there, with Social Development, being insulted, being degraded – because look, nobody takes a chance to actually get to know you, what person you are, where you coming from, what's your reason, why are you here. Especially with social development… I was insulted past the bottom line, but I took it..." – Kevin Pillay, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"…we reached out and you were not there… the City said, 'the City that works for you', but you never worked for us." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness, in response to the City of Cape Town's Social Development Department's presentation.

This is discussed in more detail within the **Special Feature: Strandfontein**.

A further interesting perspective was raised about the use of terminology in policy, and the role terminology definitions play in defining the landscape. This emphasised the power of language, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2:

"When we define people or groups as 'vulnerable', it means there's a requirement for protection and care of these individuals and groups… some unintended consequences may include the perception that individuals or groups are powerless and unable to think for themselves and to make sense of things… When we label and use these concepts, do we do justice to those that we are actually trying to support? Do we actually respect the dignity of their struggle if we summarise them as being vulnerable?" – Dr Heidi Sauls, Researcher – Western Cape Government

POWER AND PRIVILEGE

"The oppressors do not perceive their monopoly on having more as a privilege which dehumanizes others and themselves… For them, having more is an inalienable right, a right they acquired through their own "effort," with their "courage to take risks." If others do not have more, it is because they are incompetent and lazy, and worst of all is their unjustifiable ingratitude towards the "generous gestures" of the dominant class. Precisely because they are "ungrateful" and "envious," the oppressed are regarded as potential enemies who must be watched" (Freire, 1968).

"Their mandate is to protect rate paying citizens… in protecting them they extend that to mean protecting them from the people that they call 'vagrant', 'criminal', 'bergies', 'skollies'." – Isa Jacobson, Seaboard CAN

"If you look at its origin… power, and greed, and officialdom have been the primary causes of homelessness in our society, and it's no different today." – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

The matter of privilege has become a current point of conversation both globally, with the advent of the *Black Lives Matter* movement and locally, with activists going as far as invading vacant land parcels in an effort to advocate for inclusionary housing. Centuries of historical injustices have led to the persistence of social, economic and political imbalances, which continue to find systemic expression (described in more detail in Chapter 5). The attitudes of some wealthy residents are evidenced by the use of their privilege and economic weight in response to homelessness:

"In Sea Point for example, we have… ratepayers who refuse to pay their rates, who reduce their rates… and one of the main issues… is the homeless people problem… We need to bridge the gap between those people, especially the affluent people, because they have the resources… I would like to invite 200 000 of those more affluent Capetonians into this room, who are [not represented here] *… For them it's pretty much 'them and us', and that is a big problem…"* – Michael, an audience member and member of the Sea Point Ratepayers Association.

"…to have conversations with the authorities of our city that speak to their humanity and ours, that we are able to be members of our local civil ratepayers' associations that call each other to a better humanity…" – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

Both City of Cape Town representatives and citizens acknowledged that this financial muscle places privileged individuals in a position of power and influence, regardless of the fact that all citizens have equal rights under the Constitution:

"Sometimes because of an individual's access to privilege, it may inadvertently skew the city's response to how we deal with homelessness… The complaints are received from communities that are more privileged." – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

"A church [like mine] *feels a responsibility to their housed neighbours as much as to their unhoused neighbours, or perhaps more, because the voices are louder coming from the housed neighbours."* – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

The realities of power and privilege are found not only in communities but also in institutions, where some voices are privileged over others. Dr Stephan de Beer, an academic at the University of Pretoria, played an integral role during the COVID-19 response in the City of Tshwane and the participatory development of that city's Homeless Policy. He reflected on the 'hierarchy of knowledge', which speaks to the influence gained through institutional networks:

"…I worked on the other side in an NGO for 20 years; we said exactly the same things. The stupid thing is when we said the same things on the University letterhead, suddenly the Mayor wanted to meet with

us. Which said to me two things: the one is there is this hierarchy of knowledge – whatever I know about homelessness I learnt on the streets, but still I'm not an expert – you who have lived there are the only experts. Our role is to figure out how we work in partnership with people who have the expertise, the experiences and to document that. But also the responsibility…if there is this hierarchy of knowledge, what do I do with that? How am I a good steward of that? Am I there wanting to participate in things for justice, or am I just doing that so I can get my salary and write my article?" – Dr Stephan de Beer, University of Pretoria

Here, Dr de Beer raises a point made frequently during The Inkathalo Conversations: the fact that homeless individuals are the true experts in homelessness, having experiential knowledge and a deep understanding of what it means to be homeless. The challenge is that homeless voices are often not sufficiently consulted or included when 'solutions' are identified, creating a power imbalance within the sector between service providers and their clients, who have little recourse against poorly administered services (this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3).

Many stakeholders, such as NGOs and researchers, make worthwhile attempts at designing interventions or seeking to understand the complexities of homelessness, respectively. Although they may have great depths of compassion, those who have not lived the homeless lifestyle will likely never be able to fully grasp the physical, emotional and psychological experience, often compounded by or resulting from years of trauma and/or complex circumstances.

1.3. THE EFFECT OF NARRATIVES ON IDENTITY

"There's a lot of homeless people that have got potential, but is their potential being freed? I don't think so. I don't think they're given a fair enough chance to prove themselves. They are being often judged, but they also have potential." – Bongani, a man residing in a shelter, during Focus Group Discussion

"We are not here to judge ourselves for being homeless… My word is 'freedom' – I don't want to be judgemental, to be judged by anyone, or you judge yourself…" – A man working for Streetscapes, during Focus Group Discussion

In a paper titled *Self-concepts of Homeless People in an Urban Setting: Processes and Consequences of the Stigmatized Identity (2012)*, Josie L. Parker draws correlations between self-esteem and role identities based on traditional life trajectories. As an example, a study tested the level of self-esteem among students and found that a student's self-esteem or self-worth was tied to the student's assessment of others' opinions, comparison to others, and self-assessment of success versus failure.

A participant in The Inkathalo Conversations reflected on his journey from being economically established, with a bachelor's degree, to being homeless, noting how his own esteem and pride were challenged through his circumstances:

"Personally, I never begged, I wouldn't allow myself to. Looking back on the experience, I think maybe I should've asked for help. If I had asked for help a little bit sooner, I think I would've gotten

off the street sooner, but my pride wouldn't let me." – Individual who has experienced homelessness during Focus Group Discussion 2

Second to self-assessing one's worth against social expectations, are the labels conferred by society. Parker highlights that for the homeless, stigmatisation does not allow them full acceptance by others and affects their identity negatively. Furthermore, stigmatised individuals like the homeless, must manage the "*spoiled identity*" – the stigmatised identity is multi-layered, in many instances requiring homeless individuals to navigate the complex injustices against identities of race, nationality, and religion, in addition to being viewed as someone without value (Parker, 2012).

This was painfully echoed when a participant in the conversations was asked, "*what was the first thing that hit you* [as you landed on the street]*?"* to which he replied,

> *"Yho, I'm an animal now. Because I don't believe people should be sleeping outside. I always look at the stars and said, 'hayi* [no] *man, when I'm sleeping I never saw the stars'…always there was a ceiling, a roof…"* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

While navigating this crisis of identity, Monwabisi Sijaji was confronted by reinforced societal attitudes:

> *"As I saw it now… the reaction that I received from the other society, the look, even when they look at you, the look says it all… when they look at you says it all – they are telling you that you are a nonsense… it's like 'go go go go go…' so, I think that is why you get homeless people always using drugs, always angry."* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Parker's research (2012) also shows that not all homeless individuals identify as homeless and subject themselves to societal success levels. As one formerly homeless individual stated:

> *"The Homeless are not one group – we are not the same…"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"What I also discovered,* [is] *there are different types of street people: there are those that you see, they are there, but they don't see themselves as street people; because I don't want to lie to you, they would wake up in the morning, go to The Carpenter's Shop* [now called The Hope Exchange] *and wash and act as if they are not street people. There are those who don't care, maybe they have given up; they don't care… they will always carry blankets, they don't wash – don't think those people that they don't have senses, they do have senses, it's just that it's that stigma that they have, that make them to be like that."* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In navigating their identity, homeless individuals find belonging and acceptance in their own street community:

> *"…the exposure you have, the shame… so conscious of the fact you don't have anything. The family that you actually meet are on the street. These are the people that you have some things in common with now; you are down and out. My clothes are dirty but so are yours, so don't judge… which is kind*

of great… in a sense… At least it's a place where you don't have to put on a façade about these things; it is what it is." – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I got to… meet a bigger family… you know, they had their challenges and stuff like that, but like I started liking these people around me, because they all had stories and a lot of their stories… was pretty similar… to mine." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

This community becomes a place of expression for individual creativity, ingenuity and 'street smarts' to support each other on the streets, revealing a sense of individual and collective agency. The notions of street-based community and agency are discussed in more detail in Chapters 7 and 8, respectively.

NAVIGATING PUBLIC AND PERSONAL IDENTITY (WHEN STIGMAS BECOME SYSTEMS)

During The Inkathalo Conversations, a Focus Group discussion was held with 25 to 30 individuals who were homeless or formerly homeless. This Focus Group on 'Understanding Homelessness' sought to unearth a message for society at large, by asking the question, 'what do you wish people knew about homelessness?'

It is worth noting that most of the participants in the Focus Group were residents of microsites, Safe Spaces or 2nd phase shelters, or had exited the homeless lifestyle in the past 18 months and felt relatively secure in their current circumstances. There was thus a narrative of 'I am off the street now' and a sense of being able to offer advice and encouragement to those who were still navigating instability.

What emerged from this was profound; the conversation delved into both public and personal assumptions and perceptions, bringing to light the ways in which stigmas and stereotypes are held, not only by society but also by homeless individuals themselves. This phenomenon presents us with an opportunity to reflect on the complexities of our own humanity including how we navigate holding conflicting views within ourselves, while recognising that others grapple with this same inner discord.

Navigating Public and Personal Identity: Introducing 'Trevor-Merle'

The Focus Group discussion centred on an image of a homeless man in a public walkway, which was used as an archetype to explore the perspectives of the various people in the image, presented as Figure 12.

Figure 12: Image used in the Focus Group Discussion on Understanding Homelessness[19]

The fictitious naming of the person became a discussion. Those in the room immediately identified with the homeless person in the photo, to the extent that some individuals wanted to call him/her by their own name, as stated by a woman named Merle:

> *"You can give him my name… I think it can be anyone that's been on the streets – it can be me; it can be Merle."* – Merle, Individual who has experienced homelessness during the Focus Group Discussion 2

After other suggestions to name the man Trevor, the group settled on the name 'Trevor-Merle', while another participant continued to refer to the character by his own name, 'Diza.'

Public Perceptions

Facilitators asked for comments on the possible perceptions people were holding towards Trevor-Merle. Comments about societal perceptions included a lack of understanding or concern for Trevor-Merle's life story, frustration, judgement, suspicion and mistrust, a lack of acknowledgement, and a fear of being robbed. Among these comments are some that call us all to question the perceptions that we may hold, the way in which we behave towards one another, and the impact of this on the self-worth of others.

Comments about Trevor-Merle included:

> *"They are thinking that this guy is begging money, he want to smoke drugs."*

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[19] Image Source: https://images.app.goo.gl/EuNi2uYJ1bfdrqpW7

"Everybody's just going about their own lives, not even taking note of the guy sitting against the wall. Each one is just in their own bubble, no one is acknowledging the man sitting there… they're afraid if they make eye contact… that's where the guy's going to start engaging with them… he's gonna start maybe asking for a R2 or something, so they're just trying to avoid that. So, what I see is everybody's just walking with blinkers on."

"Because of my injury… I'm basically sitting in one spot all the time, on the street. So, what intrigues me at the moment in life… is the people around me, who passes like the couple who's walking at the back there. They just about passed him…they're passing fairly closely… I see that happening – there probably is a discussion between them…, 'that's just one of the problems we need to get rid of', or something of that matter…"

"There's that lack of human connection, of acknowledgement. Perhaps there's a feeling of 'don't look because then you're [not] *accountable'. But even just to have somebody look at you and acknowledge you, and just nod their head, it makes you feel like a human being."*

Referring to the man walking alongside the young girl – *"maybe he goes home with his daughter and he says 'that's why you must do your homework tonight, so you don't land up like him.'"*

"Some people… [don't have trust in] *people that's homeless, that's staying outside… maybe he wants to help… but he doesn't trust him."*

"[I see] ignorance, judgement, and desperation."

"I was in the same position… I used to stay next to the station almost eight years… some of them help, but some of them just tell me 'no you should go someplace…'"

"Sometimes people they look at Trevor and then they… judge what Trevor can do… it's judgement. People they like to judge people… they don't even want to find out about the person, they just judge that person."

"Unfortunately, it's much easier for social stereotyping, it's much easier to put somebody in a box, than actually unpack their problems… he's got his own problems, and it's much easier to say that he's a criminal, or he's a drug addict, or he's a reject of society…"

Stigmatised Identity and Internal Tensions

Intriguing comments emerged from the Focus Group, and responses quickly became introspective. What was particularly interesting were the contrasting views that individuals themselves explored, between feelings of compassion and suspicion towards Trevor-Merle.

Compassion and Empathy for Trevor-Merle

"I see isolation in a crowded place."

"I see myself there… what Trevor-Merle is feeling as he's watching people going by, he's thinking about his family, he's thinking about his opportunities, thinking about his work as well."

"He could've given up… but then people around him, he's contemplating 'could that be me one day, could that be my child, can that be my cousin, can that be my sister'…"

"Come sleep with me, come eat with me, come stand with me – can you see yourself…"

"Trevor could be lame or crippled and that's why he's there."

"Living like that everyday, it's very interesting to see people's reactions."

"I don't [know] why he's sitting there…maybe he lost everything, maybe he had a family."

"He could possibly be thinking 'maybe I should've made a move when I was younger'."

"[He's thinking], 'as ek maar net geluister het' [if only I had listened]… he's telling himself, 'if I did what that person told me 10 years ago, life would be so much different'…"

Suspicion and Mistrust of Trevor-Merle

"The one sitting on the street is actually feeling sorry for himself while he's sitting there, doing nothing with his life, and just expecting handouts from people."

"If you can see on the picture… that is the past of someone… that's someone that wants to be pitied in life. He always wants to do the same thing all over, all over again…"

"I was also on the street and went to sleep hungry, but I would never let people see me like that."

"Trevor also has to take responsibility."

"[He] also plays on emotions to get something."

"What are you doing to get out of that situation?... It's not just a one-way street, it's got to come from both sides… we have to take responsibility for our own lives…"

"People that's been sitting like that for many years, it's because they used to getting money, money, money, so they just sit there with their bakkies… tonight they will pick up that bakkie and then go to smoke… for me someone that needs desperate help, won't have a bakkie for you to throw money, I will just ask, because I need help, I'm striving."

"The life that that guy has come through, and the life that someone who stays in a home, who never sleep outside, they think 'no this guy is very dangerous', because why, he's sleeping outside in the cold. And that guy asks everyday money… so that guy is busy with something, because why… he can rob you, why, because he's asking everyday money, he's always here, so he doesn't make a move to take the money that I give him… how long?"

"I did sit here almost for five years... and the people give me the money and I go and smoke the money… and I go entertain my other friends, you know. Tomorrow I sit again like that guy, and the people give me some food, and give me everything… The people is not 'dom' [dumb], they asking themselves 'hauw! this guy'... they give him R300, others give me R50… but now I'm still again

there. The people should be scared of me, because why? I'm a 'tsotsi' [criminal]… I don't hold it against [them]."

"It's exhausting, there are just so many people who need help on the streets; that's just my experience here in Cape Town… everywhere you walk there is somebody there, skarreling, asking for assistance… I'm on the other side of the coin now and even I get exhausted… I've met people on the street who were professional street people, they're funding R700 a day heroin habits and I was just looking for a chance to get a job."

"Some people they take the blessings they get, like food, the clothing, they would go sell it for whatever need they need… they would take that small little blessing that God gives them, they would use it for their substances, for their abuse that they are using… at the end of the day they always wanted people to pity them… to wear broken clothes… there's free water in the mountain, you can take a wash every single day…"

"Diza, is me, Trevor… I'm getting that money everyday, almost R800, to almost R1000… in 4 days I have lot of money, why don't I stand up there and go rent out a place to sleep, and get out of the street? There's a problem that I have. My problem is that, I am addicted in drugs, I use the money for the drugs. I come and sit everyday there, because I'm smoking the money up… you don't know what I do with the money, you ask me what I do with the money… I'm gonna make a story up… Some of the people needs something; some of them don't need something."

Those who have not experienced homelessness may grapple with the paradox presented here – how is it that even homeless individuals express some mistrust towards others who are homeless, and what does that mean for our society's attempts to eliminate stigma or to act in true compassion? In speaking to this, the words of Paulo Freire may be helpful, "*Hope is rooted in men's incompletion, from which they move out in constant search – a search which can be carried out only in communion with others"* (Freire, 1968).

Inasmuch as The Inkathalo Conversations present a platform for public dialogue, the inner dialogue is just as important. Perhaps it is more a wonderful discovery than it is a conundrum, to realise that both the privileged and the destitute share some of the same beliefs, fears, and even biases – that in fact this inner conflict is itself a point of commonality. It is one which we are invited to continuously engage in meaningful dialogue, with ourselves and "*in communion with others,*" as suggested by Freire (1968).

Empathy and Understanding

Strikingly, empathy was expressed for those who did not understand homelessness – that they may not know how to assist, may have their own problems, or may have giving fatigue. Some of the comments in this regard were as follows:

"I think it's very wrong to assume that anybody there doesn't care, or everybody there cares. I think there's mixed feelings about Trevor-Merle, some people… do care, I like to presume some of them do sympathise with him, and some don't care. People that are passing there, they do not come from the same house or from the same background, hence they have mixed feelings…"

"People look at him and they say 'I just helped somebody yesterday, or the day before'… those people also get tired…"

"I think the guys also feel harassed."

"…I did a lot of wrong things to people, walking in the street, that's why I know why they don't trust the people…"

"…also, those people have their own problems; that guy walking there looks like he's thinking, because he doesn't know how he's going to pay his bond because he's just been retrenched because of COVID… we also don't think of those people's situation and we have to take cognisance of that. It's not just about one side of the coin… don't annoy the people, you'll probably get more if you don't annoy them."

Recognising that many in society do wish to reach out and assist homeless individuals, some participants acknowledged that these efforts at times feel misplaced:

"I like to think that someone in that street wants to help Trevor-Merle but they are afraid, you know. In my own experience someone has tried to help me before, many years back, and then I kinda like threw it in their face, you know, because I wasn't serious. So they helped me, they took me to a place, and then I ended up back on the street… so they're kinda afraid of, 'if I put in the effort, if I put in the time, or if I put in the finances, am I going to see Trevor-Merle again here tomorrow?'"

"Sometimes you help people but tomorrow you see them again there, is almost like they taking advantage of you, there where you also still need help. But by helping others you uplifting yourself. So when people take advantage, I will still go tomorrow… but it's all up to them if they wanna accept your help, so you can't force them to take the help…"

"The actual task of getting that individual off the street is complex, and you're not sure if it's gonna work or not."

NAVIGATING PUBLIC AND PERSONAL IDENTITY: IN CONVERSATION WITH 'TREVOR-MERLE'

On dialogue, Paulo Freire says that, "*At the point of encounter there are neither utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know*" (Freire, 1968). The Focus Group Discussion was aimed at understanding homelessness from the perspective of those who have experienced it first-hand – to facilitate an encounter where we come together to learn from one another in conversation. The piece below explores some of that which these homeless individuals would contribute to that conversation, expressing their experience of society and their message to society, in their own words.

The group reflected on how they and the fictitious character Trevor-Merle internalise and cope with the perceived judgements, attitudes and actions of the passers-by. We are all invited to listen beyond what was said, and to engage with the deeper appeal to our humanity:

> "Trevor's heart is sore inside, because when you judge someone when you don't know the person, it pains the person inside, because you can't judge me while you didn't ask about my life, or know anything about me, then you decided by yourself, 'oh Trevor is this, Trevor is that'."

> "You know, when you are on the street you experience a lot of painful things, and you going through a lot. You never asked to be in that situation, circumstances are not the same; ok, maybe some, but the rest that I met, they were people who are intelligent, but when you can see it was a lack of support, maybe they end up on the street. So, we must not judge people."

> "... being genuine, being honest, that's what I've done. I told the people the truth while on the street, and every blessing that I get I kept it just to prove to them, and tell them what I will do, if something doesn't fit me or whatever, and I always uplifted myself."

In response to these feelings, the Focus Group was asked to offer their ideas of what Trevor-Merle may wish to say to those passing by:

> "If I was Trevor-Merle I'd probably say that, just because I'm poor doesn't mean I'm a criminal, and I think Trevor-Merle also want to say that he's got the exact basic human needs that the others have... just because he's homeless and just because he's poor, doesn't mean that he's a lesser being, and he wants to be treated as a human being, just like the others."

> "Please can you ask me my story instead of judging me."

> "I don't have parents, my parents are dead, I'm alone. So that's why I'm here."

> "Just give me one chance and I won't let you down ..."

> "I think Trevor would ask... someone to present an opportunity to him in order for him to improve his life. Maybe... he didn't get any opportunity, maybe let's say a decent job, that's why he ended up on the streets in the first place ..."

Intriguingly, a number of participants looked into Trevor-Merle's motivations, while reflecting on their own journeys:

> "I think what Trevor would say to the people will really depend on his agenda... if he's there to get money or donations to go and fund some other addiction of his, he'd always say something that will manipulate people... but if he really needs help... he'll probably tell them the genuine truth... So, it really depends on what is his real purpose, why he's sitting there; there's two sides of the coin."

> "If he wants to get out of his situation, he could be brutally honest and tell his story... or he could lie, if he was on a substance, and get his temporary fix. So, his response, Trevor-Merle's response could either get him a temporary solution or maybe even a possible permanent solution... in my experience, if people asked my story I would always tell them the honest truth, you know, and I'm not homeless anymore... brutal honesty will get you places."

> *"You tell people where you coming from, what you need; [maybe] you need help for alcoholic, drugs, they stretch out their hand, they help you, and you'll get it."*

From their own experience, numerous participants reflected on Trevor-Merle's desire to change his circumstance and the weight of his own will and motivation in that pursuit (this is explored further in Chapter 8). From these reflections emerged a narrative that meaningful change may require the combination of personal will and some external support, whether emotional or by intervention.

Taking these comments to heart may provide some helpful insights for those who hope to assist, journey with, or engage with homeless individuals in a meaningful way:

> *"For myself it* [is] *the lack of understanding and education… how can you help me if you don't know what I need?… not what I want, but what I need to develop myself out of that situation. Yes, it will come from myself, but then who do I go to when everybody is thinking 'ok nah, it's another beggar...'"*

> *"Change starts by you… it's how you use your mindset… if you put your mindset on 'I'm sick and tired of this life man, don't want to live like this anymore'… change starts by you… if you don't put in your mindset 'I can do it', and there's a God that created you for a purpose in life…"*

> *"I decided... I needed to change man, because I was in drug addiction for 10 years and I needed to change... really change. I couldn't save myself, you know. And I didn't have guidance, I was from a young age on the street and I asked God to lead me man."*

> *"Anybody can tell a story and anybody can offer help, but you that's telling the story, you must have the will to want to change. You can get that help… but if you're not willing to change then that help is not gonna do any good."*

> *"First understand what a person needs… when he gets what he wants it can be gone tomorrow; but what he needs, it can be for the long-term."*

> *"It's that will to want – no one can give it to you. No one can take you by the hand and guide you to a shelter, nobody can take you by the hand and take you to a rehab or whatever, it's all up to you… the stigma is out there man, the stigma is that homeless people are drug addicts, criminals, prostitutes, they just the lowest of the low. That is the stigma at this moment. My time that I've spent with my brothers and sisters… somewhere along the line we faltered and we fell… some of us stayed there, most of us made that change to like pick ourselves up, get us to a Haven, get us to a safe space… that is the change that I made… this is all just a process… but it all starts with me."*

> *"I come out of heroin addiction, 14 years… in my experience, I was living on the taxi rank, and I just thought to myself one day, 'what the hell am I doing here? I don't belong here, I wasn't raised liked this'… I had to muster up that willpower… it's hard to get out of heroin… or any drug for that matter, because it re-programmes your mind, man, even your situation being homeless, it re-programmes your mind, because you need to think of steps… the institutions are out there that's willing to help… your mind has to change."*

"It's not easy to be in a situation like that… you need… someone who can make you strong, someone who can keep on telling you everything is gonna be alright, that motivation that you need…"

"We can be motivational speakers… going to schools and places in our areas, and we speak to the people about life stories, so they can also hear what kind of life we went through, so we can stop the negative destruction… there's too much people now living on the street, man, coming out of areas onto the streets… it's better if we can speak up and be honest… educating listeners…"

In closing, facilitators asked each individual for a final word to anyone depicted in the picture. In a moving end to a reflective evening, almost all of these words were directed to Trevor-Merle, offering him hope and courage. These are some of the final contributions:

Have the will to want

Trevor-Merle just wants to be a part of something

Change is possible

Hear me out

Rise up, keep fighting, and never give up, there's always hope; there are good people out there

He can help himself

Don't judge what you don't know – to which someone replied 'amen'

If everyone gives up on Trevor-Merle, it makes it easier for Trevor-Merle to give up on himself

Attitudes, perceptions, assumptions...on both sides have to be changed... and I think both sides need to be a bit reflective, because Trevor-Merle comes from a different side of the tracks, so his education will be different...

I would say, he needs to take responsibility for his life and stop feeling sorry for himself... keep on looking, there are opportunities out there

Educate the society about the homeless people, and us homeless also we must work hard...

Everyone gets a second chance in life, but all I can say is once you've rised up, never look back. Always keep your focus to the future, always look ahead of you, never tun back... because once a hour passed there's nothing to change. All you can focus on your future, with the Lord's help.

I've got two words: the first word is 'Be careful' – those people passing, be careful, because you're only one pay check away from homelessness...it's real.

My second word is 'Help' – don't judge, maybe he needs emotional help, or he needs therapy, or he needs financial help...

Get up, and walk

There is help

In God's hands

To Mr Trevor I will just say He must just pick himself up so that he can attract the opposite viewers, so that they can obviously see what's going on

Please wake up, early in the morning... and go find something, so that he can change his life

If I was the person walking past Trevor-Merle... I would say, 'Mr Merle, listen my friend, if you want to change, I'm here for you' – that will speak volumes than giving him a piece of clothing at the end of the day...

The people should stop giving that guy money... stop to give that guy food... he must struggle there and get away from there, that is my point

It's the season for change

There is light at the end of the tunnel

1.4. THE SOUL OF OUR COMMUNITIES: GO BACK TO WHAT?

Figure 13: City of Cape Town's Five Strategic Focus Areas
(Source: IDP 2017-2022)

- The **opportunity city** focuses on the creation of an environment that stimulates sustainable economic growth, investment and job creation.
- The **safe city** aims to create an environment where citizens feel safe. It goes beyond policing and includes aspects such as disaster and risk management, rescue services as well as traffic and bylaw enforcement in order to address safety as a well-rounded concept, while also considering social factors in the City's approach.
- Cape Town must be welcoming to all people and make residents feel at home. As such, the **caring city** concentrates on looking after the people of Cape Town, and especially those who are most in need of assistance.
- True inclusivity can only be achieved in an environment where there is access to economic opportunities, where citizens feel safe and cared for, and where communities are truly integrated. Therefore, the **inclusive city** incorporates aspects of all three strategic focus areas above.
- To deliver on its vision, the City needs to be responsive to its customers' needs and able to sustainably support the various initiatives, programmes and projects by delivering the right services in the most efficient and effective way. The **well-run** city aspires to do this by focusing on financial and operational sustainability, human resource development and organisational restructuring.

The City of Cape Town has set as its five strategic focus areas: opportunity city, safe city, caring city, inclusive city, and well-run city (as per the IDP, 2017 – 2022[20]). The lived experiences of many is that they do not experience the City in this manner. Those who live and work in the homelessness ecosystem and members of the audience raised concerns about the social and economic conditions of communities in Cape Town, which were seen as a push factor in leading some to the streets. Some homeless individuals shared their choice to be on the streets as opposed to living in 'townships' or 'slums'. Others could not return to their families for a myriad of reasons, often linked to traumatic experiences and destructive home environments, while others shared that they could not return to the communities they came from due to gangsterism. In further contrast to the City's goals, those who experience homelessness in business districts and suburban areas face uncaring, exclusionary, and threatening treatment from residents and city officials (described in detail in Chapter 1), as well as a shortage of services to support their wellbeing.

In response to the City's efforts to reunify (return to families) and reintegrate (return to communities), many ask 'back to what?' Homeless individuals expressed their dissatisfaction with interventions that simply seek to relocate them:

"I don't agree with integrating people into society when you are pushing them out of society in the first place! They don't actually want to reintegrate us into society, they actually just want to push the people back into poverty – back to Lavender Hill, where they were pushed to in the first place out of the white areas. Back to the abuse and violence. A lot of the people who are homeless migrate to the streets of wealthy areas to survive because they were not surviving on the Flats, but now you want to reintegrate

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[20] Source:
http://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/City%20strategies%2c%20plans%20and%20frameworks/IDP%202017-2022%20Executive%20Summary.pdf)

us into society, which actually just means going back to your place of origin." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Other chapters in this report, as well as some of the unique stories and special features, describe broader conditions shaping the reality that many people have nowhere to go, while others do not perceive their places of origin as much better than the streets. Chapter 5 expands on the legacy of Apartheid and the desperate social and economic conditions faced in our most impoverished communities.

"The social and cohesive fibre of stable communities was shattered and destroyed through the forced removal(s) known as The Group Areas Act, where people of colour were uprooted and forcibly removed to the dusty wastes of the Cape Flats… my father had to plead guilty… that he was residing in Claremont illegally, this after the family had been living there for the past 32 years. Families from Newlands, Claremont, District Six, Simon's Town, Goodwood and other areas had their traditions and customs destroyed by an act that was abhorrent and inhuman(e)." – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

"Consider local networks of care again, under the umbrella of the street people programme, and not lying with the districts – the reason for that is, our communities…" – Jantjie Booysen, Ubuntu Circle of Courage

Furthermore, socio-economic challenges such as gangsterism and the lack of opportunities available are factors that keep people out of their places of origin.

"I grew up in Mitchells Plain… the gangsters in our community saw… that this is a clever one… so they either… intimidate you to a point where, 'we're gonna harass you… you must pay us tax… or you must join our gang'… It's all these aspects that drive you out of your community at home, and that is why I ended up on the street, because of this gangsterism at home… I can't go there… if I step to my mommy they know I'm there, if I get on the train to Retreat, by the time I get to Retreat station when I get off they're there…" – Donovan, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I got three boys… they are in Mitchells Plain; I can't enter Mitchell's Plain, because about the gangsterism, about the gun…" – Nosipho Magade, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Die rede hoekom ek nie wil terug huistoe gegaan het nie, is omdat dit te droog is daar by die huis, daar's weinig werk. As jy moet werk kry, dan gooi hulle vir jou op n plaas wat die mense vir jou baie anderster treat."

[Translation**:** "The reason why I don't want to go back home is because it's too dry there, work is scarce. If you find work there, then they throw you onto a farm where the people treat you very differently [unfavourably]."] – Meshack Tshantsha, an individual who has experienced homelessness and who is originally from the Northern Cape.

"The reason why [homeless] *people are in the more affluent areas, is because we don't wanna die… We were sent there to die, you know, because that's what the system was trying to accomplish. So, if we are going to fix stuff, we can't send them back to the place where they're running away from, because they know that they're gonna die… if they do get back. Their dreams are dying there, their very*

self is basically dying there, in those areas where we were sent initially." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Rejected or displaced at home and in the city, Chapter 7 describes some of the complexities associated with many who have felt the need to 'escape' from their communities, or who feel unwelcome or endangered in their families and communities.

> *"I don't understand the reintegration or the reuniting of street people with their families, because sometimes I feel that… we were running away from something, we went away from something; sometimes there was abuse, there was neglect, there was a lot of stuff… I can't understand why would you want to send these people back to that? Are you that cruel?... I had HIV… nobody wanted me back at that time… nobody had place for me… they just didn't have place…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"Most of the time we sit with dysfunctional families…"* – Jantjie Booysen, Ubuntu Circle of Courage

Tending to the soul of our city requires that we tend to the soul of our communities – both the communities people are being pushed from, often to escape toxic and traumatic conditions, and the communities they are being pushed out of as homeless individuals.

> *"When we deal with the issue of vulnerable people, and in this instance our homeless community, **it is not just about the rehabilitation of the person, it's about the rehabilitation of community**… challenging the systems that* [are] *feeding into the fact that they are vulnerable and that they're being victimised."* – Ilse Maartens, MES (emphasis by The Inkathalo Conversations).

1.5. WHAT DOES HOPE LOOK LIKE?

A key theme throughout this report is the importance of reflective praxis and ongoing learning. This chapter may leave us with more questions than answers, but as we reflect on the narratives, as well as the learnings shared by participants in the dialogues, we recognise the call to deepen our humanity, an opportunity that presents us with reason to hope. Framed by transformational experiences and hopes shared by stakeholders, this invitation is a call to both reflect and act, a call to engage faith, and a call to celebrate the human story.

This is also a call for citizens to examine their words and actions, to not only hold a view of justice but to act towards it as well – both personally and collectively:

"Within the word [justice] we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed – even in part – the other immediately suffers" (Paulo Freire, 1968).

"…We've got a journey to go on together, that could lead to deep healing, to deep reconciliation; but that requires a language for repentance, and repentance that doesn't just say sorry but that does sorry. And that is spiritual language, but it can't be absent from policy language." – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

"We do not have a homeless problem in our city – we have a homeless people solution that with self-involvement and greater respect to our constitutional ideals, will see better services and care for all." – Ashley Potts, Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre

"The pinnacle of my personal development in this sector was through the St Peters community dinners and learning at those dinners how mutual transformation and equalising power is key to success in this sector. The more we understand that we can mutually transform, as well as the people that we work with, is key, and that power dynamics can be extremely unhelpful, and we need to learn to curb those power dynamics and equalise power." – Richard Bolland, New Hope SA

A call for deeper engagement within communities of faith, to challenge religious groups to reflect and assess their theological and moral standing in serving those who have been marginalised:

"Dialogue further requires an intense faith in humankind, faith in their power to make and remake, to create and re-create, faith in their vocation to be more fully human (which is not the privilege of an elite, but the birthright of all)." (Freire, 1968).

"It can be invitational, and it also needs to be challenging… denomination heads made calls for churches not to be open, and that needs to be addressed." – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

"…Many of us preach the doctrine that 'the poor will always be with us', and in fact it gives us this feel-good feeling that we will give them a little bit of soup… 'for me to prove my relevance, there've gotta be homeless people so that I can have a soup kitchen and give them sandwiches'. I believe we need to challenge the church… and I'm talking about our mosques, I'm talking about our synagogues, our churches…" – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

"The church at the moment is in crisis… what I do see here is I see a new purpose, a new focus, a new ministry that must be taken into account for the church." – Francois Bruwer, Fisantekraal Centre for Development/Vriende van Durbanville

The possibility to reimagine how homeless individuals can be included and celebrated within the city, as opposed to be criticised and ostracised:

"My fieldworkers were able to identify the most difficult individuals, those who were using substance, those who were involved in antisocial behaviour, and we formed an amazing partnership with Streetscapes, whereby these difficult individuals were put onto a work-based programme, there was rehabilitation attached to it… there is almost a 'housing first' initiative.

We had eight identified people whose behaviour was extremely problematic in Long Street… there were continual complaints coming from the restaurants that this was impacting on their business, and there was a very harsh law enforcement approach to dealing with this… We started a programme where these eight individuals started working… in Long Street, but what was really, for me, almost ground-breaking, is that the businesses, the restaurants who were complaining, they were actually then providing funding which were stipends for people to actually be involved.

And if you could have seen the difference in these individuals within a short period of time, when dignity was restored; they were so proud of Long Street that they actually wanted to make business thrive there. So, the restaurateur who was normally critical of them, knew them by name, would greet them, and there was just an amazing bond… it's almost the perfect kind of project, which I think a lot more can be developed from…" – Pat Eddy, City of Cape Town Central City Improvement District (CCID)

"…Start to slowly change the narrative and tell the human story… as soon as people see another human in front of them…as opposed to something else, they start to connect, and that can only be changed through communication campaigns and community engagement." – Richard Bolland, New Hope SA

"How do we help [wealthy or suburban] *communities to understand that it is now also your issue… it's not about wishing people away – how do we create infrastructure in those places?"* – Dr Stephan de Beer, University of Pretoria

1.6. READER'S REFLECTIONS

Reflection is an important practice in System Transformation. The reader is encouraged to consider the following reflection points from a personal, organisational, community, and systemic perspective:

- In engaging with homeless individuals, what kind of language do I use?
- How do I give and why?
- Where does my giving go?
- Do I give knowing what the impact is, or am I 'trusting the system'? For example, when I 'buy a bed' as part of a responsible giving campaign, do I know that there is one?
- How does my community communicate about homeless individuals?
- Which organisational practices perpetuate the stigmas attached to homelessness? Which begin to break these down?
- How do I deepen my own humanity in my everyday responses and actions?
- What are some of my own beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions? What am I challenged to reconsider?
- What might it look like for each member of society to live a 'homelessness-reversing lifestyle'?
- What next? – for which one participant framed the following reflective question:

"What we did fail to do post the TRC* was to pastor civil society in 'what next': What does repentance look like? How does repentance lead to restitution? And therefore, how could then restitution potentially lead to reconciliation?" – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

*Truth and Reconciliation Commission

CHAPTER 2:   INTER/INTRA-SECTORAL CONNECTION AND COLLABORATION

Contents

2.1. INTRODUCTION

"Homeless people are not a homogenous group, they are unique individuals with their own unique stories, circumstances, and lived-experiences that led them to become homeless; and remain homeless because of various social, economic, governance, and political factors. BUT importantly, because the current system, structures, processes, procedures are inadequate and broken." – Saarah Salie, Wesgro/Western Cape War Room

This section looks at the various role-players within the system, their mandates, and how these interact with one another as they engage homelessness in the City of Cape Town. The homelessness sector crosscuts various institutional levels as well as typical sectoral divisions. The social and economic reaches of homelessness and its diversity of touchpoints should activate interaction between tiers of government; between departments within each sphere of government; between government, business and civil society; and between civil society organisations. All of these touchpoints are considered part of an ecosystem.

Ecosystem – short for ecological system – is the sum of all the parts that make up a system. In the ecological system of a forest, for example, there are trees, shrubs, birds, bees, and animals that all live in the forest and contribute to the lifecycle of the forest. Similarly, in other contexts, this same analogy can be applied. Using this analogy, we should see homelessness and its various touchpoints as an ecosystem. In the homelessness ecosystem, there are the government and public service departments, their policies and instruments; the service providers, who are organisations and individuals who deliver various services to the homeless; various intermediaries, who may be referred to as actors that support homeless individuals episodically. Finally, those who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness – both individuals themselves and the groups they form.

Further to this understanding of ecosystem actors, are the levels at which these actors interact. A helpful example is the government – government exists at a national, provincial, and a local level; each of these levels interact with the homeless individual, the homelessness sector, and service providers in various service areas. In this way, we understand who is involved in the system, at which level, and how they contribute to the ecosystem. This in turn gives us an understanding of how each part, person, policy, and entity interact with one another; what results from or is missing from those interactions; and what actions within the system make it perform as it does.

In approaching this chapter, we hold in mind and heart the Vision Statement of the *National Development Plan 2030*[21]*,* which sets out this hope for South Africa:

"We all assist the institutions we have creatively redesigned to meet our varied needs; we reach out across communities to strengthen our resolve to live with honesty, to be set against corruption and dehumanising actions." – National Development Plan 2030

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[21] National Development Plan 2030: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf

2.2. DEFINING THE MANDATE

PUBLIC AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE MANDATES

In the South African context, there are three spheres of government: national, provincial, and local (or municipal) government, which includes both district and local municipal authorities. Each sphere has a particular mandate and jurisdiction and at each level, different departments have been created in order to administer the broad range of services offered to the public. In addition, numerous parastatal organisations, entities and authorities exist as implementing vehicles with specific sectoral mandates.

From a national government perspective, homelessness does not fall within the ambit of any national department.

> *"In July 2020, when asked '*[which] *sphere of Government is responsible for accommodating homeless persons,' the Minister of Social Development, Lindiwe Zulu, responded in reply to a DA parliamentary question that '*[there] *is currently no clarity at national level in terms of the lead department dealing with homelessness'."* – Saarah Salie, Wesgro/Western Cape War Room, quoting Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of Social Development, July 2020.

The matter of addressing homelessness is delegated to the provincial government, with the recognition that local municipalities must be involved in or initiate responses to localised challenges. Thus, the provincial and local government can independently define their roles and responsibilities concerning homelessness. In the Western Cape, sector actors who engage with the Provincial and Local Government have defined this relationship as confusing, leading to what may be referred to as 'mandate wars,' as various role players disagree over their respective service delivery obligations.

> *"A misunderstanding of official responsibilities and delegations of authority, often* [leaves] *critical services undelivered."* – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

Drawing from comments made during The Inkathalo Conversations, as well as publicly available resources, this section of the report tries to understand the intersections of governmental support within the Western Cape, with a specific focus on the City of Cape Town. Within this geography, the following government entities have adopted responsibilities in delivering services to homeless citizens:

1. The Western Cape Government: Department of Social Development
2. The City of Cape Town: Department of Social Development and Early Childhood Development
3. City Improvement Districts, such as the Cape Town Central City Improvement District (CCID) and the Voortrekker Road CID (VR CID)

These entities and their communicated mandates regarding homelessness are discussed hereafter.

> *"…One of the things that is a gap, that causes a lot of service delivery issues in this sector, is the gap between Provincial Government and the City* [of Cape Town]*, there is this constant tension between who's responsible…"* – Sam Voss, U-Turn

The Western Cape Government

In terms of the Constitution (1996), welfare services is one of the functional areas of national and provincial legislative competence. It is within this ambit that the Western Cape Government's Department of Social Development (WC Department of Social Development) has a mandate towards those experiencing homelessness. According to the WC Department of Social Development, they respond by providing full or partial funding to NGOs that work directly to "*get people off the streets and to empower them with skills-training, uniting them back with their families and integrating them into our communities*" (WC Department of Social Development, 2019[22]). Their support includes the funding of shelters and their associated programmes. In addition, the WC Department of Social Development makes the following statement regarding their assistance to homeless persons:

"How is Government Assisting the Homeless"? (Western Cape Government, 2019)[23]

The Western Cape Government's Department of Social Development (DSD) would like to encourage the public to give responsibly. This includes donating money, food, clothes, toys, bedding, etc. to registered Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who work (sic) specifically with the homeless people in our towns and cities.

…

The Western Cape Government's Department of Social Development's Winter Readiness Programme prioritises the homeless by providing R47.6-million to 29 shelters, which provide 1 401 beds each day.

The shelters render key social work services aimed at reunifying homeless adults with their families, with R16-million allocated to sustained family reunification services.

The department is also working with NGOs, to provide extra mattresses, food, and care packs to the poor. The Sustainable Livelihoods Programme funds a total of 75 targeted feeding sites across the province. Access to these sites is via the Department of Health, following an assessment by a registered social worker."

The City of Cape Town

The City of Cape Town is one of eight metropolitan municipalities (or 'Category A' municipalities) in the country. The Constitution defines a Category A municipality as having "*exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in its area*" (CSP, 2019[24]). This has consequences that may not be evident to all citizens, as demonstrated by comments about the array of municipal strategies seen in response to COVID-19:

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[22] WC DSD, 2019: https://www.2019)westerncape.gov.za/general-publication/homelessness-0

[23] https://www.westerncape.gov.za/general-publication/homelessness-0

[24] CSP, 2019:
https://csp.treasury.gov.za/Resource%20_Centre/Conferences/Documents/Supporting%20City%20Futures/CSP%20Supporting%20City%20Futures.pdf

Caroline Powell (The Warehouse Trust)*: "Why was every local government allowed to do anything they wanted when lockdown was announced?"*

Saarah Salie (Wesgro/Western Cape War Room)*: "*[They are] *completely independent… The president can't instruct local councils."*

Homelessness and the City

Stakeholders like Clifford Martinus from Oasis, a shelter facility within Cape Town, firmly believe that local government should take ownership. "*In the Western Cape, it would be the City of Cape Town,*" he said. But such public sentiment does not constitute a mandate.It is important to understand what the City of Cape Town has identified as its sphere of activity.

According to the City of Cape Town Social Development Department Directorate's programme documents, launched in Lavender Hill and Bonteheuwel in May 2013, the City proposed a plan for vulnerable groups, one of which is Street People.

> "*The Social Development Strategy (SDS) identifies street people as a particularly vulnerable group that requires assistance to achieve reintegration into communities and access to employment opportunities.*" – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

The Street People's Programme aims to assist people who live on the streets to return to their homes, using what is described as a holistic reintegration programme. It also offers accommodation and employment opportunities. The goal of the City's plan "*is to get as many people as possible off the streets*" by dealing with the core issue of what led to them living, sleeping and surviving on the streets.

> "*To identify and provide street people with the necessary developmental assistance to access accommodation, health services, skill-development services, employment and social grants and aid in facilitating the reintegration or reunification of street people into families, community and society.*" – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

The programme is said to offer:

- Winter Readiness Programme activities: The Winter Readiness Programme runs between 1 May and 30 September each year. Effectively, the programme is co-ordinated by the City and implemented by contracted NGOs, NPOs and PBOs. These organisations provide services for indigent people with resources for temporal periods, e.g. temporary mattresses, food parcels, toiletries, and bedding. The organisations contracted for these services must subscribe to a set of criteria, set by the City;
- Life skills training programmes and aptitude tests to determine suitable skills training;
- Provision of services at Assessment Centres;
- Detoxification and rehabilitation programmes at the City's Matrix Clinics in Delft, Khayelitsha, Milnerton, Tableview, and Tafelsig;
- Focused, proactive activities aimed at those at risk of turning to the streets;
- Rehabilitation and community reintegration of people living, sleeping, and surviving on the streets;

- Access to social workers and 'local networks of care', as part of the reintegration process into communities of origin;
- Access to other developmental programmes, such as the City's Expanded Public Works Programme, for temporal employment opportunities;
- Physical and mental health examination where possible; and
- In addition, the Give Responsibly Campaign encourages the public to support the homeless by giving resources to the City's programme and partner organisations, instead of giving money directly to homeless individuals, (this is an imperfect solution, as was raised throughout The Inkathalo Conversations, and reflected elsewhere in this report).

The Mayoral Committee Member, Dr Zahied Badroodien, responsible for Community Services and Health, described the City's response to homelessness in his presentation at The Inkathalo Conversations:

> "*Addressing homelessness is the constitutional responsibility of National and Provincial Government. Because the problem happens on the streets of the City, we as local government are expected by the public to respond to it, and as a caring government, the City does work to help persons off the street through social development programmes. The City is also responsible for enforcing its by-laws which apply to everybody who lives in, works in, or visits Cape Town…*" – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

He also alluded to the limits of the Municipality's mandate:

> "*The operations and management of the facilities for the homeless is a welfare service that is a concurrent national and provincial legislative competence in terms of Part A of Schedule 4 of the Constitution… Municipalities must therefore leave the operations and management of the facilities for the homeless to Provincial Departments of Social Development once the facilities have been identified and accordingly approved as suitable for the purpose.*
>
> *Municipalities must continue to identify and make available sites to be used as shelters for the homeless people, where still necessary, and submit the lists in the template provided by the Department of Social Development to Provincial Joint Operation Centres.*" – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

Disaster Management and Institutional Resilience

In many ways, the advent of COVID-19 has revealed the cracks in the service delivery system, and in particular in planning and management around disasters. According to Shehnaz Cassim-Moosa of the City of Cape Town, there is acknowledgement that there is room for better planning and better cohesion between government and citizens when it comes to disaster response, a line of thought that is in its nascent stage in governments across the world.

In special instances, such as a disaster or pandemic like COVID-19, a special set of conditions apply, as described below:

"A legal opinion on the nature of the City of Cape Town's (the City) general mandate in terms of the Constitution, as well as a view on its responsibilities toward homeless people in light of the COVID-19 crisis, as well as an opinion on which items are within the City's mandate in terms of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) (DMA), its regulations and directions published thereunder in relation to the COVID-19: The City is not responsible for the provision of housing/shelters to homeless people during the lockdown and such responsibility is vested in the responsible cabinet minister. However, the regulations do call for collaboration and the making available of resources only if it is within the financial means of the City and if it will not detract from its obligations to deliver basic municipal services… Under the COVID-19 Regulations, the City exceeded its required level of response by providing shelters to homeless people and the ancillary functions associated therewith." – City of Cape Town, 2020[25]

The statement affirms that ultimately, it is incumbent upon the Provincial government as to how they would respond to crises and interpret the Act. While legally sound, this statement is incongruent with the City's ethos of being a "*caring city*". When compared to responses by the City of Tshwane and the City of Durban, the interpretation of the Disaster Management Act by the City of Cape Town, discussed in parts of this report (see Special Feature: Strandfontein), has reinforced some of the attitudes described in Chapter 1, and has ultimately displayed the 'Soul of the City'.

Ironically, the City of Cape Town has in other respects attempted a more proactive approach toward building a resilient city. The City established an initiative charged with assessing its resilience, which could have provided a framework for a 'shock' event such as COVID-19. This plan is based on a five-pillar strategy. However, most notable is the lack of clarity on how this plan will coincide with existing inter-departmental plans. Regardless, it may present a meaningful opportunity to reset and address the key gaps experienced during a 'shock' event like COVID-19.

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[25] City of Cape Town, 2020: http://www.capetown.gov.za/Media-and-news

Figure 14: Extracts from the City of Cape Town Resilience Strategy[26] (City of Cape Town, 2019)
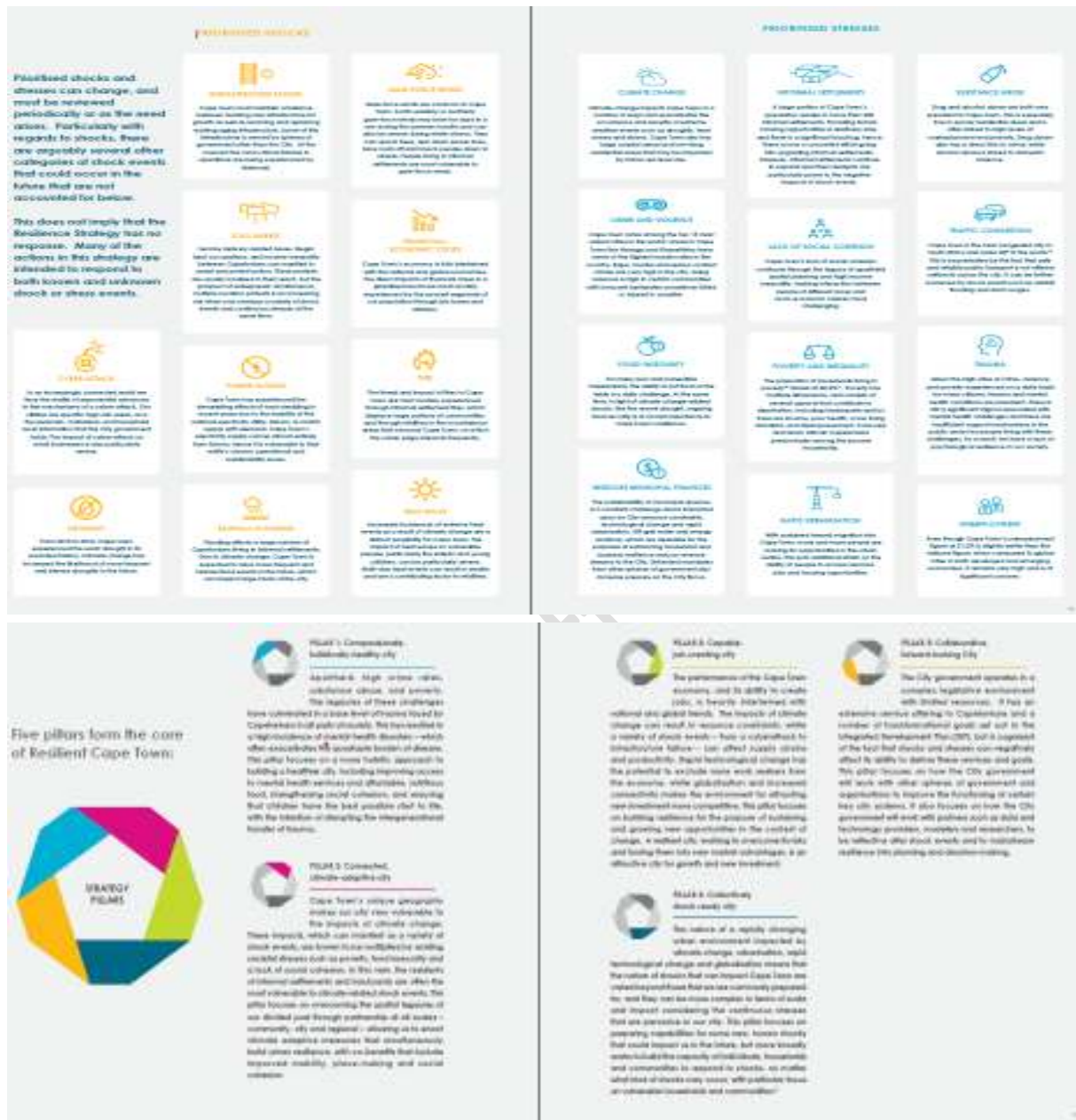
How Does the City Define Resilience?

The City of Cape Town defines resilience as, "*the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems in a city to survive, adapt, and thrive, no matter what kind of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.*"

Through this strategy, the City hopes to identify stressors and shocks that affect both the human population and the environment. Given this focus, it is important to understand how homeless individuals and stakeholders in the homelessness ecosystem will be engaged in this regard. Ms Cassim-Moosa's presentation at The Inkathalo Conversations, which shared the strategy and its intentions, raised the following questions from participants and audience members:

- Whether the Resilience Strategy has a mechanism for receiving and taking into account feedback from citizens and role-players; and
- Whether the topic of homelessness was brought into conversations with communities during the neighbourhood resilience assessment.

The responses to these questions suggest that the depth of engagement with all groups in society in developing policy and strategy may leave much to be desired, with the risk of perpetuating constraints and maintaining systemic gaps.

> *"There is an entire public participation unit that is meant to engage with… the public… It's one of those things where the legislation doesn't allow for broader flexibility, because there's… a legislated mechanism, it still calls for having public participation to be advertised in newspapers… there's this highly legislated kind of process. So, some of these things are kind of… a bit of a hamstring in terms of what you can actually do…"* – Shehnaz Cassim-Moosa, City of Cape Town

Considering this response and given some of the concerns raised by homeless individuals during The Inkathalo Conversations, possible points of engagement within the strategy have been identified, which could pave the way for greater interaction and improved collaboration between sector actors and the existing institutional framework. In essence, when actors in the sector can identify how to engage the City within its frameworks, this may unlock new opportunities for change and innovation.

As a first entry point, Pillar 1 of the strategy, outlined below, could address key concerns articulated by homeless individuals:

Pillar 1: "Compassionate, holistically-healthy city", is focused on the following goals:

1.1 Increase awareness, access to, and uptake of mental health support

1.2 Embrace a more holistic approach to policing and crime prevention to break the cycle of violence and decrease recidivism rates and trauma

1.3 Combat discrimination and build social cohesion

1.4 Promote a culture of health that increases well-being and decreases trauma

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Linking this to the challenges of those experiencing homelessness, one may consider Points 1.2 and 1.4 in addressing the hostile engagement between Law Enforcement and the homeless (see Chapter 4), where the lived experiences of homeless individuals and the resultant trauma of those experiences can be given voice and addressed. As a further example, Points 1.3 and 1.4 may be relevant as a gateway to addressing hygiene concerns, and meeting the health and ablution needs of the homeless.

Pillar 4 is another key pillar of the City of Cape Town's Resilience Strategy that affects the homeless. Under this pillar, which addresses the issue of being "*Collectively (a) Shock-Ready City*", its Goal 4.2 states its duty to *"Strengthen individual, family and community resilience"*.

Chapter 8 of this report, under *system failures,* describes the impact of the vulnerable internal, familial and social systems that often fail for those experiencing homelessness. Using these and other inputs harnessed through institutional experience and the stories of homeless individuals presents an opportunity to inform future strategies on key resilient systems to prevent homelessness.

> *"Resilience is a guiding principle of the IDP 2017 – 2022 but mainly around 'shocks and stresses'. Very broadly it looks at systems within the City and how they can respond and remain resilient in shocks and stresses* [started with the Rockefeller Foundation, which has become the Million City Foundation]*."* – Shehnaz Cassim-Moosa, City of Cape Town

Given the intention of this strategy, galvanising the sector to draw from earlier systems gaps, failures, and learnings, such as the recent implementation of the Disaster Management Act (COVID-19), when engaging the Resilience Strategy will be key. Even through this initial engagement around the strategy, the need for reflective praxis was raised in response to the presentation, which garnered support and consideration.

> *"That's something that I can think about a bit more, and think about how we can build* [that] *into our reflective learning process…"* – Shehnaz Cassim-Moosa, City of Cape Town

City Improvement Districts (Public-Private Partnerships)

The City Improvement Districts (CIDs) are a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) in specific geographical areas under the auspices of the City of Cape Town. According to the CID website, a City Improvement District (CID), also known as a Special Ratings Area (SRA), is a non-profit organisation operating within a defined area within which property owners agree to pay a levy to enhance the physical and social environment of the area.

> *"And how* [do] *CIDs get their funding?... It's from ratepayers who stay… in that particular geographical area – so one can understand that within the CBD of Cape Town… it's a big business support base."* – Wilma Piek, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

A CID, according to the SRA by-law, collects a CID levy from the ratepayers in the area over and above the normal rates charges. The money collected, unlike the rates, is a dedicated levy, which can only be spent in the specific CID area and is used to provide 'top up' services according to an approved Business Plan. These services provided by the CID are supplementary and complementary to those provided by the City of Cape Town, which continues to provide its normal services.

The advantages of establishing a CID (City Improvement District, 2009)[27]:

- The cost of providing supplementary services will be borne by all property owners
- Costs are borne in proportion to the value of the property
- The Improvement District approach is holistic
- Provides enhancement of the environment and strengthens investor confidence
- The Improvement District creates a positive identity for the area
- The Improvement District provides private sector management and accountability
- The improvement of property values
- To put forward ideas for change to Council

According to Derek Bock, the CEO of the Voortrekker Road CID, there are 47 CIDs in Cape Town. The Cape Town Central City Improvement District (CCID) and The Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID) participated in The Inkathalo Conversations. They have both established an internal Social Development Department of their own, and some have developed charity programmes and fieldwork interventions (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3).

> *"I have influenced the CID board to make more funding available… business is extremely supportive of programmes which they believe can make a difference."* – Wilma Piek, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

> *"All the funds… annually distributed to our six partners, it's divided; this year in fact the CID supplemented it and to three of our partners we gave washing machines and tumble dryers to try and actually deal with COVID-related issues."* – Pat Eddy, City Town Central City Improvement District (CCID)

RHETORIC VERSUS REALITY

The report outlines government's role and responsibilities in respect of homelessness above. These are all policy intentions, separate from the actual lived experiences of those experiencing homeless; therefore, in practice, challenges will emerge.

As an example, in an online Street People's FAQs publication, the City of Cape Town firstly highlights the complexity of homelessness as a social concern, and subsequently raises some of the challenges in offering support to those affected by homelessness:

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[27] http://cityimprovement.co.za/wordpress/

The City's Street People Response: Frequently Asked Questions, 2020

The Concern:

"Homelessness is driven by a variety of social and economic factors. Some reasons include: Displacement, migration to cities, the COVID-19 pandemic, releasing of parolees by the Department of Correctional Services without subsequent support systems, and economic causes such as unemployment and weak economic growth."

The Challenges:

- *"Many, if not most, street people turn down offers of assistance to get off the street.*
- *Irresponsible handouts instead of donating to shelters and NGOs further prevent people from getting off the street.*
- *It is not illegal to be homeless and no person can be forced to accept social assistance.*
- *There are also those who attempt reintegration, but then end up back on the streets."*

From the conversations, it was clear that the challenges raised by the City have complex reasons, many of which are discussed throughout this report. The following pieces reflect on some of these challenges between what is intended by various government agencies and how that is realised or experienced.

Language in Action

"Policy is ridden with concepts which are typically poorly defined and understood, leading to 'conceptual confusion' – for example, where managerial and operational staff have different understandings, this may lead to a difference in implementation approaches. In order to effectively influence policy and strategy, concepts must be interrogated and made sense of so that actors measure and implement the same things [results, theory of change, monitoring and evaluation]*.*

Utilising research – objective information needs to inform strategy and policy; at the same time, so many aspects must be considered, such as the background and understanding of those involved and affected. Critical engagement with concepts, policy, strategy, interventions, and interactions is required… We have a tendency to think that we're all on the same page when we are developing strategies and policies, when in fact we need to be intentional about how we define things, and the people we involve, that everyone needs to be on board, to be able to take this forward." – Dr Heidi Sauls, Researcher – Western Cape Government

As pointed out in this comment, language as a constructional element is a crucial point of departure. Here, Dr Sauls, like Mauthner and Doucet, recognises that the reflexive turn in the social sciences has given rise to feminist, postmodern, post-structural, hermeneutic, interpretive, and critical discourses that signify knowledge and understanding as contextually and historically located, and as linguistically represented (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003).

This implies that how we use language within the policies, definitions and descriptions allows for a particular orientation and representation of a phenomenon, and oftentimes guides the construction of our responses to phenomena. In one example, Dr Sauls uses the term 'vulnerability'. She further explains that using the word 'vulnerable' presupposes that protection, or a particular kind of intervention, is needed.

The implication is that a particular set of resources are dispersed in respect of the defined group. While this term does not have negative implications in and of itself, coupling it with homelessness may very well have negative implications, as is the case across various governmental policies which speak to homelessness. She further points out an example in another scenario where the word vulnerable/vulnerability is used as a descriptor; women are labelled as vulnerable in referring to gender-based violence (GBV) and inter-personal violence in South Africa. However, statistically, men are at greater risk of being murdered, also implying their vulnerability. While governmental resources are directed at this 'vulnerable' group, a gap may arise within the system with regards to the "*concepts, policy, strategy, interventions, and interactions... required...*" as stated by Dr Sauls*.

As illustrated in this instance, there is a risk that the language within policy can describe and problematise a particular social issue incorrectly, and that this will lead to policy responding to an incorrect analysis of the problem. In defining homelessness and its complexities, as well as the challenges faced by homeless individuals, who are also defined as 'vulnerable', policymakers must ensure that problems are accurately diagnosed and that appropriate responses are designed. An example showing that this is not the current reality lies in the fact that there is no central system with shared outcomes or shared language to measure a 'theory of change' between the government and the homelessness sector (as described in more detail elsewhere in this report). This demonstrates that there are entrenched systemic and inter-sectoral gaps that limit the alleviation efforts towards eradicating homelessness.

Wilma Piek and Pat Eddy, working with the CIDs in the Bellville and the City Centre respectively, find it very complex to engage the current system and the reality on the ground. They have found that while the intention is to link homeless individuals to opportunities that would improve the district's outcomes, the system that ought to facilitate this disables this possibility.

> "*...A narrative was coming out, 'people don't want help.' And this narrative has continued, and it continues to come out of the City, repeatedly, 'people don't want help'... what is the help that we really are offering people?... we really started exploring what is wrong, and then, very clearly, I think* [saw that] *most things were wrong with the system.*" – Pat Eddy, City Town Central City Improvement District (CCID)

In addition, as policymakers are hoping to operationalise policy frameworks, their experience is that the language is convoluted, misdirected, and as asserted by Dr Sauls, misconstrued.

> "*The system sometimes creates paralysis, where you find decision makers and even policymakers thinking 'we need to have clarity from the court in order to know that we can do this,' so it becomes a challenge.*" – An audience member in response to a presentation by Wesgro.

Regulatory Systems

Regulatory systems refer to the body of legal requirements for practices and processes, and the legal authority to ensure adherence to these requirements. A key feature pointed out by institutional scholars is understanding the regulatory system and how it supports a specific social phenomenon (Nilsson, 2014). Regarding the regulatory system and its hierarchical nature, observations by sector actors are that there are incongruencies both within and between the Provincial Government and the City of Cape Town.

Provincial Government holds the oversight role within the Province, from where the City of Cape Town should take its directive.

Sector actors have identified the WC Department of Social Development as the sphere of government that neglects its role and fails to give effective directives and guidance to address homelessness. Participants raised examples of what seem to be myriad regulatory gaps at provincial level.

> *"Applications in WC Department of Social Development for shelter funding… before you can do this, you first need to register these places [shelter]. WC Department of Social Development was not aware of this... so you're dealing with the Monty Python of bureaucracy." – Jesse Laitenen, Streetscapes*

> *"WC Department of Social Development dictating how things must be done is not working – it needs to be informed by what the people's needs are." – Jon Hopkins, U-Turn*

While the WC Department of Social Development was represented in the person of Dr Heidi Sauls at The Inkathalo Conversations, the full extent of WC Department of Social Development 's role in homelessness could not be discussed in the absence of other criticial WC Department of Social Development role players. For this reason, this report does not explore the role or activities of the WC Department of Social Development in detail and addresses largely what has been publicised and presented by representatives of the City of Cape Town, discussed hereafter.

As described earlier, Councillor Zahid Badroodien presented the support structure for the City of Cape Town's Social Development Department. As the key role player for the City of Cape Town within the homeless ecosystem, he outlined how the system is designed to be integrated and connected. However, this contrasted with the experiences of other system actors, as will be discussed.

The government intends to design and structure an integrated system of support but there is a mismatch between Councillor Badroodien's presentation, which outlines the City's framing of support for the homeless, and, firstly, the experiences of those who have lived on the streets of Cape Town, and secondly, the experiences of City department officials. As an example, while the City of Cape Town's Social Development Department's presentation proposes a collaborative inter-departmental plan, the experiences of Saarah Salie (Wesgro) are expressed in this quote: "*Without civil society, I don't know where we would be in this country right now because... the system is a disaster.*"

This so-called '*system disaster*' presents a regulatory challenge, particularly where the regulatory frameworks are unclear or allow for various interpretations. One such example is illustrated in the following flowcharts, which represent the same processes within the Social Development Department, illustrated in variant ways. An official presented one version while another version lives in the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013).*

City of Cape Town Social Development Department Operating Procedure

Figure 15 and Figure 16 are programme flowcharts; Councillor Zahid Badroodien presented Figure 15 (Social Development Department Programme Flow) at The Inkathalo Conversations, while Figure 16 is an illustration of the flow from the actual *Street People Policy, 2013*. Figure 17 illustrates the Displaced Peoples Unit's flow chart, also presented by Councillor Badroodien. These flowcharts vary in diagrammatic structure while addressing the same population group and social problem, demonstrating incoherence across documents, governmental structures, and approaches, all within a single department within the City.

> *"The City hasn't followed its own process."* – Warren Conrad, The Hope Exchange

It is these normative and regulatory challenges (Nilsson, 2014) within both government and the sector that entrench gaps within the system and leave beneficiaries confused and unsupported.

> "*Back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.*" – John Hufkie, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness, describing his experience with governmental support systems.

> *"The system is a failure itself… I think what's failing dismally is that we're forgetting to really care about the people…"* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 15: Social Development Department Programme Flow as presented by Councillor Zahid Badroodien
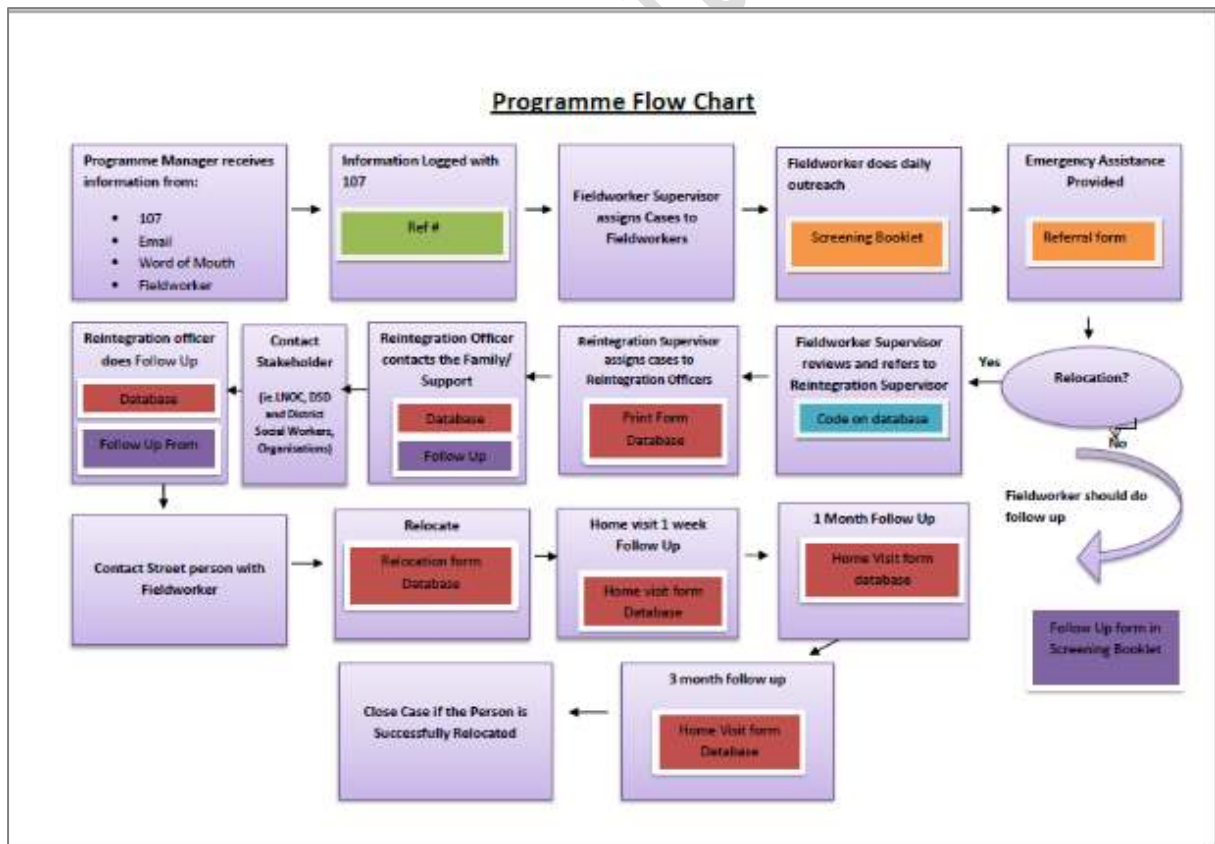
Figure 16: Street People Process Flow in the Street People Policy (2013)[28]
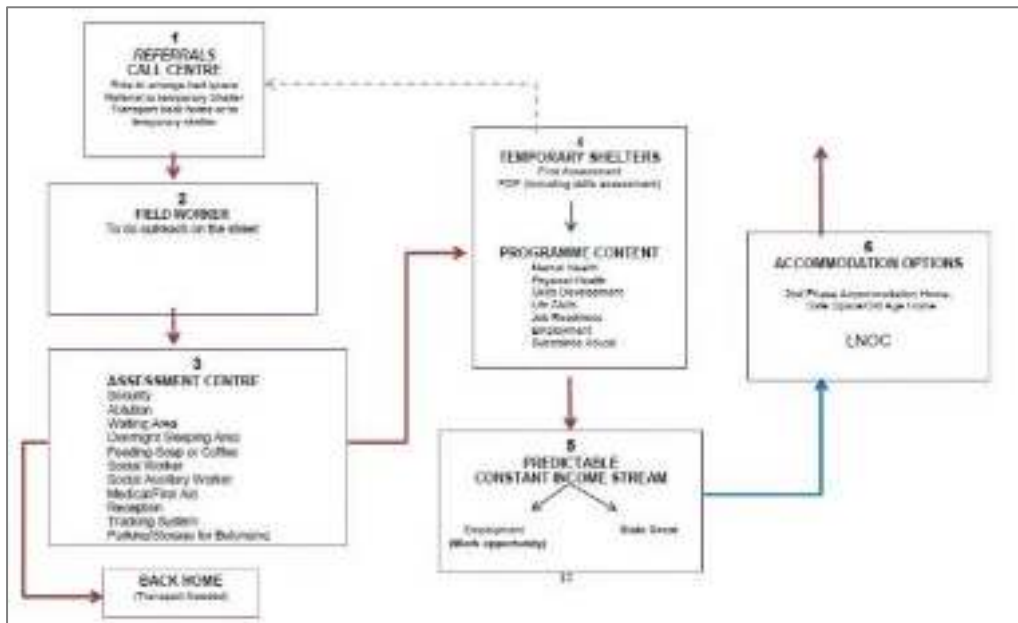
Figure 17: Programme Work Flow as presented by Councillor Zahid Badroodien
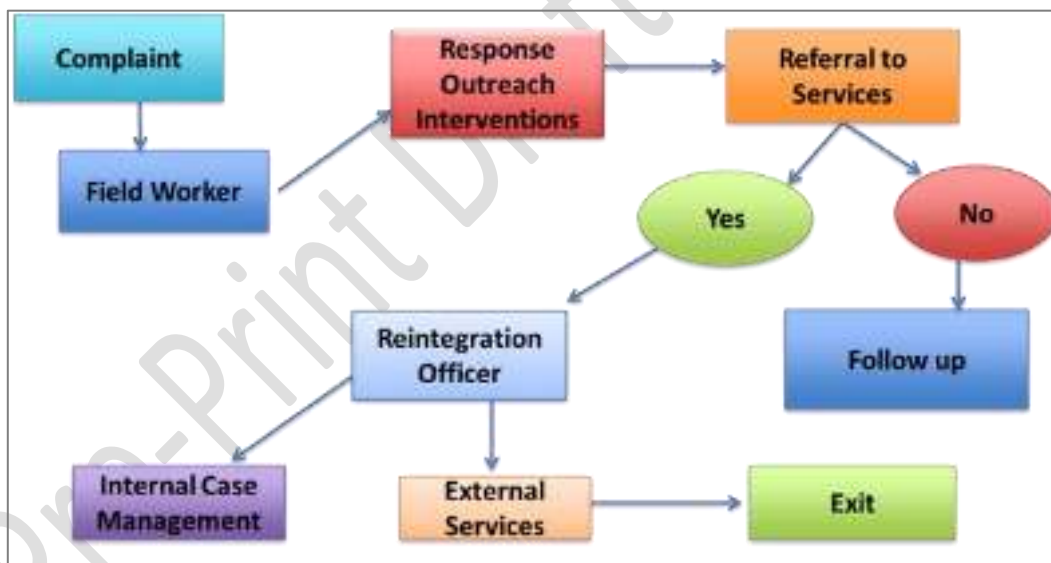
Figure 18 illustrates the Standard Operating Procedure for Children, as presented by Janice King of the Western Cape Street Children's Forum (WCSCF). In this operating procedure, Janice King highlighted the major risks and gaps in the process, which often undermine the care and interventions that are intended – these are seen in the form of red stars noting the particular flaw.

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[28] Street People Policy (2013):
https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Bylaws%20and%20policies/Street%20People%20-%20(Policy%20number%2012398B)%20approved%20on%2004%20December%202013.pdf

Figure 18: Standard Operating Procedure for Children as presented by the WCSCF, with gaps or obstacles indicated in red
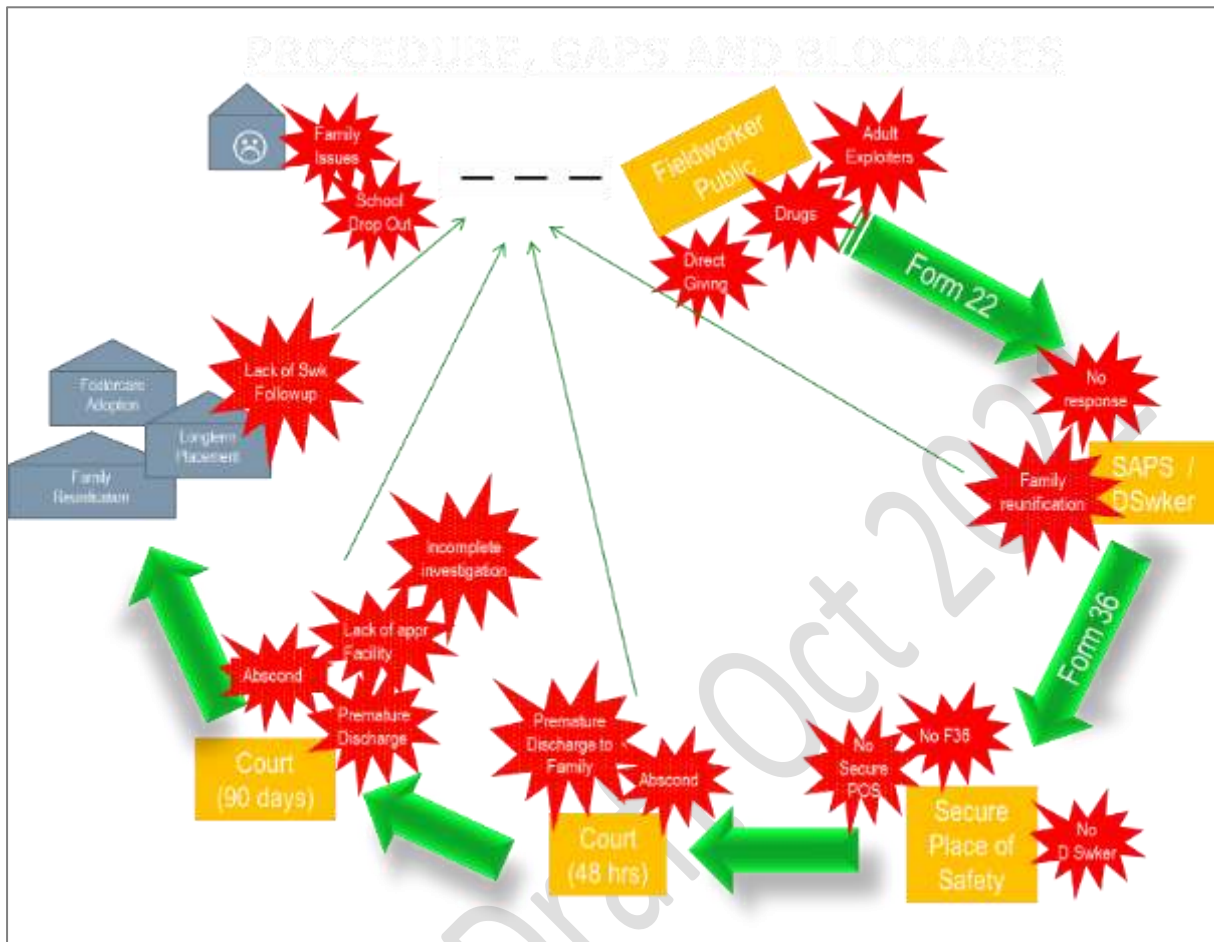
Normative Operating Relationships

Normative relationships speak to the way in which regulations, procedures, and processes typically (or normally) play out, and how the relationships between the actors in a system become the accepted or permissible embedded pathways for how activities are carried out.

> *"The sector is very disintegrated and disconnected. On certain issues, there is no cohesion. There isn't one voice coming from the sector."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"Shelters, Relief – not touching on development or rehabilitation – we are just recycling people over and over again – that's why we get stuck."* – Ilse Maartens, MES

These comments acknowledge that there is a disconnect within the sector, citing a relational challenge, and suggesting that sector actors can improve ways of working together, ways of communicating effectively, and ways of developing more meaningful strategic partnerships. These observations relate to normative operating relationships, which are underpinned by a particular cultural practice (Nilsson, 2014). These cultural practices and the resulting relational challenges within the sector cannot be detached from historical patterns of privilege and access, because it is these proximities to wealth and resources that enable some organisations to traverse particular challenges while others remain steeped in the

bureaucratic quagmire. It is also because of these complexities that the very nature of the praxis of sector organisations is challenged.

A social purpose organisation like the state/government and those organisations within the homeless sector are ultimately concerned with social change. Dr Warren Nilsson, a leader in Social Innovation theory, asserts that social change, and by extension, social innovation, is primarily concerned with the "*disruption of social practices and relationships, the regulative, normative, and cultural structures that inscribe systems*" (Nilsson, 2014). Given the disconnect between the intentions of policy and the application thereof, it is clear in both government and the homelessness sector that there are key gaps that need to be properly identified and addressed. In light of their purpose, they would benefit from a framework for social change.

In this regard, Nilsson (2014) outlines a general framework that ought to concern social purpose organisations. An invitation is extended to the sector to ask critical questions and wrestle with the social, cultural practices and political structures they inhabit, and which inhabit them. Heiskala (2007) and Nilsson (2014) point to the structure of the organisation, prompting this reflective question: What determines how social purpose organisations are structured and what these organisational structures are responding to?

2.3. RESOURCING THE SYSTEM

As part of The Inkathalo Conversations, a workshop was held with several NGOs, including shelters, with the theme *Funding, Facilities and the Future: Probing the Case for Intelligent, Inclusive and Progressive Services*. Some of the questions explored with the group included:

- How does funding work?
- Who gets government funding and who does not?
- What is the true cost of having someone live in a shelter?
- What are donors funding?
- What do you think the future must be?

This discussion brought to light how services are funded, what kind of funding is available, and how service implementers are organising to respond in the context of available resources.

Much like the programmatic fragmentation within spheres and departments of government, a similar phenomenon prevails when distributing funding. Government has set up a funding mechanism for civil society organisations that would support government's due diligence in facilitating development and social change within its jurisdiction. However, it was found during the workshop that this is done disproportionally, which means that holistic programmatic interventions are either starved in some way or abandoned. Therefore, instead of interventions being multidimensional, interventions are piecemeal at best. This section looks to outline some of these gaps and challenges the sector experiences when engaging these funding mechanisms and how these mechanisms sometimes disable effective social development strategies for alleviating homelessness.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

> *"*[Public funding requests] *must go through necessary processes and any organisation in good standing can apply …"* – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

At the workshop '*Funding, Facilities and the Future*', Lorenzo Davids, one of the Lead Facilitators of The Inkathalo Conversations, pointed out that Councillor Badroodien had confirmed that approximately R50 million is made available each year through grants and funding for the homeless. Davids surmised that this excludes other cost elements such as law enforcement and health, suggesting that ultimately, the total cost of addressing homelessness exceeds R50 million.

Nonetheless, to put this annual R50 million into context and within per capita terms, this figure is divided by the number of homeless individuals within the City. According to the City's FAQ about street people, the estimated number of homeless individuals is estimated to be around 6 000 as of November 2018, although this number differs based on the sources consulted. Given these estimates, the City of Cape Town's spend per person (per capita) is thus approximately R694 per homeless person per month. Acknowledging that these are estimates and are not all-inclusive, it will only act as a guide and is used as a marginal figure for reference in this piece. A shelter head estimated that on average the cost of servicing a client, when costing the delivery of a comprehensive intervention programme, is in the region of R7000 per client per month.

> *"…it is about R6000– R7000* [per person] *per month, so…how on earth…the guys that are working with government… how do you make it work with approximately R700, R800* [per person] *per month; you cannot make it, it doesn't make sense…"* – Jantjie Booysen, Ubuntu Circle of Courage

It was unclear from the conversation exactly what the approximately R700 government contribution is based on, but what is clear is that this figure is considerably far off from the estimated required funding as stated above. This then starts to shape the context in which shelters and other sector actors operate.

> *"*[We] *don't get any funding from government,* [we] *get funding from churches and overseas funding – they only ask for support from government in the form of buildings – …we don't want your money* [for ourselves]*, just give us the money to look after the people…"* – Pastor Jack Mahoney, The Ark

Evidently, the funding provision of approximately R700 per person per month by government does not suffice and places considerable strain on the resources available, which impacts the efforts of sector actors and organisations towards addressing homelessness. This is concerning, especially since it is not the sole responsibility of the civil society sector, which has limited resources, to alleviate homelessness, but is the expressed mandate of different arms of government. The resource constraints are either financial, human, or both:

> *"We have not received any government funding except for the social worker for which WC Department of Social Development pays – R65 000–R70 000 per person per year. For the bulk they need to fundraise."* – Ilse Maartens, MES

As described above, the salaries of those implementing interventions are typically not covered by donors. This directly influences how many staff members can be employed to do the actual work. In addition, the cost of hiring specific experts is often not financially viable for NGOs in the sector, with most health sector professionals charging a minimum of R500 per hour.

> *"*[The City] *has the objective to reduce homelessness numbers but the City of Cape Town doesn't actually help…* [for example]*, when the person has recovered and wants to go back home that is far away, they don't help the person – the sector must find the money for these things."* – Jantjie Booysen, Ubuntu Circle of Courage

Sector actors are at the interface of service provision and the social contract between the government and its people, and in many instances, unbeknown to the beneficiaries, the sector and its actors must navigate these complex dynamics of government funding, budget shortfalls, and programme 'cherry-picking'. While sector leaders, individual actors, and institutional players may not want to burden clients with these complexities, it does at times garner judgement and dissatisfaction from those receiving these services.

> *"The sector is not doing enough to hold the City accountable. If they really are the voice of the homeless person, I don't think they are making enough noise. The City has been dodging left right and centre, spending millions on programmes that are not working. They are avoiding taking responsibility for their actions. The sector should be more robust and open in their criticism of the City. Because if they are not doing that then they are approving of the City's 'kak'* [nonsense] *that they are doing. If they are scared of not being able to get funding then they shouldn't bother to help because they are not. The sector shouldn't be scared of the City bullying them, because the City is going to bully the homeless person instead."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

PRIVATE AND DONOR FUNDING

> *"Perhaps something the sector is struggling with, donors love to fund the programmes but not necessarily the salaries of the content, so professional people cost a lot – social workers, occupational therapists, civil engineers…"* – Ilse Maartens, MES

In an ideas economy where there are ideas on how to solve problems, like in the civil society sector, the challenge is often finding the financial and economic resources to back the solutions. While a growing ideas economy requires a context that will allow it to thrive through trial and error, the risks are high, especially when it is a social purpose institution like the state.

> *"Tyranny of the Auditor-General… when a project requires more lateral thinking they become fearful and panic that they will end up with a negative audit."* – Workshop participant*:* Funding, the Facilities and the Future.

Conversely, what private funding does enable, as in the case of U-Turn, New Hope, MES, and others, is the ability to test new ideas and theories through a resource-rich environment. Where this is not the case,

conventional ideas and the lack of innovation results in the same solutions being applied to the 'same old social problem', which allows for very little to shift in the way of innovative solutions.

A stakeholder shared that their organisation receives many more requests for assistance than they can service:

> "… *Over a thousand people that walk through our doors for our first phase every year, so when I say thirty people – we only have thirty spots at the moment on our second phase life change programme… The reason we only have thirty spots is because it costs R6000 per person per month of which half is the stipend that we're giving the person and the other half is actually the cost of the training… So – we are trying to play with the financial model and we're getting there…*" – Jon Hopkins, U-Turn

The upcoming research that focuses on the cost of homelessness will be beneficial in the sector as it will help inform the re-evaluation of the sector's current financial and/or funding model. Moreover, this kind of data will empower organisations to negotiate much more fair and realistic terms of reference when signing trans-payment agreements with government funders.

> "*We pay the person to participate in the programme… it costs us just under R7000 per person per month to provide the basics, for which some is subsidised by the government and the rest we need to find privately.*" – Sam Voss, U-Turn

For example, the solution referred to above by Sam Voss, is part of U-Turn's Life Change programme, a 4-step pathway to employment. According to their website, "…. *over 80% of our graduates remain employed and sober."* However, despite this success, which costs over R6000 per participant per month, the government would not support it in full. Instead, the government would 'cherry-pick' components of the programme, giving organisations like U-Turn, who believe in a holistic approach, the burden of having to seek alternative funding sources from which to supplement the funding shortfall for their holistic programme offering.

> "*Our programme is costly and so it is not viable to scale it. They want a solution but the true cost of the solution is unpalatable* [to them]*…*" – Jon Hopkins, U-Turn

> "*I would love as a sector if we could cost the service and quote the donor on what it is they want funded. When donors want to fund limited budget items then they should not expect the sector to partner with them.*" – Sam Voss, U-Turn

This is one of many examples within the homelessness sector where sector actors and sector institutions that possess a thriving ideas economy on viable solutions for homelessness are up against risk-averse and unimaginative government and private donor funding systems. This reality only prolongs conventional patterns of inadequacy and inefficiency.

It is worth questioning whether government funding is risk-averse. It is also worth questioning whether dubious financial practices redirect designated funding to non-funded service provider activities.

Assertions in this regard were exemplified by claims that shelter beds, which have already been budgeted and paid for, may be covered four times over.This is demonstrated through:

(i)   the funding of shelter beds by the WC Department of Social Development;

(ii)   the 'Give Responsibly' campaigns encouraging sponsorship of shelter beds by the public;

(iii)   the direct donations and bed sponsorships from major funders; and

(iv)   the daily payments for a bed by shelter residents, who do so through their social grants or out of their earnings (including EPWP earnings).

This appears to be bordering on a common corrupt practice which concerns private funders and donors. Francois Bruwer, in his presentation, raised this as a growing concern for private donors when investing in social projects. These practices contribute to the 'resource trap' that stifles its own efforts in addressing homelessness.

In addition to the concern of corrupt practices, there are still further challenges with private donors:

"When the donor focus changes, what they fund changes and how this affects and compromises the support that the sector is able to provide." – Workshop participant: Funding, the Facilities and the Future.

Francois Bruwer, a VAC Member and businessperson, presented research findings describing obstacles faced by businesses wishing to support initiatives through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding:

- Legal compliance challenges: Respondents admitted that legal compliance was expensive for companies. The study also found that South African listed companies had many legislative and regulatory codes with which they had to comply. This was costly for companies and required expertise and skills;

- Financial Constraints: The findings revealed that listed companies usually planned CSR projects around the availability of funds, rather than against needs of the communities;

- CSR distracting from core discipline: The findings revealed that although CSR had been incorporated by JSE-listed companies into corporate strategy, it still distracted from company core discipline as much time and resources are spent on CSR-related activities by listed companies;

- Stakeholder management and engagement: Developing policies and balancing the legitimate interests and expectations of the different stakeholders is challenging for some listed companies due to the diversity of stakeholders and the associated costs;

- Absence of a S18A Tax Certificate confirming that SARS has granted tax-exempt status;

- Some of the major challenges: multiple corporate responsibilities; high stakeholder expectations; limited business opportunities/return on investments; corruption; government interference; globalisation; weak institutions in developing economies; and

- Many South African companies lack the capacity to plan, implement, manage, and report on community development programmes.

In the event that private donors and business do invest, the following factors, as presented by Francois Bruwer, are considered when evaluating the return on their investment:

- Stage (i) Establishing the scope and identifying key stakeholders: This is the stage where the boundaries that are set out are analysed and adjusted as required. At this stage, the beneficiaries are selected and their involvement in the process is determined and finalised;

- Stage (ii) Mapping Outcomes: At this stage, stakeholders are engaged, and an impact map or theory of change is developed, which indicates the relationship between inputs, outputs and outcomes;

- Stage (iii) Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value: This is the stage where outcomes are evaluated and monetised through the data that was collected;

- Stage (iv) Establishing impact: At this stage, changes which would have eventually happened as a result of other factors are eliminated from consideration. This therefore gives a precise value to the programme;

- Stage (v) Calculating the Social Return on Investment (SROI): At this stage, all the benefits are added up, negatives are subtracted, and the results compared to the investment; and

- Stage (vi) Reporting, using and embedding results: This last step involves sharing findings, responding to findings, cementing good outcomes and processes, and verification of results.

Noting these constraints and the expectations of private and donor funders, it should also be acknowledged that this landscape is dynamic, unpredictable, and uncertain, and requires sector organisations to respond accordingly. This section presents some ways to think about this. However, according to Francois Bruwer, what inspires hope is the fact that 96% of companies surveyed still regard social investment as a priority.

MORAL CORRUPTION

Even in a post-Apartheid era, South Africa has been plagued by corruption. Corrupt practices have become embedded in all sectors of our society, more prominently so in government and private sector institutions (Potgieter & Moosa, 2018). Inevitably, these behaviour patterns become entrenched in the moral and social fabric of society. Sadly, as is brought to light in this section, this infiltrates the civil society sector, which has held the collective moral conscience on injustice for decades through its existence as a liberation movement and protector of civil rights. In the past, a strong civil society charter acted as the moral guide that upheld the moral practices, socio-economic and political structures to advance justice.

However, today there are instances where this moral decay is widening and eating into the moral consciousness and practices of the hard-won moral order, including the sector addressing homelessness. In this regard, many homeless individuals who participated in the conversations reported that some who work in the sector misappropriate the scarce resources intended to serve the homeless:

> *"Shelter staff members take the donated food that has not expired for themselves and give the expired food to the residents."* – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness

In these cases, these individual actors within the shelter sector commit these inhumane and unjust practices and enact attitudes and behaviours that reflect a damaged 'Soul of the City', as described in Chapter 1. These sector agents fail to give the same regard to those experiencing homelessness as they would to other members of society, thus rendering a homeless person less than human by their actions.

This kind of behaviour perpetuates a pervasive pattern that undermines the social and human rights project.

In addition, there is the allegation of the exploitation of clients or beneficiaries. Often beneficiaries reported feeling exploited when they were unaware of their personal stories being shared with potential funders, or their personal stories being publicised for organisational financial gain, while there is little to no difference in their own circumstances. Here Anda, a formerly homeless individual explains:

> *"Throughout the shelters, I saw myself as an object, as a product, that was being sold... there was a particular time that I was asked... to make this kind of video that I must... speak about this particular story of mine... I thought it was just for the purpose of trying to assist them, but it so happened that somebody else that I knew... this lady she told me on Facebook that 'I saw you on something that side* [overseas]*'. So, I asked myself, I was not told that that particular video that I was making was going to go that side, what is it doing there? So mostly, in the sector itself... we're forgetting to really care about the people and try and assist the people to uplift them.*
>
> *Within the sector what has happened most of this year is just that our stories and us, we're being sold, to make people wealthy, whereas we're not benefitting... The government does give out certain funds for this particular things, that's why I said... we have a very* [big] *problem with corruption within the sector... the corruption that we have is that most of the homeless people, we've been homeless, but at the end of the day when you look at me you're seeing a product that you can sell."* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Mazantsana's experience of these actions made him see himself as a "*product.*" Hoggan (2016) refers to this as the "*internalising of social structures*". Similar to structural violence during Apartheid, it forms an internal narrative that inverts the social construct of the system, creating what Tabata (1980) refers to as "*psychological bondage*". Similarly, John Hufkie shared the reality of being structurally excluded (as a homeless person) while witnessing unjust practices and structures of economic participation by a privileged group with access to power (in his case referring to a particular NGO).

> *"... I see the abuse here, wherever they touch just turns into a pot of gold..."* – John Hufkie, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

While the previous accounts of corrupt behaviour are levelled at the individual and the organisations, the following concern is levelled against the shelter system and policies. Understanding why these conditions need to be set, it was Lisa's experience that shelter regulations are exclusionary, unjust, and impractical.

> *"The shelter problem...is our schedules that we have in the cycle outside* [the shelters don't allow you out in time]*... We partners, most of us are couples; there is no catering for couples to be together... taking away a lot of your rights as a human being in a shelter... You must be on disability to get into the* [provides name of shelter] *shelter – hulle soek jou kaartjie* [they want your grant card].*"* – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The indictment of corruption is also levelled at government initiatives, as numerous participants questioned the case of the Strandfontein facility erected in response to COVID-19. Some stakeholders felt

it set a precedent for direct investment from government into capital service delivery programmes for the homeless. When a disaster is declared, such as COVID-19, emergency funding is directed through adjusted procurement frameworks to respond to the disaster, in line with the Disaster Management Act. However, the City's Strandfontein transactions have come under public scrutiny, and in this case by those taken to the facility.

> *"…Strandfontein cost R32 million, R 32 million… Are you to tell me that Culemborg is hosting – the 200, what about the other ones? We are still here, COVID-19, it is still here…there is no vaccine…"* – John Hufkie, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"From a management perspective of Strandfontein, serious questions need to be asked about who was contracted to manage that site, appointed, and the tender process… Where were the protocols, the SOPs – the standard operating procedures – there appeared to be none?"* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

While Strandfontein provided for a unique scenario, subscribing to specific criteria and funding instruments, other stakeholders experience that a lack of institutional knowledge discriminates against previously marginalised communities on the Cape Flats, and question whether funding for social development initiatives is in fact going to the right causes. Despite the government's awareness of institutional barriers that disable effective support to those needing it the most, some feel that little is done to improve access to funding.

> *"The City has now announced this this food relief grant, for the feeding… schemes or the soup kitchens… We* [are] *supporting 60 feeding schemes, 80% of those 60 feeding schemes, they haven't even registered… I know who will get that funding. The community aunty in Bishop Lavis and Bellville, Delft and Eerste River and Manenberg… cannot apply for that funding because* [they're] *not even registered. No one is supporting them in terms of registration; they don't even know what… an NGO is."* – Quinton Adams, The Shack Builder

2.4. COLLABORATION VERSUS COMPETITIVENESS

A collaboration in theory means that people, institutions, and resources band together to support a shared vision or intention. Furthermore, the success of collaboration rests on the ability to galvanise all actors to support a single intention. In practice this means that a set of patterns, structures and institutional partnerships distinguish this collaborative effort. The effectiveness of these selected patterns, structures, and partnerships is an indicator of collaborative success. From the previous sections, it is evident that the sector is dealing with structural, economic, and moral complexities, suggesting a need for a sector analysis.

Sector actors play different roles in a system – based on their expertise and experience. Some of these work very well and if they collaborate with organisations with complementary strengths, the system itself will be strengthened. As a model for the different roles in the system, the diagram below is helpful. Some organisations can be seen as beginners, who are quick to launch innovative new solutions that disrupt or fill a longstanding gap, but often struggle with longevity. Others are thinkers; they have well defined strategies, but often lack the ability to act. Adopters are actors that have strong execution capabilities and

often support the activities of others, while they may lack strategic alignment. Leaders may be those who have both strategy and execution well established in a specific area of expertise, but may focus only on fulfilling a narrow service offering with excellence. In a well-functioning ecosystem, all of these system actors are relevant, and can work well together to provide holistic interventions when leveraging their respective strengths.

Figure 19: Role Players in an Organisational Ecosystem[29]

From some of the emerging comments within The Inkathalo Conversations, a picture starts forming which may suggest possible constraints for effective collaboration.

> *"We need to first find each other... as organisations we try to trump one another – we need to start with the 'I' first...we think our methodologies are the best... then we lose the plot... as organisations we have done nothing – is it the money we are chasing? ...Work together as a sector to present a better solution."* – Clifford Martinus, Oasis

This comment alludes to the possibility of a power struggle within the sector. It sets up the sector as competitors, who use methodological approaches as 'trump' cards, which sacrifice trust and stifle collaboration efforts and collective power.

> *"...don't become so possessive about what you're doing – there are many that are providing* [services]*."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 20 illustrates an example of the competitive scenario described by stakeholders. It shows how ideas are fed into a mainstream narrative through a need to compete. That is to say when collaboration is absent,

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[29] Source: https://www.bearingpoint.com/en/our-success/thought-leadership/the-ecosystem-iq/

ideas, resources, and vision are not shared, and though everyone might be speaking about homelessness as a mainstream narrative, it will only generate a new sterile narrative, system stasis, and regression.

Figure 20: The War of Ideas[30]
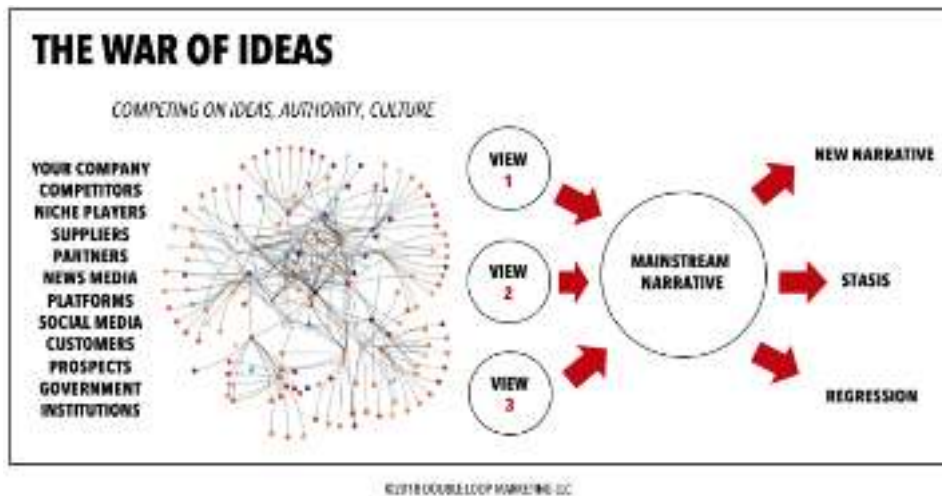
The result of the 'war of ideas' is an illegitimate organisation or sector where no real 'power' exists, instead producing fragmented pockets of power. Clifford Martinus from Oasis, using his experience serving on the The Homeless Agency Committee (HOMAC) Committee, shared his hope that this platform would be helpful to shift change if stakeholders would work together.

When organisations in this instance and institutions in general fail to collaborate and strengthen the efforts of the sector, it affects both the beneficiary/client and the overall mission or goal of the sector/entity.

> *"Even though there are so many NGOs in the sector, and new ones are popping up left right and centre, they seem to not really be having a real impact on the lives of the people. The NGO becomes bigger and bigger, but the homeless person is not really changing. The sector in itself, they are way too focused on other things other than the real issue. They seem to be keeping people alive, rather than teaching people to keep themselves alive, or advocating around the things that are suffocating homeless people (no housing, no jobs). That would give more dignity. They are not being inclusive enough in a lot of ways. It is as if each NGO is its own little empire, and they seem to be more focused on building that empire than addressing the root cause of the issue."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

While reflecting on the current patterns between sector organisations that perpetuate unhealthy competition and lack of collaboration, there are instances where opportunities are harvested, where collaborative partnership are modelled, and where ideas and resources are shared to produce a meaningful outcome. Towards the end of this chapter, a piece called *What does hope look like* describes these. To demonstrate collaborative thinking, here is a leading healthcare model by Philips. In contrast to the 'war

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[30] Source: https://www.marketingjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Screen-Shot-2019-02-21-at-5.05.10-PM.png

of ideas', it demonstrates how collaborating with other partners and healthy competition can deliver viable solutions for change.

Figure 21: Philips Healthcare Value Creation Ecosystem[31]
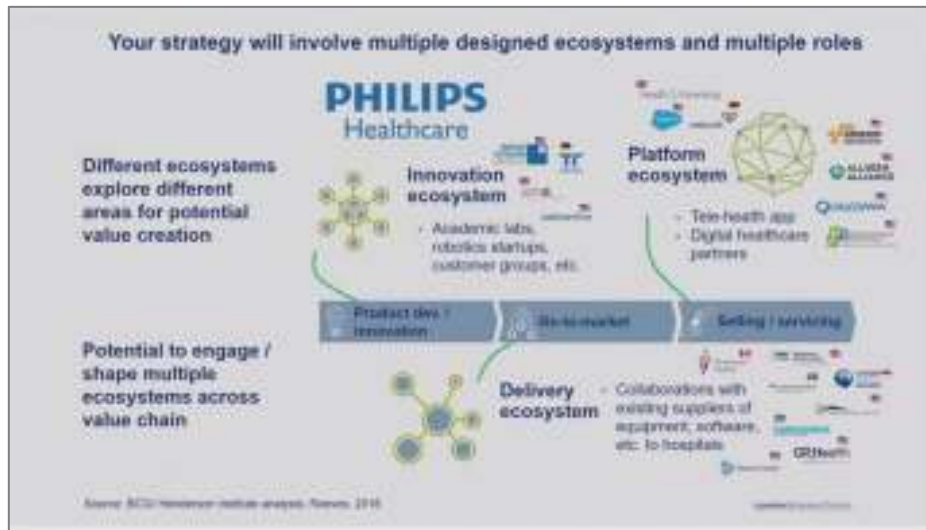
2.5. A SYSTEMS THINKING APPROACH

Much like we understand ecosystems in nature, for example, how the bigger ecosystem of rainfalls influences the smaller ecosystem of how forests grow, our society and the way people and economies interact can also be seen as ecosystems.

Figure 22: Natural and Socio-economic Systems[32]
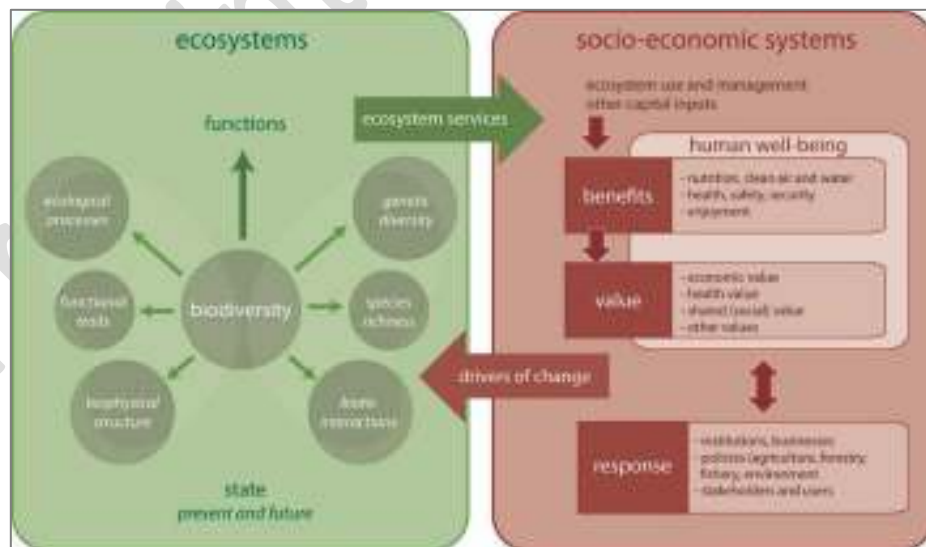
[31] Source: BCG/Henderson Institute Analysis; Reeves, 2018

[32] Source: https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/intermediate-assessment-2017/socio-economics/

Fundamentally, systems thinking is about understanding how things influence one another. Systems thinking is useful when concerned with social change (the "*disruption of social practices and relationships, the regulative, normative and cultural structures that inscribe systems*" (Nilsson, 2014), as mentioned before). The more we understand how things fit together, the better we can rearrange parts in a way that would benefit the whole. This section introduces the idea of systems thinking as a model for better understanding homelessness and its various interconnected parts.

While this chapter has highlighted the gaps within governmental structures, policies, sector organisations, funding, and practices, this section aims to draw on the relationships between these elements and depict them as an ecosystem.

Throughout this section of the report, it is evident that the systems and structures that hold up the social support services for governments often lack strategic positioning. Where this is the case, it largely becomes incumbent on civil society organisations to realign, reposition or fill the gaps. Civil society does this in various ways: it advocates for the marginalised, it acts in their support, or it lobbies for changes in policy. This is also true for the organisations and stakeholders addressing homelessness in Cape Town. However, often the stakeholder lacks the overall infrastructure, systems and programmes to render comprehensive services. One stakeholder reiterated what others had mentioned about not being able to work in isolation.

> "…even if it means that some organisations need to shut down – we cannot have the silo approach… If the homeless sector is not talking to the substance abuse sector there is a problem." – Jon Hopkins, U-Turn

> "The sector is very disintegrated and disconnected. On certain issues, there is no cohesion. There isn't one voice coming from the sector." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

This necessitates a probe into why organisations prefer to work in isolation, instead of collaboration. To surface some answers, a series of question are posed in this section as we collectively think about what should change and how to effect such change. Applying a systems thinking lens causes us to consider the implications of policy frameworks designed for those on the street, and the actors in the homelessness sector – their role, ethos, and effectiveness toward the beneficiary, who is currently at the tail end of the system. The very idea that beneficiaries are at the tail end of the system, is another matter for discussion.

In order to innovate and respond to the levers of change or opportunities within the ecosystem, the system actors *(*shelters, government, beneficiaries, etc.*)* need to identify and address the regulative, normative, and cultural practices within the system. For example, it is clear from the comments by shelter users that there are gaps within their development pathways. A systems thinking approach to changing this would involve unpacking all of the regulations, codes, norms, and standards (regulative systems). It would map out the players, their roles and relationships (normative systems), and explore the day-to-day experiences and interactions between shelter residents and staff (cultural practices). Then it would identify the desired outcomes and the key levers for meaningful change, before facilitating collaborative efforts (and mobilising resources) towards a new reality. The ability to reflect, self-correct, and measure incremental change as this process unfolds, is critical.

Figure 23: The Social Outcomes Ecosystem[33]
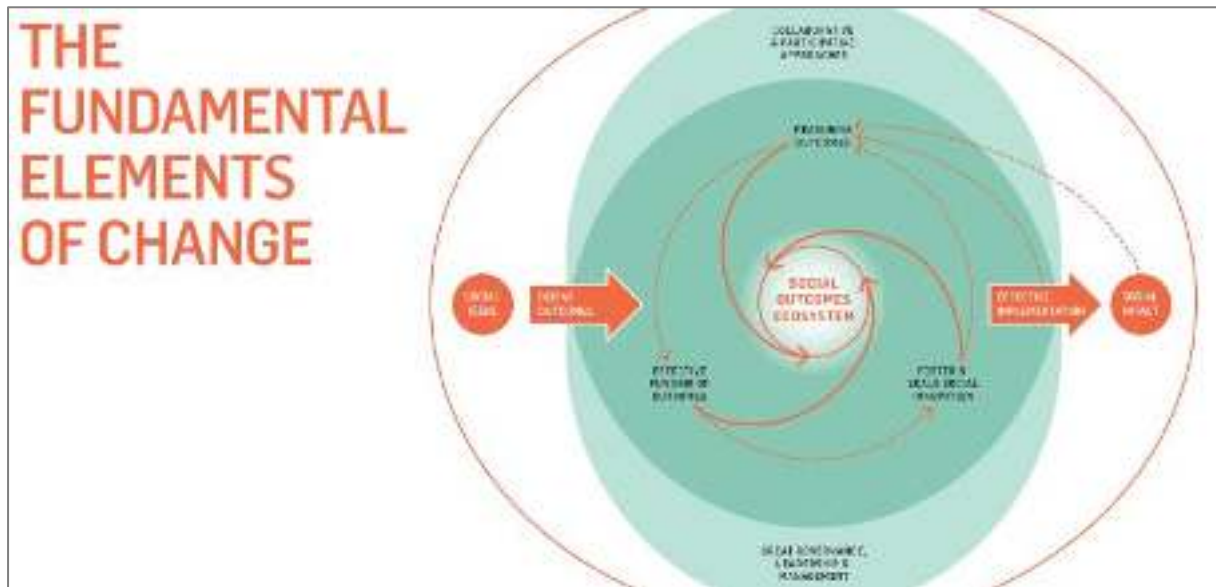
Some framing questions to consider in working towards system change follow. These will be explored with specific examples hereafter.

1. **Is the sector fostering systemic reflection, helping actors to shift from being reactive to proactive in their approach?**

    e.g. "The narrative came out that people don't want help – it continues and continues to come out of the City. I started interrogating my own team about the help that we are offering people." – Pat Eddy, City Town Central City Improvement District (CCID)

2. **What is the level of co-creative, aspirational forms of agency?**

    e.g. "Sacrifice your BEST IDEA – if you haven't sacrificed your best idea then you haven't collaborated." – Ilse Maartens, MES

3. **What are the regulative and normative structures for this particular context?**

    e.g. "Has the policy been effective? Or applied? And what are challenges?" – Melene Rossouw, Lead Facilitator: The Inkathalo Conversations/Women Lead Movement

    e.g. "Another important lesson is that the City needs to be more open to the people who work in the sector – we don't have all the answers... nor do they have all the resources. While there are some partnerships, it's not sufficient." – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

These questions are reflected on below, with specific mention of some of the systemic gaps identified.

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[33] Source: https://www.csi.edu.au/about-social/social-impact-framework/

IS THE SECTOR FOSTERING SYSTEMIC REFLECTION?

Data Systems Failure and Tracking Policy Efficacy

> *"In order to effectively influence policy and strategy, concepts must be interrogated and made sense of so that actors measure and implement the same things* [results, theory of change, M&E]*."*
> – Dr Heidi Sauls, Researcher – *Western Cape DSD*

The City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* sets out the following steps for review within the policy:

Street People Policy (City of Cape Town, 2013)
9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

9.1. The policy will be reviewed and updated every two years or in light of evidence that indicates that this policy is not meeting the outcomes set out in section two.

9.2. Street people forums, networks, structures and other affected parties may consult with the Street People Programme on the efficacy of this policy and the extent to which it achieves its aims. This will be relayed directly to the Head of Social Development Department through the appropriate channels.

9.3. The compilation of annual implementation plans will specify details of targets to be reached in the short, medium and long term and evaluation tools will specify quantitative and qualitative indicators with timeframes, which will assist in tracking progress on the achievement of policy objectives. The implementing role players will use these tools in their internal M&E process by providing regular reports on policy and program performance.

Between the recommendation by Dr Sauls and the well-intended monitoring and evaluation process outlined in the policy, there exists one major challenge – there are no indicators, central database, or tracking system that is shared by the Western Cape Provincial Government, the City of Cape Town, and the organisations in the homelessness sector. While the Western Cape Government clearly outlines as part of its protocol in its *Norms and Standards for Shelters for Homeless Adults* (2015)[34] that individual, financial, human resources, and programmatic tracking systems need to be in place, how this data is gathered, tabulated, and shared between spheres of government – or even departments – is unclear. Therefore, it is unclear how the City of Cape Town evaluates the impact of their interventions and programmes for homeless individuals without a central system for all sector actors. Wilma Piek explains the challenge that this poses for their CID programme.

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[34] https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/social-development/norms_and_standards_for_shelters_for_homeless_adults.pdf

"VR CID has advocated for a joint database, but because it's individual and confidential, we [won't] *have access to it. But then we got a practical problem that the City has a very expensive programme that they use… I can't remember the name. MES and U-Turn is using Salesforce. So, what… are we going to use, because a lot of money was already spent on it. Then in terms of the numbers… we experience the same* [as other service providers] *with the enumeration of the homeless in Bellville, they said there was only 54 people, then I call them and said it's totally not possible… fieldworkers not wanting to go to 'dangerous places'… but we did it and counted up to 354, which was still not all the people... it turned out to be over 800* [at the final count at Paint City in Bellville].*"* – Wilma Piek, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

Furthermore, the Local Networks of Care (LNOC) within the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* lack cross-departmental synchronisation, which affects how sector actors and homeless individuals access services. Moreover, these data elements are set to inform yearly targets, strategic planning, budgets, progress and biennial policy updates, which it has failed to do since its publication in 2013.

"The chart does not work in the policy document… there is no synchronisation. We have departments such as health, social development, but, for example, I am in charity and I can't call the clinic to get someone into a rehab. There is no coordination between the different departments in terms of services – the things don't work because you don't sort out the root. You can feed and clothe someone, but they will land back up on the streets – it's repetitive. The graph is ideal but not real. You need to start at the crux of the story." – Individual who has experienced homelessness during Focus Group Discussion 1

"The system is in shambles and needs to change." – Individual who has experienced homelessness during Focus Group Discussion 1

Lack of co-ordination weakens government and sectors efforts, seen more acutely at Strandfontein, as Reverend Annie Kirke, a Human Rights Commission Monitor explains:

"Some people let monitors know that they could leave to go home to their family and so they completed forms, and some were helped and others required social development's help – when some individuals didn't have contact details of their family members, social development refused to drive out to check the validity of their addresses..." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

These gaps from policy and government permeate across the sector and lead to unclarity around whether the sector is failing or succeeding in any way.

"Referring to the improvement of life for all people – he disagrees as he doesn't feel that the government have improved the lives of the people. There are a lot of homeless people with potential but they are not given a fair chance to free their potential… feels that the government has failed him… he requires something basic… they tell you to go from this office to that office – eventually you just give up as you become tired." – Individual who has experienced homelessness during Focus Group Discussion 1

Reflexive Practices

Heiskala (2007) and Nilsson (2014) point to the need for reflexivity by social actors within the system, asking what systemic reflection is happening and how social actors are responding.

As mentioned earlier, to innovate and identify the levers of change/opportunity within the ecosystem, the system actors need to respond to the regulative, normative, and cultural practices within the system. It emerged that there are clear gaps within the development pathways for those entering the shelter system. Through a Focus Group conversation, the following gaps, among others, emerged:

1. Three months is deemed to be an insufficient time in shelters to address the individual developmental needs of homeless people, resulting in individuals being 'recycled' through shelter institutions.
2. The lack of 2nd tier housing opportunities for independent living limit the opportunity to transition out of homelessness, which becomes a barrier to exiting.
3. Individuals feel like objects or products in the shelter system, as opposed to human beings.
4. Unjust practices are perpetuated within the homelessness sector, through a lack of respect and dignity, corruption, and malpractices.

A further reflexive question to be asked here is: What systemic practices, cultural practices, and norms are sector actors perpetuating?

During The Inkathalo Conversations, it was clear that some sector actors were starting to ask some of these questions, as illustrated below:

Wilma Piek:

- *"I asked my team to identify the challenges, the gaps, what we can't give to people…"*

Francois Bruwer:

- *"What does the homeless person want?"*
- *"How to achieve a unified approach?"*
- *"Where do we start to effectively address the issues?"*
- *"What information is available and what is required?"*
- *"How do we change the culture of homeowners?"*

Theodore Sass:

- "*Are we monitoring this initiative, what are the impacts and what are the results*?" [Referring to the Giving Responsibly giving campaigns].
- *"Why don't we see higher rates of reintegration if it is working?"*
- *"How do people maintain their livelihoods?"*
- *"What is meant, in the Street People Policy, by infrastructure? Does it mean permanent supportive housing, transitional housing…?"*

- *"Only 14% of participants have access to grants – EPWP challenges* [are] *contractual, low wages, skills transfer – how is the skill transferable to their future?"*
- *"Critical thinking around structuring new realities"*

Hopefully, by exploring these facets within the sector it could reveal what Neville Alexander refers to as the "*power blockages.*" He asserts that when these "*pockets of power*" are identified, they then need to be "*centralised,*" allowing social actors to strengthen the sector's responses through co-creating (Alexander, 1990).

WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF CO-CREATIVE, ASPIRATIONAL FORMS OF AGENCY?

Social innovation thinkers like Nilsson (2014) and Heiskala (2007) ask questions about agency and co-creation. Nilsson notes that 'societal institutions' (for example, financial systems, class systems, human rights regimes, social-ecological relationship patterns) are most fully implicated in the "*Grand Challenges*" – those complex and interrelated problems that often reach across systems, borders, and disciplines. However, their agency is required because they create many of the conditions necessary for social agency, such as trust, coordination, specialisation, and predictability. The development of institutional frameworks, derived from scholarly research, has brought to the forefront the need for institutional maintenance.

The development of agency challenges the ideas of institutions being agile and responsive in dealing with the multiplicities of their complex social environment. More than this, it is about the ability to harness the intelligence within the ecosystem to respond to the barriers constraining the ability to disrupt the regulative, normative and cultural structures that inscribe unjust systems (Nilsson, 2014). However, as seen below, the 'homelessness ecosystem' suffers from disconnects.

> *"We need to first find each other… as organisations we try to trump one another… we need to start with the 'I' first… we think our methodologies are the best, then we lose the plot… As organisations we have done nothing… is it the money we are chasing?"* – Clifford Martinus, Oasis

> *"There are* [different] *role-players who work in government – some of them are politicians and others are government administrators."* – Shehnaz Cassim-Moosa, City of Cape Town

Therefore, a further reflective question is: How might social actors in the homelessness sector organise themselves as a catalyst for social change?

WHAT IS THE REGULATIVE STRUCTURE FOR THIS PARTICULAR CONTEXT?

Finance Mechanisms Deciding Structure

Heiskala (2007) and Nilsson (2014) suggest that the structure of the organisation decides how social purpose organisations are structured. Ultimately, social innovation seeks to transform regulative, normative, and culture aspects of social systems, and their interplay with each other. However, as expressed in this section of the report, how many of the sector organisations structure themselves is largely a function of government funding schemes. Described during the conversations as "*cherry-picking of interventions*", government's strategy is experienced as disconnected from the need for holistic care models. Those experiencing the services of sector organisations are human beings and by their nature are

complex; they require multiple interventions to support holistic well-being and development as social beings. Thus, the practice of organisations responding to regulatory frameworks leaves sectoral support fragmented.

Having to adapt interventions according to the donor agenda surfaced issues of rank and power dynamics between donors and NGO stakeholders. NGOs are typically positioned at a lower rank than the donor when it comes to funding and resources. It was expressed that this creates an unhealthy power dynamic whereby the NGO may feel they have less power to negotiate what they believe might work better – especially when they are dependent on the release of funding to continue supporting those in need. This power dynamic is harmful and unhelpful as it may perpetuate an unwillingness among donors to adapt their funding models.

Language as a Construct for Systems Failure

Secondly, the challenge with the language used to frame policy is the following:

Language, which constructs social realities, is based on how we frame a particular reality; we inevitably construct from this perceived reality. One of these language constructions, alluded to by Saarah Salie below, is the 'blanket' response to homelessness, despite there being a myriad of social, economic, and political factors pushing people onto the streets.

> "*Homeless people are not a homogenous group, they are unique individuals with their own unique stories, circumstances and lived-experiences that led them to become homeless; and remain homeless because of various social, economic, governance and political factors, but importantly, because the current system, structures, processes, procedures are inadequate and broken.*" – Saarah Salie, Wesgro/Western Cape War Room

Where this is the case, as pointed out earlier by Dr Sauls, the result is a mismatch between policy framing, resource allocation, and sector responses.

2.6. WHAT DOES HOPE LOOK LIKE?

Social innovation seeks to undo the obstructive patterns and constraints to social change, but doing this requires a clear understanding of what the systemic regulative structures are, how they work, what patterns they are perpetuating, and what opportunities exist to undo these patterns.

Through this understanding, the system can be opened to new ways of engaging, adapting and responding to the environment. The City is in a quandary; however, alternatives exist outside of the City, which have shown promise. As seen in Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations, transitional housing is possible. The example presented by the Development Action Group (DAG) was coordinated with funding from the Emergency Housing Programme and Informal Settlements funding. A multi-intervention pathway programme is possible, such as U-Turn's privately funded initiative. Co-created responses like the City of Tshwane's Homeless Policy are possible – prepared over the course of four years, largely by civil society and other stakeholders, COVID-19 presented the City of Tshwane with the disruptive conditions which allowed for its operational success. It is also possible to reimagine and disrupt the conventional understanding of the normative, cultural and structural formation within the homelessness sector, by challenging institutional thinking:

> *"A community having flesh and blood has a heart. A City does not have a heart. The State does not have a heart. Neither can they. It is not in their nature. The City and the State doesn't have a heart – it is not in their blood – they are institutions – the System is not flesh and blood – they are not a community."* – Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk

Attempts to replace existing negative and obstructive patterns with functional alternatives require ingenuity and the ability by the system (sector) to seek key connections and collaboration opportunities for change, as explored in the examples to follow.

TSHWANE COVID-19 RESPONSE AND POLICY FORMATION

Just as there are many pathways into homelessness, in the same way, there need to be many pathways out of homelessness. In 2015, the Tshwane Homelessness Forum began a process of developing "*pathways out of homelessness*", conducting research, and convening the Tshwane Homeless Summit. Two critical elements of the summit were the involvement of individuals experiencing homelessness, and the initiation of a Social Contract, signed by organisations and institutions as a commitment toward their long-term involvement in the interventions developed.

One of the key challenges in Tshwane was political regime change. To a certain extent, each regime change would negate preceding work done by the Tshwane Homelessness Forum. This delayed the progression of the desired interventions and policy reforms in Tshwane for about five years, according to Dr Stephan de Beer, who presented inputs from the City of Tshwane at The Inkathalo Conversations. The development of a Social Contract between government and stakeholders was a way to retain the commitment of key stakeholders and the momentum of interventions among them, regardless of changes in the political sphere.

Through the participation of stakeholders spanning civil society, public and private sector actors, houses of worship, academic institutions – and, most importantly, those affected by homelessness – the Tshwane *Street Homelessness Policy* was adopted in 2019. This is reportedly more than a policy, but also a comprehensive strategy focusing on five programmatic pillars, namely:

- access to shelter and housing;
- economic access;
- psychosocial and health care;
- community education and advocacy; and
- institutional infrastructure and capacity development.

Though unfunded at the time, this presented a framework for cross-sectoral engagement, and in 2020, COVID-19 presented a unique political opportunity to influence and expedite many of the plans developed over the five-year period. Dr De Beer shared the various ways in which inter- and intra-sectoral connection and collaboration happened in Tshwane as part of the City's COVID-19 response, presenting emerging opportunities of hope for the sector as a whole.

Some of the key outcomes of the City of Tshwane's COVID-19 response were as follows:

- 25 shelters were established in a period of 14 to 21 days, housing 1 800 persons;
- Shelters were equipped with Standard Operating Procedures, shelter management training, and psychosocial programmes;
- 20 000 health screenings were conducted, 500 persons received methadone treatment, and new diagnoses were made;
- The interventions witness the strong link between housing and public health – with housing supporting adherence, recovery, and treatment;
- A vehicle for implementation was established in the form of a Central Operational Centre, to be described below; and
- This paved the way for a new way of collaborating and working together.

These achievements of the Tshwane COVID-19 homeless project were underpinned by incredible efforts across the sector and the collaborative mobilisation of resources.

Some of these achievements were:

- As discussed previously in this chapter, analysis at an eco-systems level and intelligent identification of opportunities for support can prove meaningful for social change efforts. Leveraging the health policy, homeless individuals in Tshwane could be moved off the street and into support facilities. Furthermore, the University of Pretoria's Department of Family Medicine supported health efforts at the COVID-19 site in Tshwane by providing repeated screenings as required (reportedly about 20 000 screenings), as well as effective drug rehabilitative care and support to 500 people, using methadone. According to Dr De Beer, methadone therapy is expensive, and he noted that collaborative partnerships made this approach possible.

- It is the view of the Tshwane Homelessness Forum that elderly individuals with access to an Older Persons Grant should not be homeless for more than 24 hours. Dr De Beer explained that Tshwane has made use of the Special Needs Housing provisions within the Social Housing Policy to provide solutions for those who are older or have permanent mental illness. *"We think we can end street homelessness with chronic populations – older people, even people with chronic mental illness – it's the young, unemployed… people that we don't have the solutions for… it's a South African issue of access…"*

- Subsequent to lockdown interventions, a church within a gated community in Tshwane had committed to continue providing support for five elderly individuals. In addition, two new permanent facilities have been opened for older homeless persons.

- Demonstrating how a community galvanised to support those experiencing homelessness, a Homeowner's Association availed a neighbourhood park for the erection of 50 tents. This resulted in a touching story of a local community insisting on ensuring that services are adequately delivered to their invited residents. Dr De Beer recounted, "*the guys who ran it… the chair and the deputy chair of the Homeowner's Association, saw it doesn't work when other people run it from the City… so they pitched their caravan there, and this guy's wife lives down the street in their house, and he now lives in a caravan… on the site, and they're busy trying to, with the City, we're wrestling to try find a long-term facility.*"

- 25 of the individuals who moved into the park were substance users; through the securement of accommodation and treatment, the majority of these individuals are no longer drug dependent.

- The praxis and enactment of policy was noted as fragmented and disconnected throughout The Inkathalo Conversations, even by representatives of the Province and City. According to Dr De Beer, Tshwane experienced that the involvement of officials in this process has catalysed new ways of thinking: *"officials are now starting to ask new questions, 'Why is it like this? Why wasn't the policy implemented*?'… *So, we're finding officials almost becoming almost activists about this whole thing."*

- While some transitional housing and longer-term accommodation was available in Tshwane, provided mostly by NGOs, overnight bed space was reportedly much lower than in Cape Town prior to COVID-19. In responding to the pandemic, the clear need for additional bed space was recognised by the City. As a result, the City of Tshwane committed to securing old buildings as shelter facilities. These can provide 1 200 overnight bed spaces for those experiencing homelessness in the City.

- A notable difference was found in shelter management between the City of Tshwane and NGOs, with the observation that NGOs served the sector with a greater deal of passion and willingness.

- As churches and organisations opened their spaces for temporary accommodation, what emerged was a new way of working together and an effective approach at supporting those living on the streets. NGOs volunteered their specific expertise (such as psychosocial support, family reconciliation services) and offered only their core services at the temporary shelters. This ensured that NGOs could operate within their strengths, while homeless individuals at the sites received exactly the care that they required.

While Dr De Beer acknowledged that the sustainability of this model is a challenge, he noted that this was the most effective way of addressing homelessness. The model that emerged was one where a single facility acted as a 'Central Operational Centre', which at any point could identify who had received which type of care, from which service provider, and what additional support would be required and from whom. Again, a challenge within this unintended model was the question of 'where does the buck stop?' The way forward remains a developing discussion between a committed group of stakeholders who have now achieved collaborative success.

Figure 24: Implementation Model in the City of Tshwane, as presented by Dr Stephan de Beer

As a result of these efforts and their promising outcomes, the Gauteng Provincial Government has engaged with the City of Tshwane's team to develop a participatory policy at provincial level and has allocated a budget for shelters for the first time. In collaboration with the National Homeless Network, the Presidency now seeks to inform policy at a national level based on the lessons learned.

BELLVILLE JOINT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

"I didn't know that when I entered into this particular sector 'hoe straf die competition eintlik is' [how stiff the competition actually is] *and the politics… and I'm not talking party politics, I'm speaking about organisational politics… I thought I was just working for Jesus…"* – Ilse Maartens, MES

Having worked in the police force for 14 years before entering the homelessness sector, Ilse Maartens (MES) approached the Voortrekker Road CID (VR CID) with the idea of developing a dedicated task team comprising of agencies and organisations focused on homelessness in the Bellville area. This saw the

formation of the Bellville Joint Operations Committee (Bellville JOC). According to Ilse Maartens, the JOC had only one agenda – what is best for people living and working on the street?

The Bellville JOC was established to engage in critical thinking about how to structure new realities, and to implement relevant solutions developed as part of an international symposium on homelessness in 2015. Taking learnings from this symposium, Ilse Maartens and others are of the view that homelessness can be solved. It requires the following five pillars:

- needs assessment;
- accommodation solutions;
- creation of job opportunities;
- skills training needed to break the cycle (with a co-creative approach); and
- an integrated systems approach where state, civil society and business have one development language and one plan.

The Bellville JOC is one way to address the fifth pillar, seen as a means to support the other four pillars.

It endeavoured to pull together representatives from business, security, service providers, and ward councillors, and was positioned under the VR CID as this was found to be a neutral space for all its stakeholders. Through their cooperation, a process flow was developed around who was working in the sector; where they were working and at what levels; what they were doing; and whom they were serving. Together, they embarked on a "*Hope Lives*" campaign to gather data on the homeless population within their area. The group sought to understand entry and exit points, and to take an honest look at whether their efforts were providing anything more than relief.

The Bellville JOC soon realised that certain focus groups would be relevant and created these around accommodation, safety and security, and developmental interventions. As a pertinent example, the safety and security focus group brought together the various law enforcement agencies, namely SAPS, Metro Police, Law Enforcement, and Private Security to gain clarity on each member's mandate – what they are actually supposed to be doing. This task helped these entities find each other and find their respective functions. In addition, the focus group sat together to deal with one issue and agree in the room how they would work in relation to one another.

Figure 25: Focus Group Example from the Bellville JOC, Describing the Mandates of Members (presented by Ilse Maartens)
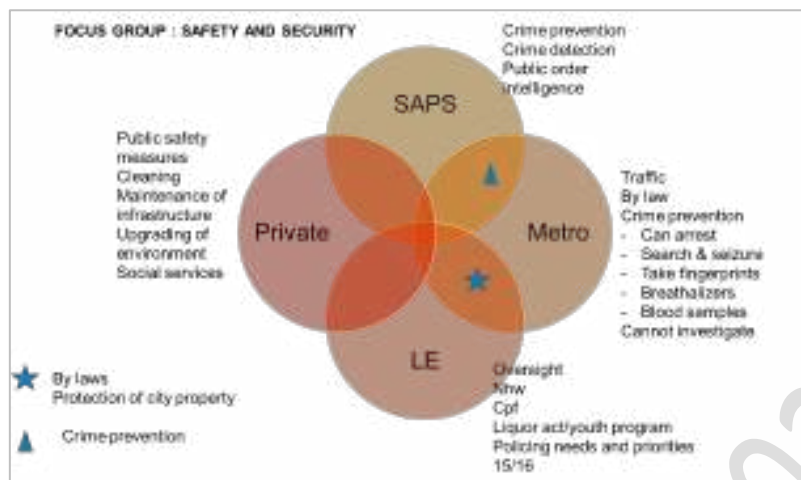
The Bellville JOC has produced some tangible outputs, collaborating to create a 'step-down facility' for individuals who are exiting shelters – the Bellville JOC's version of a 'safe space'. This safe space was co-created, asking those who have experienced homelessness what they needed and expected from a space like that.

At the advent of COVID-19, Ilse Maartens reported that because of the pre-existence of the Bellville JOC and the relationships, she was granted a seat at the SAPS JOC, and could sit in their meetings every morning to see what was unfolding in terms of lockdown. Reporting back to the Bellville JOC in real-time allowed for organisations to pool their limited resources in response to lockdown measures for people who could not be housed. In the formation of Paint City, officials and law enforcement put their uniforms aside and assisted in moving 150 homeless persons in the space of three hours, where the facility was able to give them starter packs and welcome soup.

Organisations such as U-Turn participated, and even the Hawks brought food to those in need. Substance use was one of the biggest concerns; there was no infrastructure for people to go through formal detox and yet many were in isolation going through withdrawals. The Bellville Haven and TB/HIV Care provided support and a doctor did consultations via WhatsApp calls, gave prescriptions to make people more comfortable, and even raised funds. Those who were addicted were treated with Sypoxin and no lives were lost due to withdrawal.

Thanks to the Bellville JOC, many of these stakeholders had already worked together, already trusted each other, and thus could pool resources to support 1 100 people every day, providing food twice a day. Through their efforts, homeless individuals across Bellville, Kuilsriver, Brackenfell and Parrow were supported.

George Narkedien, manager of The Haven Bellville, commented that the birth of Paint City was based on respect and empathy, and that the process itself was enjoyable for the stakeholders involved, *"dit was lekker* [it was enjoyable].*"* Ilse Maartens emphasised that what stood out was collaboration, as organisations worked towards pushing the collective agenda and not their personal brands. She also indicated that many of the resources they needed to assist people belong to the City. Maartens indicated that Bellville had a councillor dedicated to homelessness made a world of difference.

2.7. READER'S REFLECTIONS

Reflection is an important practice in system transformation. The reader is encouraged to consider the following reflection points from a personal, organisational, community, and systemic perspective:

Between problem and promise arise some critical reflective questions:

- How are these responses incorporated into the sector and how are these alternatives presented to regulatory structures, such as those in government, to demonstrate and gain support for creative solutions to complex social problems?
- Alternatively, is the sector a reflection of the regulative structure within the City and Province?
- What systemic practices, cultural practices, and norms are sector actors perpetuating?

Some systemic points of reflection and engagement raised by Heiskala (2007) and Nilsson (2014) throughout this chapter are collated below:

- What determines how social purpose organisations are structured and what these organisational structures respond to?
- What agency is being expressed through the system? This question prompts all actors who interact in the sector, to simply observe what happening.
- Is the sector reflecting? The question prompts actors to make sense of the observations and to ask, 'So, why is this happening?'
- How might we co-create and how do we imagine the future to be? This question taps into the possibilities of the future and then asks, given where we are now and where we want to be, how might we co-create to build/create/mould this future that we are longing for?

These questions are an invitation to re-imagine possibility and harness the hope that re-imagination bring to re-create and co-create together.

CHAPTER 3:   INTERVENTIONS

Contents

3.1. INTRODUCTION

An intervention may take on a simple or complex form and can be understood as a concerted effort intended to result in changes to an individual's behaviour, thoughts, and circumstances. The existing and emerging interventions, in the form of programmes, services, and strategies presented during The Inkathalo Conversations are discussed in this chapter. It is important to note that these do not represent the entire pool of interventions within the sector. The purpose of this chapter is not to describe every intervention and name or identify every organisation, nor is it to evaluate the importance, quality or effectiveness of the interventions, but rather, to make meaning of what emerged from the presentations by stakeholders and by those most affected by homelessness.

Within this chapter, some interventions are discussed in more detail than others; the reason is three-fold:

- The Inkathalo Conversations could not obtain a presentation from every single individual and organisation/institution/department that requested to present during Phase One.
- Some interventions feature more prominently as these represent services core to numerous organisations that operate in the sector; therefore, there was the immediate opportunity to harvest rich insights and lessons for the purpose of a deeper understanding of the sector.
- For sense-making purposes.

While The Inkathalo Conversations created the platform for myriad interventions to be raised, no one or single intervention can be regarded as better, more effective or of greater import than the others. Instead, this chapter encourages the reader to take this opportunity to reflect critically and honestly on what seems to be working, what is not working, and what has the potential to be improved or strengthened.

Existing and emerging interventions that were identified during The Inkathalo Conversations and addressed in this section include:

- Sustenance
- Shelter
- Statutory services
- Hygiene and ablution services
- Safety and security
- Medical care and support
- Substance use recovery and rehabilitation
- Mental health services and psychosocial support
- Fieldwork and outreach programmes
- Spiritual development and support
- Life-skills development and services
- Job readiness and economic opportunities
- Family preservation and strengthening
- Community engagement opportunities
- Sector-strengthening strategies

- o Advocacy, lobbying, and public education & awareness
- o Research and policy and resource development
- o Networks

Various stakeholders presented in both structured, unstructured, and various free formats, with some providing insight into their approach or framework, theory of change, and implementation processes. In most cases, it was found that a particular theoretical model, a vision, mission, core values, and their experience were the guides to stakeholder interventions. Some were inspired by religious beliefs, while others were activated by crises – such as the COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdown.

The interventions discussed in this section include traditional as well as alternative and emerging models. In addition, the experiences and challenges of interventions are highlighted as these emerged.

For the purpose of this chapter, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943, 1954), depicted below, serves as a useful point of reference for the variety of human needs as well as the interventions explored.

Figure 26: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs[35]

3.2. EXISTING AND EMERGING INTERVENTIONS

Interventions in the homelessness sector are primarily geared toward responding to an individual who has become homeless. Preventive and early interventions were found to be rare. The majority of the interventions presented at The Inkathalo Conversations were pitched at a curative/statutory level. While this is a critical and necessary intervention, with many individuals experiencing homelessness benefitting from the support, it illuminated the way that interventions are conceptualised and implemented.

The following graph depicts the types of interventions presented by organisations participating in The Inkathalo Conversations. Many organisations may provide more than one of these interventions, while others have a singular focus.

Figure 27: Interventions Presented by Participants at The Inkathalo Conversations
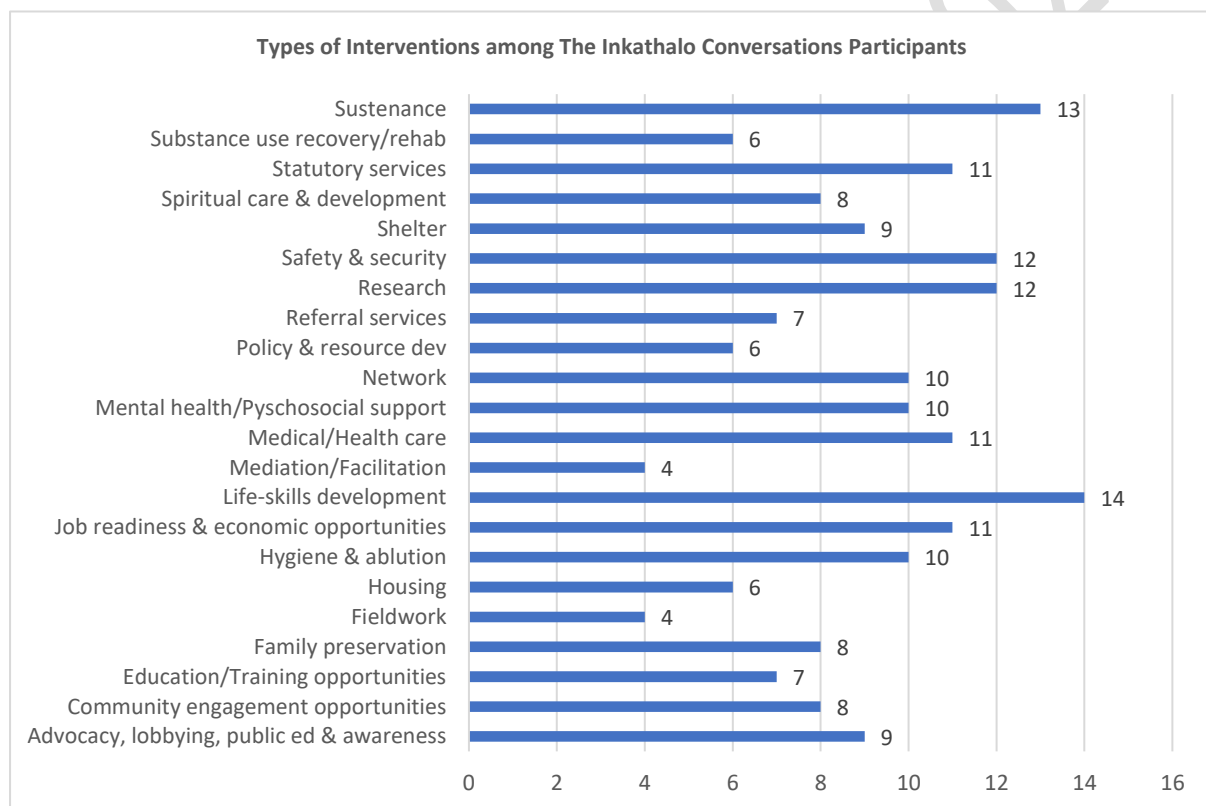
Among all the stakeholders represented during the first phase of The Inkathalo Conversations, life-skills development and the provision of sustenance were the most common interventions. Safety and security, and research also recurred frequently. It should be noted that safety and security was not only associated with, for example, law enforcement interventions, but also related to the safety and security associated with receiving shelter. Individuals doing research also attended this process. Within the NGO sector, a few organisations had commissioned or embarked on ground-level research that focused specifically on the issue of homelessness. This may explain why the area of research occurred repeatedly.

Hygiene and ablution, psychosocial support, and networks were represented equally. Despite networks occurring numerous times, engagements during The Inkathalo Conversations often gave the impression that there was a lack of effective collaboration amongst stakeholders within the sector. While there are

many stakeholders who form part of formal networks such as the National Homeless Network, the Bellville JOC, HOMAC, the WCSCF, and various religious networks, this does not necessarily equate to efficient collaboration and partnership within the sector. However, during The Inkathalo Conversations, it seemed that the stakeholders present were engaging one another and willing to share insights, research findings, and resources. It may be of interest to reflect on why, with a number of formal networks identified, many still expressed challenges with cooperation in this sector.

SUSTENANCE, SHELTER, HYGIENE AND ABLUTION

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs places physiological needs at the forefront of all other needs. These include air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing and reproduction.

Traditional interventions available for individuals experiencing homelessness are found mostly within the non-profit sector and the topic of shelter and the current shelter model often dominated the conversation around interventions. The 18 shelters currently listed on the Western Cape government directory are all registered as NPOs that receive funding from and are endorsed by the Department of Social Development[36] (as at September 2020). Shelters usually supply temporary, second-tier or transitional accommodation; meals and statutory services that provide clients access to social workers; and potentially other forms of health, psychosocial, and spiritual care.

Statutory services including social welfare services, support with obtaining identity documentation or social grants, and hospital treatment, are provided by the local authority. While part of many NPOs' service offerings include assistance or referral to statutory services, such referrals are not compulsory, which appears to be a massive gap within the homelessness interventions ecosystem.

Sustenance

Within the South African socio-economic landscape, sustenance as an intervention is critical. During The Inkathalo Conversations, sustenance received a worthy number of mentions – both by those who work in the sector as well as those who have experienced homelessness.

"...*we've provided hundreds of thousands of meals...*" – Warren Conrad, The Hope Exchange

The need for sustenance rose exponentially during the COVID-19 national lockdown. Many South African citizens highlighted their plight by stating that they would not die from COVID-19 but would instead die of hunger (News24, 2020).[37]

The crisis was quantified by Janice King from the Western Cape Street Children's Forum (WCSCF), who reported that once lockdown measures eased, organisations and drop-in centres within their network alone were feeding over 12 200 children per month – and this accounted only for the communities where this data was available.

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[36] Department of Social Development: https://www.westerncape.gov.za/directories/facilities/847

[37] News24, 2020: https://www.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/News/were-not-going-to-die-from-the-virus-but-from-hunger-20200422

"The feeding of children in the communities… [is] *12 200, just with the organisations that we work directly with – so that actually shows how close the children and the families were to crisis."* – Janice King, Western Cape Street Children's Forum (WCSCF)

During the COVID-19 national lockdown, organisations providing meals to individuals experiencing homelessness were placed under tremendous pressure. Not only were many of the NGOs required to close or pause operations, but they also had to find other means of feeding the homeless. Many NGOs had to relinquish control to the government to provide sustenance.

Interventions by citizen-driven community action networks (CANs) were birthed from the COVID-19 national lockdown, which saw hundreds of localised community feeding drives established for those in need and not limited to strictly homeless individuals. The Seaboard CAN (along with other CANs not present at The Inkathalo Conversations), provided sustenance in the form of a soup kitchen to individuals experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 national lockdown.

Organisations without prior regular feeding scheme initiatives, such as Community Chest, also provided meals to stranded individuals experiencing homelessness. Individuals in their personal capacity also stepped in to provide meals to the homeless during the lockdown, as in the case of Peter and Lesley Wagenaar, Mouille Point residents who ran a feeding scheme from their car.

"In two days' time there ain't gonna be… any more scraps getting put in those bins, nobody's gonna be giving handouts. There is no further sustenance coming from that source for them… We took it upon ourselves to start cooking food for the homeless people in our area… Eventually it grew to 225, mornings and evenings… We were very blessed to be able to serve 18 000 meals in that period… We're gonna serve home-cooked meals, not just any old food..." – Peter Wagenaar, Mouille Point Resident/Mini Meltdown

Unfortunately, not all relief measures regarding sustenance were compliant with human rights standards during the COVID-19 national lockdown. Some of the individuals who were taken to the Strandfontein site reported that the food provided was atrocious and that eventually the City's service provider was replaced.

Another stakeholder shared how the appeal of a good meal can even attract the relevant beneficiary to its wider intervention. Welcome dinners are one of the more unique sustenance interventions, which, alongside a meal, offer an opportunity for human connection and fostering friendships across the lines of race, class, and culture.

However, it was evident that securing a meal was not the only thing that individuals experiencing homelessness required as part of the interventions offered to them:

"You can't just feed people on the street and think it's enough..." – Brinley Hector, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"The shelters are offering you food but not support [for] *you as a person to go forward – but anyways, that's shelters… Shelters are confusing… Where do you go? The mountain, the sea, Simon's Town?"* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Shelter

While this section provides some insight into the nature of shelter interventions, the topic of shelter and progressive accommodation needs is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

Shelter was regarded as a priority need among both those living on the streets and those working in the sector. Interventions that focus specifically on social and affordable housing, transitional housing, and informal settlement upgrading are run by organisations such as the Development Action Group (DAG), whose mission it is to support communities in achieving social, spatial, and economic justice (DAG, 2020). MES, The Hope Exchange, and U-Turn assist with social, transitional or short-term housing solutions.

Individuals experiencing homelessness shared how, often, shelters did not allow for autonomous living:

> *"...a shelter, you would need to do a, b, and c – you would need to follow a set of rules, now that set rules might not apply with our way of living..."* – Donovan, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"The shelters don't allow you out in time…"* – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In addition, a major challenge for government and the homelessness sector is deciding how to prioritise the housing needs when it comes to the homeless on the streets and those who are living in informal settlements:

> *"Problem comes about when the homeless receives housing but not the person living in a shack in Khayelitsha, for example"* – Sam Voss, U-Turn

Moreover, shelter was often not provided for members of the LGBTQIA+ community, for couples, and for families. As far as is known, there is only one shelter that accommodates individuals experiencing homelessness who identify as being part of the LGBTQIA+ community. An individual shared his experience:

> *"The sector itself is also nurturing an environment where our Constitution and the fundamental rights are not being upheld in the sense that discrimination and exclusion are being perpetuated. Referring particularly to the LGBTQI community but also the community at large. Homeless people must be seen as equal citizens with their own voice and their own rights. If we are not looking at those things, then what are they looking at?"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"...there is no catering for couples to be together – taking away your rights as a human being to live in a shelter..."* – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

An emerging model of shelter has been the City of Cape Town's Safe Spaces, described by the City as "*transitional shelter which provides overnight shelter*". The Culemborg Safe Space is located on the City Foreshore and reportedly provides overnight resting place to approximately 230 individuals experiencing homelessness (City of Cape Town, 2020). This concept was birthed out of the overwhelming pressure on existing shelters to provide bed space to the individuals experiencing homelessness in the Cape Town CBD. Currently, there are three Safe Spaces in operation:

- Culemborg Safe Space 1 in the CBD;
- Paint City in Bellville; and, most recently,
- the Culemborg Safe Space 2 expansion site.

In addition to overnight shelter, the Culemborg Safe Spaces also offers access to ablution facilities and hygiene essentials. City of Cape Town Mayoral Council Member, Councillor Zahid Badroodien, explained that the Safe Spaces concept is *"a different model… a pre-shelter"* that provides *"holistic development of individuals".* He further reported that while many officials had requested a Safe Space, establishing one in each ward was not financially viable. He stated that the Mayor has expressed the desire to see a Safe Space in each of the four main areas of the City. Whilst some have found the Safe Spaces to be helpful, others have reported poor conditions and inadequate services at Safe Spaces:

> *"Have any of you visited the Safe Space recently? It is a mess! An absolute, utter, outdoor mess – they rain wet, there's no food provided at the Safe Space – thank you, lockdown, lockdown arrived, and the NGOs are now sending cooked meals to the Safe Space. In the morning, they receive, if that, a cup of coffee. There's been weeks without water, so they can't bathe…."* – Tasneem Hoosain, Souper Troopers/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Shelter for children was not sufficiently explored during Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations. The Homestead and Ons Plek were identified as two of the organisations providing shelter to children experiencing homelessness.

Some organisations took on the less traditional approach to their interventions such as the 'microsite' piloted by New Hope SA (discussed in Chapter 6). Community Chest was another organisation that, with limited prior involvement in the sector, showed up to assist those experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 national lockdown. Community Chest invited a group of individuals stranded outside the Culemborg Safe Space 2 expansion site (prior to its opening) into their office building in Bree Street as a temporary solution. 178 people moved into the building with all their belongings, with some making beds and others pitching their tents. They lived in the building from 24 May until 31 July 2020.

The need for hygiene and ablution services were important to individuals experiencing homelessness, a topic that is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. Organisations such as The Hope Exchange, Culemborg Safe Spaces, and MES provide daily access to ablution facilities.

Some participants' comments indicated that while shelter was a starting point in assisting individuals experiencing homelessness, it opened a gateway to assist them with other needs, including deeper-rooted issues:

> *"You cannot address the trauma without housing, jobs,* [and] *income..."* – Jesse Laitenen, Streetscapes

> *"An addiction specialist said to me that you don't tell people to get off drugs and then you* [will] *give them… a roof over their heads – it's the other way around…"* – Isa Jacobson, Seaboard CAN

Stakeholders above allude to something much more than shelter – it is the sense of safety and security that appears to be critical to the success of many interventions. This is discussed next.

DISCUSSION ON SAFETY AND SECURITY, MEDICAL CARE AND SUPPORT, SUBSTANCE USE RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION, MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES/PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Safety and Security

Safety follows on from the physiological needs according to Maslow. While many members of the public gain a sense of safety and security by the presence of agencies such as the South African Police Services (SAPS), the City's Law Enforcement (LE), the public-private City Improvement District (CID) security, private security companies, and neighbourhood watches, those living on the streets typically experience these agencies as threats to their safety (see Chapter 4).

As an intervention towards the safety and security of homeless individuals, the City's Safe Spaces purport to provide a space that is free from weapons, drugs, and alcohol. The space is entirely voluntary, which may further enhance a sense of safety. Security in the form of storage space for personal belongings is part of the services provided. This is a valuable service, given the numerous reports by individuals experiencing homelessness that their personal belongings are often stolen, lost or even confiscated by Law Enforcement officials. In addition, these facilities report to have a dedicated Law Enforcement team that provides around the clock security to residents of the Safe Spaces. However, in light of the strained relationship between many homeless individuals and Law Enforcement, the presence of Law Enforcement has been reported by several homeless people as a traumatic experience.

Organisations providing shelter may also be considered as interventions that provide a sense of safety and security. While some stakeholders submitted that shelter was necessary before any intervention was possible, a homeless individual revealed that even within the shelter spaces, their belongings and their opportunity for successful recovery were not secured:

> "I was there because of drugs – also through the referral of a social worker... there were drugs being peddled in this shelter..." – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> "Those who struggle with substance abuse sometimes resort to stealing and theft in order to pay for their substance, and therefore shelters can be seen as a place where theft happens and... one is not safe..." – Richard Bolland, New Hope SA

The shelter needs of those who have a substance use disorder need to be carefully conceptualised. The Streetscapes stakeholder commented that while renting private accommodation might yield positive results for those individuals who do not use substances; it might be less viable for those who do use substances to live in a communal accommodation set up.

Medical Care and Substance Use Interventions

Access to the healthcare system is fundamental to the functioning of any society. Medical care, substance use recovery and rehabilitation, and mental health services are considered part of the healthcare system.

It is well-known that many South Africans do not have access to quality healthcare. One of the stakeholders stated that:

> "...we need to provide equitable access to healthcare – specifically in mental health and substance abuse..." – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

Organisations that work with individuals experiencing homelessness are required to provide access to medical care and support, or to collaborate with other organisations or the public health sector to whom they can refer individuals for their necessary medical care. While some organisations have interventions that provide satisfactory support to their clients, effective referral from one organisation to another may also provide the necessary care to an individual experiencing homelessness:

> "From [Shelter A] I went to go stay at [Shelter B] because I needed to start taking ARVs and [Shelter A] needed to put me in a place where I'd actually be able to take the stuff and you know, eat well and all that other stuff that goes with it… I stayed in [Shelter B] for about two years I think, and I regained my heath and my self-confidence and I started working again…" – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In some instances, individuals experiencing homelessness had major challenges accessing medical care and treatment when approaching shelters. The same individual also shared accounts of other organisations that did not provide medical support and where he was expected to pay a fee to secure a bed at their shelter facilities:

> "I had pneumonia last year so I needed to be in hospital for a week and then I needed to go to a [shelter]. They needed to find me a place to recuperate, so they gave me a letter to go to [a shelter]. When I got [to the shelter], it was explained to me that there isn't any beds… I needed to come back again… I went back again and there still wasn't any beds… I [then] went to one of the people who normally helps me and they gave me a letter to say that they're going to pay for me to [stay in the shelter]… I took the letter back to [the shelter] and suddenly there was a bed…" – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Not all interventions accommodate individuals with a disability who often require specialised medical care and support:

> "Now in the street there at Culemborg, there's worse… there's people that's disabled, there's a guy there that's laying there that doesn't have a pants because he wetted all his things on Monday… so you reach [out] to every fieldworker of the City, because they have to come to Culemborg… they do nothing about the situation. So, what are we supposed to do? We are also in the same category like him, but we can help ourselves. There's [a] lot of people that can't help themselves… that guy doesn't have a blanket, doesn't even have a second pants, all the things we gave him, he makes it dirty every day…" – Alice (not her real name), an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Substance use interventions presented at The Inkathalo Conversations formed an integral part of the discussions. Many individuals and stakeholders confirmed that there was a strong correlation between substance use and homelessness. The rates of relapse were further compounded during the COVID-19

lockdown, where State institutions such as Stikland were converted into COVID-19 facilities, preventing many from accessing detox, recovery, and rehabilitation services.

Besides the State, some of the stakeholder organisations shared how they provided interventions for those addicted to substances. U-Turn, a registered NPO, has a particular focus on individuals experiencing homelessness that struggle with substance use. Their phased approach incorporates a *model of change* based on Prochaska et al's (1992) 'Transtheoretical Model' in terms of which the individual journeys from pre-contemplation to contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. Within these stages of change, U-Turn provides various services and programmes that assist the individual to become employed, independent, and sober.

The organisation STAND (Social Transformation Action Defined) takes a trauma-informed approach to their substance use interventions. Dealing with trauma was central to many of the interventions and almost all stakeholders verified that trauma contributed greatly to an individual using substances. One formerly homeless woman shared her struggle with addiction while she was experiencing homelessness:

> *"...at that time it was just meth you know, I was using meth and I was using mandrax and so... I was better and I got involved with a guy obviously that was obviously my downfall again. After I left him after 2 years, I just carried on with drugs again and then I met this guy who I thought oh wow, you know, men are so... so I started using heroin and... it was just a great escape you know, heroin made me feel... I didn't have to think about anything, I didn't have to feel anything, I could just sit there and I could fall asleep – it was just the most amazing drug for me, I started injecting, I almost had an overdose, I had a couple of suicide attempts..."* – Cindy Barnard, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre, an outpatient facility that focuses on substance use recovery and rehabilitation by providing support to individuals and families who are affected by substance use disorders, proposes that the opposite to addiction is the concept of 'connection'. The 'connection' intervention appears to consider the deeper issues relating to substance use disorders as mentioned above. They believe that a harm-reduction model would be best suited to substance use interventions as it would not prevent individuals who are still using substances from going to a shelter. This was supported by Streetscapes, who also employ a harm-reduction approach to substance use interventions.

There appear to be numerous barriers within the substance use treatment services that negatively affect individuals experiencing homelessness:

> *"...we say 'they don't have a home, you must have a place of residence before we can help you'...this is because we are following the criteria of the TPA (Transfer Payment Agreement)* [with government]*..."* – Ashley Potts, Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre

Stakeholders cited further challenges of substance use interventions. These include, but are not limited to:

- standard office hours that do not recognise that an individual may require services after hours;
- office-based services that require an individual to come to the service-provider, which might not be possible due to various constraints;

- an intervention focus that prioritises treatment above after-care support due to the funding agenda;
- the limited intervention period of 28 days;
- the behaviour and attitude of those offering substance use interventions;
- the harmful narrative surrounding those requiring substance use interventions, which is also related to inefficient delivery of psycho-education or public education and awareness drives; and
- the lack of employing sound theoretical underpinning and best practice models to intervene in substance use issues.

Moreover, some stakeholders believe that substance use and treatment should be embedded within the health sector as opposed to being treated as a criminal matter.

> *"...we put someone with substance use in jail, we do not reduce harm, they are exposed to substances, they are more stressed – this doesn't make any cost sense..."* – Jesse Laitenen, Streetscapes

Jesse Laitenen further asserted that an individual with a substance use disorder required more than a one-dimensional intervention. This approach would be particularly effective for those who have an opioid dependency. Stakeholders confirmed that heroin use is a major challenge in the CBD. Most often, it is dealt with by law enforcement agencies. Such engagements have traumatic side effects, especially if incarceration is included, which then exacerbates the need for substance use to cope with the trauma of incarceration. A more informed approach is required that considers the neurological aspects of addiction.

A positive alternative to incarceration is the TB/HIV Care Step-Up Programme that assists heroin users with harm reduction services such as needle and syringe services, opioid substitution therapy, and other medical and psychosocial support services. In collaboration with Streetscapes, the Central CID (CCID) referred 16 individuals experiencing homelessness to this programme and believes that this option is a lot more constructive than being imprisoned. Moreover, CCID provided funding for these individuals to have access to additional social support. Pat Eddy of the CCID shared how this, which has become one of their best programmes, follows what is currently seen as best practice internationally.

Ashley Potts, Director of the Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre (CTDCC), argued that for the application of alternative intervention models in this sector to be effective, a radical shift in mindset would be required. The CTDCC model renders an office unnecessary and it would like to move substance use interventions to the field:

> *"...must be field-based not site-based – in the next year I don't want buildings or on an office because it is unnecessary expenditure..."* – Ashley Potts, Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre

However, not all stakeholders might support this concept, as some believe that outpatient substance use interventions are not effective – especially for those with alcohol and heroin substance use challenges. Here, they recommend inpatient facilities, as outpatient interventions require tremendous administrative, statutory, and logistical efforts. On the flipside, however, inpatient interventions are costly, making it inaccessible to the average person, let alone the homeless individual. While the idea of field-based substance use support to individuals experiencing homelessness might not be viable for all stakeholders

working in the sector, there may be support for this kind of intervention by individuals experiencing homelessness. To illustrate the complexities of homeless people who will lose their income sources if they were to go for inpatient treatment, creative alternative outpatient services should be explored.

> *"My dream is to start a company, where homeless people can park cars, we get a location, we can park cars there, from there you get our rehab there..."* – Donovan, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Field-based support may be of more value to an individual experiencing homelessness – especially for economically active individuals.

From using the phrase 'substance use' instead of 'substance abuse' and 'substance addiction', it became evident that stakeholders who participated in The Inkathalo Conversations had found alternative ways of conceptualising substance use, its root causes, and how one ought to deal with it. Some of the views were that substance use is an emotional problem, a mental health issue, a neurological issue, and results from trauma, or a lack of human connection. It was evident that substance use is a crosscutting topic that cannot be housed in an isolated sector or just a segment of society.

Mental Health Services and Psychosocial Support

Mental health services and psychosocial support are imperative interventions that complement and strengthen the interventions that see to the basic human needs of individuals. Earlier, the discussion highlighted how individuals experiencing homelessness often also have emotional, mental and/or psychological needs and challenges. However, many of these individuals did not receive the psychosocial support they required– often offered by NGOs with limited resources and funding – as interventions focused mainly on providing for the basic needs of individuals.

> *"The shelters are offering you food but not support* [for] *you as a person to go forward… but anyways, that's shelters… Shelters are confusing… Where do you go? The mountain, the sea, Simon's Town?"* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

From his experience in volunteering at shelters, Richard Bolland echoed this:

> *"Most shelters have between 40 and 60 people living in them, alongside that there are normally between one and three social workers or fieldworkers working in those shelters. And so, for someone who needs quite a high* [level of] *intervention,* [and] *is only… able to see a social worker possibly once a month… that level of intervention often sees that person becoming quite frustrated and leaving the shelter system."* – Richard Bolland, New Hope SA

> *"I was exposed to certain things in the* [shelter]*, the streets; you make your own choice to go to them and tell them your story and what you have been through, but there was not really that type of care that was needed."* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

After conducting interviews with 40 individuals experiencing homelessness, considered "*repeat offenders*" by the City, Streetscapes discovered that almost all participants had experienced some form of familial trauma. The Streetscapes stakeholder asserted that when looking at the landscape through a lens of public

disorder, instead of considering the experience of trauma, one would continue to arrive at superficial issues.

> *"…When you're dealing with people who've gone through a lot of trauma, there's a lot of… violent and verbal outbreaks… that can manifest as a result of trauma. Often, those verbal and violent outbreaks have a zero tolerance in shelters and people either get warnings or get kicked out. And trauma is not necessarily dealt with in the best way when it comes to those environments…"* – Richard Bolland, New Hope SA

These challenges were often induced by familial and/or other complex trauma and further compounded by the experience of living on the streets. A homeless man openly stated, *"I'm not so lekker up here…"*, while a formerly homeless individual disclosed that he did not know if he was *"really a normal person like other people"* as he recognised how he reacted to certain triggers. He shared:

> *"I am an angry person and I think I'm still carrying anger from all the things I have experienced and what I'm experiencing in the sector itself..."* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

A limited number of service providers offer a trauma-informed approach to substance use specifically, and to homelessness generally. In some cases, NGOs do their best to offer these kinds of services:

> *"I ended up seeing… the social worker. I then, after seeing her, told myself… 'I need to talk about everything, the trauma I dealt with, the joy that I lost, where I want to be in life'. She then told me I need to attend… that program again and we* [that] *will take it from there. We then did a PDP – a personal development plan – and an exit plan… I then told her… about my problems… Then I started* [the] *programme. Now* [the] *programme… at* [names shelter] *in Bellville is totally different to any night shelter I had been at. Simply because the theme is that you're there for three months, you do a programme; once you've done the programme, all else* [support] *will follow.* [I] *went to* [rehabilitation] *after one week. I walked in by the doors and I introduced myself… where I come from, my drug of choice… why am I there… I told them that I want to take my life back."* – Brinley Hector, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"Afterwards* [three weeks] *you go into continuous care where they go into depth about your issues and your problems. I then got* [to] *open up regarding my brother and today I am thankful* [that] *I can get to speak about it openly. I get to speak about where I come from and where I am going."* – Brinley Hector, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In some instances, individuals experiencing homelessness were not completely convinced that they wanted to accept the support of programmes. One individual shared how after avoiding many of the programmes, he finally decided to consider participating in a programme at an NGO. The willingness and commitment to participate in programmes is key to benefiting from them:

> *"Hearing by the guys, they go to the programme, and I thought to myself… do it and see where it's going to help you, where it's going to lead to."* – Brinley Hector, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

However, these kinds of services are costly and the State does not make provision to fund them fully. Moreover, state-funded mental health institutions have long waiting lists. This is a major barrier for many organisations who wish to refer clients for specialist services. They recognise the importance of making mental health support available to individuals experiencing homelessness. Many individuals experiencing homelessness indicated that unresolved trauma or unaddressed mental health issues were contributors to a lack of overall wellbeing:

> *"Some of my issues I am still experiencing, I am still having dreams about… there are times I wake up – every morning I wake up very angry, irritated – I don't know if I am irritated about life or if I'm irritated about what. What happened on the streets to me, at home – it irritates me and now I want to take it to somebody else and take it out on somebody else. But it's great, sometimes you have people who try to understand the whole* [person] *that you are… I would want to wake up happy every morning, smiling, but I don't get that. Since I have been through too many, I don't wake up happy. I smile every day and stand tall – I pretend to stand tall – but there are certain things that are eating me deep, deep inside."* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"I became angry, like a bear with a sore paw, and then it came to where my ex-wife… couldn't take it anymore – how I was treating her, my anger, and not wanting to see my kids like that anymore, there was the door... I ended up on the streets, my brothers were against me, sleeping in front of the day hospital, any place I could find to sleep, I would sleep there, all this anger that had built inside of me, just thought I should end it all…"* – Ali Adams, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Another barrier to mental health services is not necessarily the lack of availability of services, but the negative association that society holds about receiving mental health care:

> *"I didn't go for counselling because I'm not the type of person to go speak to a stranger – I handled it in my own way – maybe that is why I am the way I am today... maybe it was because I never got closure..."* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"People are going to judge you, you're going to condemn yourself, but you're not going to allow yourself to fall flat – for me, I don't need people's help to uplift myself, or rehab – I never went to rehabs…"* – Tina Brandt, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork, in the research context, is "*about getting involved with what and who you are researching"* in a way that is practical and hands-on (Pole & Hillyard, 2017). The City of Cape Town defines a fieldworker as a "*person who is the first person of contact to services offered, through daily visibility in areas/hotspots (outreach), and responds to complaints"* (City of Cape Town, 2020). The Inkathalo Conversations found that fieldwork interventions were being implemented by the CoCT, public-private agencies, NGOs, and by community-based organisations and initiatives – with the goal of referring or connecting individuals to appropriate interventions. In particular, outpatients of rehabilitation programmes expressed a need for field-based interventions.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Many of the interventions that were presented at The Inkathalo Conversations included a spiritual component – whether intentionally or informed through the stakeholder/organisation's ideology and/or organisational vision. Often, individuals experiencing homelessness included their spiritual wellbeing as part of their overall growth and development.

During The Inkathalo Conversations, faith emerged quite significantly. At two of the Focus Group discussions, participants requested to close the sessions in prayer. One prayer was that of the Christian faith tradition, while another was that of the Islamic faith tradition. A few other Focus Group discussion participants expressed how they were able to reintegrate within a community successfully through a commitment of faith, while others shared how their faith kept them resilient while living on the streets.

A few of the organisations shared their affiliations with religious networks and how their faith was a motivating factor in assisting those who were destitute.

> *"If we consider a Godly perspective – what is a Godly expectation regarding the homeless…?"*
> – Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk

Straatwerk, a registered NPO, does fieldwork that is informed by its faith and religious beliefs and translated into practical, ministry, and faith-inspired approaches. Their team members go out onto the streets to do outreach ministry to individuals who are identified as destitute, in spiritual need, and who want to exit prostitution.

During the U-Turn presentation, a stakeholder believed that the church could play a vital role for individuals struggling with substance use disorder in fostering connection and strengthening the pre-contemplative phase in order in move into the contemplation phase. This kind of connection is what the Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre emphasised as being a critical factor in successful recovery from addiction. It was also visible in how New Hope SA offered community dinner evenings at a church facility.

Some individuals experiencing homelessness shared how they believed that becoming converted to a faith was the only solution for themselves and family members to experience wholeness and become well functioning. Moreover, during the Focus Group discussion on Family, one of the family types identified was that of the Religious/Spiritual Family. Faith is an element that was seen as very critical to a significant number of participants during this process and would be worth exploring in more depth as part of a future process.

LIFE-SKILLS DEVELOPMENT/SERVICES, JOB READINESS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

> *"There are houseless persons who are not homeless; they can create a home where there is love and care. All they need is economic opportunity and affordable houses*." – Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk

Often, homelessness is associated with unemployment (Radey & Wilkins, 2011). Interventions that are job-focused are therefore valuable in assisting individuals to exit homelessness (Radey & Wilkins, 2011). Life-skills development programmes to strengthen individuals' success in re-entering the employment sector

often accompany these types of interventions. Moreover, becoming economically active appeared to be a significant step before being reunified with family members.

Life-skills development is offered by most of the organisations that participated in The Inkathalo Conversations.

Participants highlighted the importance of access to employment and economic opportunities to any exit strategy. Stakeholder organisations such as MES, The Hope Exchange, U-Turn, Straatwerk, and the Fisantekraal Centre for Development offer various interventions that support vocational development and opportunity. Each organisation has a unique model that underpins their intervention, and the inclusion of personal development plans was often mentioned. These organisations have methods to support their interventions – for example, the Fisantekraal Centre for Development makes use of four networks to support their skills development programmes for youth, namely, volunteer, prayer, donor, and job placement. Donors can consider covering the tuition of individuals on their programmes.

Some of the interventions double up their job-readiness and economic opportunity interventions. For example, U-Turn has a voucher system that strengthens their interventions provided to individuals experiencing homelessness. The Hope Exchange has a social entrepreneurship model that offers car washing services and a charity shop. MES has the 'Become a Nation Builder' programme to which the business and corporate sector can contribute. It emerged that organisations that sought to sustain their efforts through a combination of public and private funding and support, rather than relying entirely on government funding, may offer more dynamic, diverse interventions.

Other organisations offer more informal job-readiness and economic opportunities, such as jobs within the organisation. For example, one individual experiencing homelessness shared how during his stay at a shelter he was given the opportunity to start driving the organisation's vehicle and was tasked with picking up food donations. Being economically active appeared to be a significant step in the individual's journey to recovery:

> *"I went to the programme, George called me and asked if I had my license, he said that I was going to drive the bakkie, gave me the whole talk... I had to do a pick-up at Pick 'n Pay – George was on the tracker..."* – Ali Adams, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is a key government initiative aimed at addressing poverty by creating short-term work opportunities (EPWP, 2020[38]). In 2009, the EPWP introduced a Non-State Sector Programme (NSS) as a new cog for the EPWP. To support NPO community development initiatives, the NSS uses wage subsidies and is managed by the Department of Public Works (EPWP, 2020). There are stakeholder organisations, such as Ubuntu Circle of Courage, that partner with the Department of Public Works to secure EPWP work placements for individuals experiencing homelessness.

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[38] EPWP, 2020: http://www.epwp.gov.za/

The EPWP is a well-intended, short-term employment solution. However, it does not address the longer-term employment challenges that are required for sustainable exits out of the homelessness ecosystem. A participant from Straatwerk, a NPO that provides individuals with economic opportunities and access to employment, shared:

> *"I am not involved in the Public Works programme but in our own job programmes – the intention is good but the way it is shaped because of labour law – it fails to sufficiently address the root causes of poverty – emotional and economic deficiency..."* – Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk

In addition, some stakeholders recognised that individuals experiencing homelessness are on a journey to recovery, and that the mandated labour-intensive work, which is commonly offered through the EPWP, is not always conducive to a successful recovery:

> *"EPWP – started with 14 people, sweeping streets.* [The] *City wanted to do a full day but the people were not in a good space… they found a garden space, and we thought we would try this – they now run four urban gardens..."* – Jesse Laitenen, Streetscapes

In addition, individuals were concerned about the duration of the EPWP opportunities, which typically last three months, describing this as a 'catch-22' situation. Councillor Mahlangu, the Portfolio Chairperson for the Homeless Agency Committee, stated that they were *"fighting with the EPWP as the three-month duration is not enough... it cannot sustain you."*

A further barrier to accessing economic opportunity interventions was age as a criterion. A woman experiencing homelessness shared how the EPWP typically recruited only those under 35 years old. Another complication negatively affecting an individual's chance of securing work offered through the EPWP is their lack of statutory documentation, namely, the identity document. Numerous homeless individuals reported the loss of their IDs during altercations with law enforcement agents (see Chapter 4), which completely undermines their opportunities to become economically active.

FAMILY PRESERVATION AND STRENGTHENING

The White Paper on Families (2013:37)[39] focuses on three key strategic priorities, namely,

- "promotion of healthy family life;
- family strengthening; and
- family preservation."

Family strengthening is defined as the *"deliberate process of giving families the necessary opportunities, relationships, networks, and support to become functional and self-reliant."* Family preservation services

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[39] White Paper on Families in South Africa (2013): https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/social-development/white_paper_on_families_in_south_africa_2013.pdf

focus on the "*resilience and strengthening of the family in order to keep them together*" and can be delivered against four core areas:

- prevention;
- early intervention;
- statutory intervention; and
- reunification and aftercare.

(White Paper on Families in South Africa, 2013).

Yet, despite the *Norms and Standards for Shelters for Homeless Adults* (2015:14) stating that, "*If possible, shelters should make provision for married couples, people living in a co-habiting relationship and couples with children,*" it was reported that shelters did not make provision for families to stay together.

Interestingly, the *White Paper on Families in South Africa (2013)* does not mention homelessness. Instead, it refers to *"family members who have been separated for extended periods of time for various reasons"* (White Paper on Families, 2013:43). A key social work service at shelters is to attempt to reunite individuals experiencing homelessness with their closest family members (Western Cape Government, 2019[40]). Reunification services aim to assist the "*family in the transitional period… in order for the family to stabilize and enter into a reunification process".* However, this conceptualisation frames reunification within the context of a family member being removed by social services; and not in the context of when a family member becomes homeless.

Many individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as some stakeholders, stated that being reunited with family members was not always the most appropriate intervention to exit homelessness. During The Inkathalo Conversations, the accounts of successful family reunifications were rare. In some cases, individuals explained how they became homeless in part due to circumstances within the family environment (explained in detail in Chapter 7). In many circumstances raised by participants in the conversations, reunification was either not possible, or it was not in the best interest of the individuals experiencing homelessness.

> *"I don't understand the reintegration or the reuniting of street people with their families, because sometimes I feel that… we were running away from something, we went away from something; sometimes there was abuse, there was neglect, there was a lot of stuff… I can't understand why would you want to send these people back to that? Are you that cruel?... I had HIV… nobody wanted me back at that time… nobody had place for me… they just didn't have place…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.
>
> *"...in the case of children who are living and begging on the street, often family reunification is actually not appropriate – so there's a huge emphasis on... statutory work… and in policies to focus on family reunification, but by the time a child's actually ended up on the street the*

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chances are that that is not going to be appropriate and therefore other options have to be looked at..." – Janice King, Western Cape Street Children's Forum (WCSCF)

Some individuals might want to be reunified with their family of origin, but the community to which they are to return might not be conducive to their successful reintegration, nor might it be safe for them or their family members to return to that community. During an engagement, a homeless woman shared how every time she returned to her community of origin to visit her family she would be faced with her perpetrators who would make inappropriate comments:

"I can say it's gone and forgotten – but there was no punishment for what they did to me – they still laughing and chatting... at me like nothing happened... that is why I don't want to go to [my community] *– to make a life for me and my children. I will go visit and greet the people and they don't even know that I stay on the streets in Claremont – they will say you looking lekker, you looking well after yourself but this is people that was sitting there when I was assaulted, batteries ran over my head, when I got stabbed in my face, all people that were there that was laughing* [at] *the things that happened to me... then they act all prim and proper but they're still doing it..."* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"My younger sister says she never had a [sibling] *and that hit me hard... they do come check on me and I spend the day there sometimes but I lie flat so that gangsters don't see me..."* – Labika, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In other instances, family bonds had been broken over time, and individuals did not feel that they could return to their family of origin:

"...my people live in Chukker Road... I haven't been home since the age of 15, so I don't have a home to go to. I don't have a conversation to have with my mommy... There is no home for me to go to, because I left... That's a lot of people out there as well; bonds have been broken, people have moved on... I think each and every case has got a solution of its own... and if the social workers and the government people... that don't really, man, go out there and see what they can do..." – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"When home and culture were stripped away it takes a while to go back home and to even think about going back home." – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

The strengthening of families is driven by certain core factors, namely: family economic success; family support systems; and thriving and nurturing communities. While family reunification is not the panacea for exiting homelessness, there were instances where stakeholders and homeless individuals described how they were reunified with their family:

"I had meetings with my family. The shelter [names the shelter] *doesn't just work with you, they* [also] *work with the family... I remember the first time, they called my mum – just made me so nervous. To deal with the family and deal with where you are* [and] *going back is very, very important. It's not just me that has to change.... So, they work closely with the family and find out actually what their issues are and why they are the way they are. Sometimes it's not*

the way they react to you, it's actually because of their own issues." – Cindy Barnard, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Being employed to be able to provide for family members appeared to be a moderating factor for parents who were experiencing homelessness. When participants at a Focus Group discussion were asked what would make them feel secure, an individual responded:

> *"...you need to secure your employment because money is the thing that talks... I'm grateful to Mr Booysen, who is teaching me how to grow – I'm back to supporting my family and my children's studies."* – An individual experiencing homelessness.

The State recognises that intersectoral coordination between the various actors is required for family preservation and strengthening services to be delivered effectively and efficiently. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), and faith-based organisations (FBOs) are viewed as necessary agents to promote the vision of the *White Paper on Families* (2013). During The Inkathalo Conversations it emerged that well-developed, research-informed and soundly programmatised family preservation services are critical as part of any restorative work that is to be done within the homelessness ecosystem. Core to any family preservation model is understanding the views, needs and experiences of the individuals on both end who will be receiving the services.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The *Norms and Standards for Shelters for Homeless Adults (2015)* recognises social integration as an important aspect of exiting homelessness successfully.

Social integration is defined as the *"...supportive relationships on community level, whereas social support mainly refers to individual, group and community level. Social integration is promoted through active and continued participation in social, economic, cultural, and spiritual and public affairs enhancing the intergeneration relationships within families, communities and the reduction of inequality, discrimination and marginalized vulnerable groups"* (Norms and Standards for Services to Families, 2012).

Literature demonstrates that a sense of citizenship and wellbeing are elements that make for personal growth and participation in community life (Georghiades & Eiroa-Orosa, 2020). Important to reintegration then, are opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness to be able to participate in meaningful community activities. There are some interventions that create room for individuals to be a part of everyday interactions within the community. Straatwerk, New Hope SA and Souper Troopers were some of the stakeholder organisations who described some of the innovative ways that fieldwork could be done in order to reach out to individuals in a more personal manner.

Souper Troopers, for example, creates social gatherings where homeless individuals are invited to engage in recreational and basic needs activities, such as haircuts and community lunches. Another interesting concept was the welcome dinner described by New Hope SA. At these welcome dinners, individuals experiencing homelessness would be invited to share a meal with others at a church hall.

> *"...chat, get to know them, form a friendship and from there, refer them to a shelter or rehab... once the person has journeyed a while in the shelter or rehab, we look at job options and*

> *second phase accommodation and assist the person to shift into those facilities seamlessly..."*
> – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

By building a sincere connection with individuals experiencing homelessness, it seemed easier to recommend additional interventions to the individual. Moreover, this is an incredible way to foster human connection and break down stereotypes and stigma. New Hope SA stakeholder, Richard Bolland, shared how this concept later developed into the microsite concept during the COVID-19 lockdown, which led to the communal living structure in Muizenberg, where ten previously homeless individuals now form part of a wider community. The residents of the New Hope SA house in Muizenberg participate in meaningful community social and economic opportunities, such as the community kitchen, garden and market. A few stakeholders viewed microsites, where people would be accommodated within their communities, as healthy examples of proper reintegration.

However, where the person exiting homelessness is reintegrated is also of critical importance. One individual shared how after attending 16 rehabilitation interventions, he still could not go back to his community of origin as he would relapse every time he did so. He attributed this to his previous involvement with gangs and how reintegrating into his community of origin would mean rejoining a life of gangsterism. Similarly, another individual shared how returning to his community would put his family at risk:

> *"I don't want to bring that trouble to my mommy. Where she lives there are the Capitals... they are the JFKs – they infested that whole area. My past and them, we've clashed a few times, to a point where I can't go there. If I step to my mommy they know I'm there. If I get on the train to Retreat, by the time I get to Retreat Station, when I get off they're there. If I go, I tell her to get me at Plumstead...it's now to a point where it's not only my own safety but my mother's safety."* – Name withheld , an individual who has experienced homelessness.

A woman shared how returning to society in general was a struggle because while you may have changed, the community may have not:

> *"Going back into the society, it's a real struggle, because you have all these tools and you have all these changes and now you have to apply them. And you come to realise everything around you hasn't changed, it's just you that has changed..."* – Cindy Barnard, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

While it is important for individuals experiencing homelessness to have access to meaningful and authentic engagement with community, it is critical that one takes cognisance of the community in which this is done. Fieldworkers from the CoCT's reintegration services highlighted that part of reintegrating an individual back into society is the development of their individual development plan (IDP). This would seem to be a critical component of reintegration as not all communities are soft landing places for those returning. In fact, they may have left because of the community environment.

It is important to further understand that the traditional concept of 'reintegration back into society' is a problematic approach to managing homeless persons. The 'reintegration back into society' approach assumes that homeless people have not integrated themselves into the communities that they migrated to. The evidence, however, points to the fact that the overwhelming number of homeless persons have

integrated themselves into their new communities: they know people; they watch patterns; they observe movements; they provide a layer of security; and they ensure a level of information and intelligence. The fact that the community may not have welcomed them as new members of the community is very different from the notion that they have not integrated themselves into the community. And they often don't leave the community – for years. So there is a symbiotic integration that is at an almost subterranean level and another more antagonistic struggle for integration at a more public level. In the traditional Reintegration approaches and sociological assumptions, what is foregrounded is that homeless people 'don't belong in the communities that they have migrated to', meaning they are 'without community or outside community' and must be 'reintegrated' into community, but with this understanding: they must be reintegrated into the communities from which they began their outward journeys. It further assumes that they cannot be integrated into the communities they are currently living in. This is wrong. We should stop using the 'reintegration into the community' concept as a pretext for sending people away from the communities they have migrated to. What if our reintegration work looks at deepening meaningful integration into the community they have chosen to make their home in? This approach seeks to work with homeless people as individuals who should be engaged with and homed in the communities in which they feel their most significant relationships exist and in which they identify as feeling safe and valued in. What is called for is an alternative approach to reintegration. Many homeless people have worked hard at integrating themselves into the communities they currently live in: through recycling, cleansing, security and deterrent initiatives and the like. These actions should be recognised as important integration work that the homeless have undertaken by themselves, and the status of being regarded as perpetual outsiders should not be the lens through which society and the State forever view them.

During a stakeholder engagement, it became evident that what was considered a neighbourhood to one individual, might not be the same for another. Moreover, this leads to the following questions: What is a safe neighbourhood or community to which someone can be reintegrated? Should the concept of 'community' only be defined purely in previous or current geographical terms? Should one consider the 'social', 'physical' and 'mental' neighbourhoods that individuals experience while being homeless when service providers embark on reintegrating them back into society?

SECTOR-STRENGTHENING STRATEGIES

Advocacy, lobbying, and public education and awareness

Sector-strengthening strategies such as advocacy, lobbying, public education and awareness, research, policy and resource development, and networks could help inform and provide the impetus required to shift the paradigm regarding successful reintegration for individuals experiencing homelessness.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines advocacy as "*the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal*".[41] Hessenius (2007) asserts that to "*advocate is to plead the cause of something; to support it.*"

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[41] Source: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/advocacy#:~:text=%3A%20the%20act%20or%20process%20of,his%20advocacy%20of%20gay%20rights

As advocacy can be employed as part of a community initiative, it seemed appropriate to discuss advocacy alongside public education and awareness. During The Inkathalo Conversations, it became evident that most interventions were nested within programmes of NGOs working in the sector. Very few mentioned advocacy, lobbying and public education and awareness as part of their interventions regarding individuals experiencing homelessness. This is not unique to South Africa, with Hessenius (2007) stating that in the US, most NPOs do not actively participate in advocacy or lobbying.

Advocacy is not a requirement for interventions to be successfully offered and implemented. The lack of advocacy was, however, highlighted as one of the intervention gaps within the homelessness sector. In a written submission, an individual experiencing homelessness stated that:

> *"The sector is very disintegrated and disconnected. On certain issues, there is no cohesion. There isn't one voice coming from the sector."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The lack of advocacy within civil society in the homelessness sector was evident when an individual experiencing homelessness described how he and other peers formed an advocacy body in reaction to their experiences at the City of Cape Town's Strandfontein site during the COVID-19 lockdown. While there, he explained, "*everyone was told to stay outside – nobody was allowed to come and then we had to form a committee to fight for ourselves.*" – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

While the circumstances surrounding the formation of this advocacy body, the Strandfontein Homeless Action Committee (SHAC), were not favourable, it is a powerful collective voice led by those who have experienced and may still be experiencing homelessness first-hand.

For advocacy to succeed, stakeholders and individuals experiencing homelessness expressed the need for collaborative advocacy efforts. This view was supported by stakeholders who recognised that:

> *"We do a lot of programme stuff but we don't actually have a strong advocacy voice and I'm so pleased that the HAC* (Homeless Action Committee) *is there and is working for this… and I want to talk to you guys more – definitely about how can we do the advocacy stuff better and actually more effectively… in this space…"* – Jon Hopkins, U-Turn

> *"NGOs have to start working together as advocacy agents and stand in solidarity with the homeless and say 'not in my name, you're not going to treat other human beings like this'…"* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

> *"The issue of advocacy for justice must be a natural orientation for NGOs – the issue that certain NGOs through their leadership, or through their boards, prevent people from engaging in human rights activities as it may cost them reputation or money, is an injustice. Who* [is] *suffering?"* – Lorenzo Davids, Lead Facilitator: The Inkathalo Conversations

Public education and awareness could also play a vital role in shifting the mindset of society regarding homelessness. During The Inkathalo Conversations, an individual shared how, after ending up in a

children's shelter, his peers at school further stigmatised him. Ground-level advocacy and public education and awareness could be very useful within educational settings, dispelling the myths and misconceptions that housed individuals might have regarding homeless individuals.

A stakeholder from Project Hope highlighted the importance of awareness and education of community members and the role it can play in shifting their attitudes toward individuals experiencing homelessness. An individual experiencing homelessness suggested that fieldworkers should meet them in the field (in the public space) and that informational pamphlets about the various interventions should be distributed in the public domain so that individuals who become homeless know where they can reach out for assistance.

Public education and awareness, and advocacy can act as a beneficial sector-strengthening strategy, bringing a lot more attention to the sector's needs, and acting as a catalyst for greater public education and awareness initiatives. However, while advocacy may influence the state's decision-making indirectly through its activities, lobbying is far more focused on *"directly impacting an authorizing environment's decision making"* and usually has legal consequences (Hessenius, 2007, p.5). Moreover, NGOs are allowed to do advocacy work to any degree but might only be able to lobby within certain confines and regulations. Therefore, it becomes even more crucial that NGOs within this sector find ways to collaborate meaningfully.

Research and Policy Development

The role that research can play within the homelessness sector should not be underestimated. While a tension can exist between those conducting research and those offering interventions, it should be considered that both are in fact doing incredibly important work that can, if done in collaboration, enrich the interventions available in the sector. Moreover, research findings have the potential to influence policy. The Inkathalo Conversations appreciated the various research presentations focusing on issues pertaining to individuals experiencing homelessness.

With gratitude, the research contributions included:

	Name	Institution/Organisation	Research Areas
1	Theodore Sass	University of the Western Cape	Investigating the Multidimensional Well-being among the Homeless: A Cape Town CBD Perspective
2	Dr Stephan de Beer	University of Pretoria	Research and Policy on Homelessness in Tshwane, Pretoria
3	Jon Hopkins	U-Turn	The Cost of Homelessness (2021 publication)
4	Dr Heidi Sauls	Western Cape DSD	Concept of Vulnerability (Anthropology)
5	Caroline Powell	The Warehouse Institute	Spatial Justice in the Southern Suburbs
6	Shehnaz Cassim-Moosa	CoCT	Resilience Strategy
7	Quinton Adams	The Shack Builder	Gangsterism in Cape Town

These research contributions highlight the strengths as well as the weaknesses within the homelessness sector. Research outputs have the potential to help stakeholders shape or reshape their interventions. For this to happen, it is imperative that research and practice (two sectors which often work in silos) meet in a space of deep democracy, where neither the researcher nor the practitioner assumes more power, but where an equitable and inclusive partnership can be formed to strengthen and advance sector interventions. A number of researchers presented their work at The Inkathalo Conversations, some of which were more academic in nature, while other appeared to be more community-based. The research presented has the potential to influence policy, enhance advocacy and lobbying activities, and inform public education and awareness drives.

A current research study focusing on the cost of homelessness, once completed, has the potential to inform the State's plans and budgets for interventions:

> *"….and there's a study that we're doing with Streetscapes on the cost of homelessness – which is coming out in the next couple of months but we're actually looking at the cost to society of someone being on the streets – and I won't give you a figure because it's not final yet – I can share with the team some preliminary stuff but it's significant. And actually, probably* [after] *two or three years of someone being on the street,* [it] *is more expensive than someone being on the U-Turn programme or Streetscapes Programme … So that's what we need to show to the City to say the cost [of what they are] currently doing is actually more expensive than doing a rehabilitative model that's gonna help many more people over time…"* – Jon Hopkins, U-Turn

Research has the added potential to shape and inform the best practice of interventions that are offered to individuals in the sector. Streetscapes' research with 40 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness showed that securing employment would greatly assist them. From their findings, Streetscapes adapted their practices to offer some successful interventions, which is transforming the participants' lives.

Research can create challenges in the sector when sound methodological practices are not applied to research studies. A few stakeholders reported that the methods employed to enumerate individuals experiencing homelessness were potentially flawed. B, an individual experiencing homelessness, stated that he could not remember being counted and asked, *"who does the counting?"* as he believes that the number of homeless individuals increase on a daily basis.

Networks

Networks such as the Western Cape Street Child Forum, the National Homeless Network, More Than Peace, The Warehouse Trust, and the Bellville JOC, were represented at The Inkathalo Conversations. Establishing networks that are intentional about conducting meaningful research, strengthening advocacy and lobbying practices, and sharing resources is an additional sector-strengthening strategy – especially in the South African NGO landscape that is often perceived and experienced as under-resourced. For example, the National Homeless Network strives to do the following:

- Advocating for the homeless with National government and supporting advocacy at Provincial and Municipal levels;
- Liaising at all levels with government departments and institutions;
- Sharing information on best practice, policies from across South Africa and the world; and

- Sharing research and developing a common research agenda.

3.3. INTERVENTION RESOURCES AND CHALLENGES

Throughout The Inkathalo Conversations, it was clear that stakeholders had numerous resource challenges regarding the current interventions available to individuals experiencing homelessness. The Inkathalo Conversations presented an opportunity for organisational stakeholders and homeless individuals to be in the same room. This allowed for meaningful engagement around the experiences of both implementing and receiving interventions. Individuals experiencing homelessness provided an incredible insight into how the interventions are experienced and how they might be able to function even more effectively. In addition to their individual presentations, participating stakeholders from organisations serving the sector were invited to participate in a Focus Group discussion, which yielded insights and recommendations to improve interventions and the practices by which they are executed. The following discussion attempts to highlight these facets by these conversations. It should be noted that many of these topics are comprehensively discussed in Chapter 2, focusing on Inter/Intra-sectoral Connection and Collaboration.

FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of interventions depends largely on the ability to adequately fund them. In South Africa, the NGO space in which interventions are offered is riddled with a constant battle for funds to cover the full cost of interventions – including the salaries of staff members. This is reflected in what seems to be a group of stressed, frustrated, and overwhelmed stakeholders along with many dissatisfied clients who often receive interventions that are limited in scope. Conversations revealed that insufficient funds for sustainable support often result in individuals not receiving the 'full gambit of services required', or the sense that the sector is 'recycling people over and over again'. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent national lockdown exacerbated an already fragile ecosystem.

As organisations grapple with their sustainability models, they may resort to methods which do not serve their clients – whether knowingly or unknowingly. For example, an individual shared his discomfort at how his life story was used to secure funding for the organisation, while he received no benefit beyond the continued intervention.

> "I think the system is a failure itself, because even throughout the shelters I saw myself as an object, as a product that was being sold." – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In other instances, the sector made great efforts to minimise the burden on the individual experiencing homelessness, by finding alternative ways to keep their work sustainable, while other individuals offering interventions often used their own financial resources to assist individuals who wanted to be reunited with their family members.

Clifford Martinus from Oasis described that the facility he manages uses a family-like structure, referring to the concept where older siblings who gain employment contribute to the family household. Once a resident of Oasis has left the shelter and obtains work, they contribute towards the facility.

However, other organisations simply could not sustainably accommodate the hundreds of people who sought their services. For example, U-Turn's programme comes at a cost of close to R 7 000 per month per person, half of which goes toward covering the cost of the training and the other half toward the individual's stipend. In order to remain sustainable, the organisation can provide services to only a limited number of people.

> *"We pay the person to participate in the programme – it costs us just under R 7000 per person per month to provide the basics – for which some is subsidised by government and the rest we need to find privately."* – Sam Voss, U-Turn

The research that focuses on the cost-analysis of homelessness (published by U-Turn in December 2020) will benefit the sector as it will help inform the re-evaluation of the sector's current financial and/or funding model. This kind of data will empower organisations to negotiate much more fair and realistic terms of reference when engaging with government funders.

Competing funding agendas and complex donor-stakeholder relationships further complicates an already outdated funding model. (for the full discussion, please read Chapter 2).

MODELS AND APPROACHES

It emerged that there were various approaches and models informing interventions. Some appeared to be more intentional, while others were more reactive in nature. As stated by Sam Voss, (U-Turn) there is a need for more *"…developmental solutions and not only relief type services or programmes."*

The brevity of interventions was consistently raised as being detrimental to positive outcomes. For example, participants confirmed that the timeframe at shelters is typically three months, when in reality, it was reported to take one to two years for someone to sustainably exit homelessness. Homeless individuals and service providers alike expressed that a three-month shelter intervention was considered too short a time to find relief, recover from addictions or trauma, become job-ready, and to map out one's life plans. In contrast, one shelter manager shared how one individual had been at their shelter for over 10 years.

Furthermore, it appeared that almost all participants had been through the various shelter and NGO interventions for years and few had successfully managed to exit homelessness. It is important to stress that this may not be due to the failure of shelters and NGOs but rather the failure of the wider system to take up more sustainable, cost-effective, and long-term interventions.

Even with the best of interventions, some individuals seemed fatigued by constantly needing to participate in programmes. One individual shared how she never had the time to rest, to think and to reflect. With regard to children becoming adults within the shelter system, an individual expressed her anxiety of being told that once she turned 18 years old, she would need to leave the shelter system (discussed in Chapter 7).

While one cannot ignore the immense value that mass programmes have in the lives of many who have experienced homelessness, many expressed the need for a more individualised approach, for better meeting a person's unique circumstances.

A major gap in the interventions for individuals experiencing homelessness was the lack of advocacy accompanying programmes. NGOs have the potential to become the bearers of social justice and initiate greater sector-based advocacy initiatives. This is evidenced by the formation of the social action group, the Homeless Action Committee.

ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Some individuals recounted their positive experiences of interventions geared toward their circumstances, while others had less favourable and even traumatic experiences of interventions. From sector corruption to toxic leadership, theft and abuse to a lack of access to services and inadequate nutrition, homeless individuals shared their experiences.

Individuals experiencing homelessness described the environment and behaviours of staff members of some of the shelters:

> *"I one day went with one of the supervisors to fetch the necessary donations and stuff like that and we ended up not at the shelter – we ended up in Manenberg – some of the stuff were dropped and the others taken back to the shelter…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"We've attacked housemothers and you know what the housemothers gave back to us when Woolworths give us the food, she will take the food that is not too expired for herself and give us the expired food."* – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

Moreover, there were some disturbing elaborations on how clients were abused in the care of some organisations:

> *"… aware of certain supervisors and certain organisations that impregnated a resident but he was fired and asked to leave…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"I also know of a FBO* [faith based organisation] *– my supervisor at this place was guilty of sexual harassment – he was one of the blue-eyed boys so nothing happened…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

EXPERTISE VERSUS EXPERIENCE

It became evident that individuals experiencing homelessness often felt that their experiences were not fully acknowledged for the sake of informing interventions. Individuals asserted that they had experience, which was often overlooked by those with expertise.

> *"Understanding homelessness is not about using degrees and education. A homeless person can address the issues of homelessness because they have been there; they know what they*

are talking about. It's not about talking about something you have to study and write exams on. The sector needs to understand that working with homeless people is not about degrees, you need to know where the people come from and what being homeless means." – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"The stakeholders don't have answers... You will notice a lot of resistance from the homeless people... You guys treat us as though we are on the back foot, but we understand a lot more, have a lot of intelligence and knowledge of certain things... The only expert is the one who lives in the field..." – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

One stakeholder acknowledged:

"Whatever I know about homelessness I learned on the streets, but still I'm not an expert – you who have lived there are the only expert[s]. *Our role is to figure out how we work in partnership with people who have the expertise, the experiences, and to document that."* – Dr Stephan de Beer, University of Pretoria.

A significant sense of not being consulted and the lack of co-creating interventions emerged during The Inkathalo Conversations. It was usually a case of individuals feeling that they simply needed to accept what was being provided or risk not receiving any form of support. By merely accepting interventions, there is no room for co-creation and innovation in how interventions are designed. Individuals experiencing homelessness stated:

"When we call them when we need them, they must listen to us... but they don't do things according to what our needs are... they shouldn't be making plans on their own, they need to listen to our inputs as well... Julle moet [nie] *so maak, dit issie menslik nie."* ["You mustn't do that, it isn't humane]." – Meshack Tshantsha, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"To have more and to involve the people on the streets... to inform them about what is it that government can really do to improve their lives. Because they going to be sitting there thinking... it's just another month or it's just a short time... We definitely need to empower them to let them know that there are free treatment available for their addiction." – Brinley Hector, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

One individual believed that when they did not accept the intervention offered, they would be penalised:

"There is very little input from the people that they claim to be serving. People never really get to give input or voice their opinion. If you do, you get pushed to the side. The bottom line is NGOs do not seem open to criticism. The people should have some sort of say in the direction that NGO wants to go. They come up with these bright ideas and everyone must just jump on the bus. If you are not 100% on board with them, then you must get off the bus. Most of the time the bus is going in a direction that you don't really want to go. Homeless people are being excluded from the decision-making process that directly affects their lives.

There is not enough inclusivity. Take them from where they are and have more input and participation from homeless people, but at the moment everyone including the City comes with their own little project rather than consulting the homeless people around what is the best way

forward. There needs to be greater participation and input from more stakeholders, from everyone, not just the NGOs." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

With the inputs from the individuals experiencing homelessness, stakeholders would have the opportunity to receive feedback and, ultimately, strengthen their monitoring and evaluation systems. Moreover, gathering the inputs of the client would make interventions more robust:

"There should be more focus on/for leadership academies to come out of the homeless people that are being served. In actual fact we would better help the next person because we have experienced what it is like to be homeless, and we have a big role to play in terms of helping provide better services. Our contribution is just overlooked. It is sad, you want to help people, but you haven't experienced what it is like." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

A lack of cultural competence and contextual understanding appeared to be a barrier to some when accessing interventions, as individuals felt that service providers did not fully understand them or their circumstances:

"Especially if it's a white person, I find it difficult to listen with honesty… because a lot what comes from it is not from experience, and a lot comes from what they heard, or what they kind of see, or what they think. And a lot of times their method is the method they feel… the route they think you need to take is unrealistic... Because I am going through stuff, my body is going through stuff, I went through stuff… they don't comprehend. It's difficult for them to understand that I have actually got nothing." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"During the time that I was there… the trains wasn't running… a lot of us came late to what we needed to… The more we tried to explain to them this is actually what's going on outside, the more they didn't want to understand it, and the more they picked on this issue. For me, you are dealing with people who are trying to put their lives together, they've just gone through rehab, they've got a whole lots of other stuff… I felt that approach was doing more harm to the people than… anything else… I was actually in the board room a couple of times for attitude." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

SUCCESS: DEFINED, MEASURED, AND EVIDENCED

"And how does it get measured, that people are actually making progress towards their goals? Do we have enough monitoring and evaluation systems which actually show how people [are] *exiting homelessness and finding a place of their own?"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The conversations revealed that a lack of monitoring and evaluation exists at all institutional levels. Both the definition and rate of success among interventions is unknown to most stakeholders and the metrics remain unclear. Many interventions stress the importance of reintegrating the individual experiencing

homelessness into their community of origin or reunifying them with their families. Reunification and reintegration are often considered the markers of successfully exiting homelessness.

The Norms and Standards for Shelters for Homeless Adults (2015:6) operationalises reintegration within the following definition: *"The reintegration of family members with their families or community after being detached from the family or community and the process of empowering and supporting the client and family, the extended family or community to be reintegrated with their family or community over time. Reintegration in this context refers to persons over the age of 18 years."*

Reunification is defined as, *"The reunification of family members with their families after being detached from the family and the process of empowering and supporting the client and family, the extended family to be reunited with their family over time. Reunification in this context refers to persons over the age of 18 years."* (Norms and Standards for Shelters for Homeless Adults, 2015:6).

While reintegration may be an important step in exiting homelessness, not every individual looks forward to going back.

> *"Going back into the society, it's a real struggle because you have all these tools and you have all these changes and now you have to apply them. And you come to realise everything around you hasn't changed, it's just you that has changed…"* – Cindy Barnard, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

A woman in her 50s remarked:

> *"I haven't been home since the age of 15, so I don't have a home to go to… There is no home for me to go to, because I left… That's a lot of people out there as well; bonds have been broken, people have moved on…"* – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Perhaps if more collaborative consultations took place between the NGOs and individuals accessing their services, they would be able to fine-tune their interventions to suit the needs of clients more effectively. Interventions are at times riddled with assumptions. One of these is that all individuals experiencing homelessness want to be reunited with their family or reintegrated into their community of origin. There were some individuals who shared that the reason they became homeless in the first place was because of challenges within the family unit (discussed in detail in Chapter 7) or in the community (discussed in Chapter 5).

> *"They don't actually want to reintegrate us into society; they actually just want to push the people back into poverty – back to Lavender Hill where they were pushed to in the first place out of the white areas. Back to the abuse and violence. A lot of the people who are homeless migrate to the streets of wealthy areas to survive because they were not surviving on the Flats…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"That's all I'm asking for – dignity... stop making us feel that we are the reason for you not [wanting] to help us. Stop making us feel that for me, as a single parent, with such a bad record, going to housings department and saying, I don't have an address, but I have a shack, can you help me? I will do whatever you want me to do – screen me, verify me – I just need a home. For me and*

my child. I haven't had an income; you're questioning me for why I haven't had an income. I don't have an income because I've been in a relationship of gender-based violence for so many years." – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

SELF-REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Related to the concept of success is the practice of reflection among sector organisations. Some organisations are self-reflective and acknowledged that they do not have the answers and continue to adapt their interventions. However, without a clear understanding of the complexities of homelessness, a problem statement, a theory of change, aims and objectives, processes, outcomes and impact indicators, and frameworks according to which the intervention is evaluated – even in an elementary form – how will one know whether changes are speaking to the desired outcomes?

A number of organisations have adapted their interventions over the years, demonstrating emerging practices of reflection, learning and reorganising. New Hope SA is an organisation that has changed its interventions over the past few years. In the past, they acted as a bridge between homeless individuals and a variety of disconnected services. In recent years, they have focused their efforts on building a microsite or small community, integrated with its surroundings in Muizenberg. The Hope Exchange is undergoing a strategic review and adapting its offering, focus, and approach. It is unclear whether their clients have been a part of this review and re-design.

In some organisations, reflective practice may be lacking, or, importantly, these reflective practices may exclude the very individuals for whom changes are made. One representative of an organisation shared a realisation that came to them as a result of the Inkathalo process – that they do not have a structured mechanism for receiving feedback from the individuals they serve (their clients), making it difficult to incorporate their recommendations when making programme changes. This was reflected in the experience of a homeless individual:

> *"My experience with the particular NGO… wasn't serving me the way I felt it should… I felt that I didn't have much input… from my side. This how they did things, this is what I need to go through, this is what I'm going to learn, this is how the classes will be run…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Moments that ignited realisations occurred when invited stakeholders were asked to lean into an alternative imagining of how interventions could look and feel. During the conversations, there were many moments in which one could sense an eagerness for change and a latent energy that could fuel shifts within the intervention ecosystem. Perhaps when one leans courageously into the question, 'what is trying to happen right now?' alternative interventions can be birthed. Furthermore, it is anticipated that new realities could be created by pressing into the question, 'what does hope look like?' This is discussed in the piece to follow.

3.4. WHAT DOES HOPE LOOK LIKE?

Neocleous (2013) had a point when he asserted that "*while there are no alternatives, we remain in a colonised imagination*". On a global scale, the COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to a concept often referred to as a 'new normal' – the notion of recreating the way we are and operate in the world, of seeking out alternatives in a state where the norm has been disrupted. Yet, for those desperately trying to survive in a diminishing resource landscape, the opportunity to reconceive a way of being in the world is typically not truly afforded. During The Inkathalo Conversations, it became apparent that the individuals residing and working within the Cape Town homeless community continued to operate in a reactive state, perhaps even more so than before COVID-19, making it particularly difficult to develop strategic pathways.

This begs the question, in relation to the interventions being offered to this community: What does hope look like?

Asking the Question

Ironically, the simplest starting point may well be this very question, with thoughtful consideration to who should be asking this question and who should be answering it:

- An obvious approach may be to pose this question inwardly, but there is an invitation to progress beyond this towards the stakeholders, organisations and even funders offering the interventions.

- The emergent opportunity is to ask those who experience homelessness what hope looks like for them. With a genuine need to understand the complex dynamics surrounding the state of being homeless at any given time, this exercise may yield the most innovative responses to intervention design yet. Throughout The Inkathalo Conversations, those experiencing homelessness raised the need to be consulted, to be asked for feedback, and to be co-creators of the interventions designed for them. Asking this incisive question opens the door for a generative conversation about what is working and what is not working so well. A two-way discussion between the organisation and the individual experiencing homelessness deepens the understanding as well as the human relationship.

- When the individual experiencing homelessness *is able to ask the stakeholder* or organisation offering the intervention, 'what does hope look like?' it can transform the environment into one of mutual beneficiation, one in which the individual is able to operate from their own agency, their own knowing, wisdom, and insight about what life is like on the streets, as well as how they might contribute their capabilities towards the intervention. It dispels the notion that only the organisation – usually sitting with more rank and privilege, should ask that question. This raises the recognition with agencies that their clients have something to offer into the co-creation process, as well as the services being offered, leading to a sense of true partnership between the organisation and the client.

Opening an honest, transparent and enabling conversation between organisation and client targets the many areas highlighted as challenges and gaps during The Inkathalo Conversations. These include but are not limited to:

- Funding and sustainability challenges;
- Outdated models and approaches;
- An organisational environment that is often not conducive for the individual experiencing homelessness;
- The inability to connect the expertise of the stakeholder to the experience of the individual experiencing homelessness;
- The lack of cultural competence in many respects;
- Unclear or ineffective means of evaluating the success of interventions; and
- The lack of self-reflective practices within the space.

A New Way of Engaging

Through improved engagements among organisations, this sector could see a great increase in innovative approaches and opportunities to collaborate with one another around ways to increase prevention and awareness interventions as well as sharpen advocacy efforts. Sector-based participants expressed their appreciation for The Inkathalo Conversations as a platform for learning and connection between a variety of organisations who typically operate in silos or in smaller groupings of two or three organisations collaborating regularly.

The Inkathalo Conversations also showed us that opportunities for those outside the formal bounds of the sector to engage with the homelessness sector provide a doorway through which the 'rest of society' or other sectors can gain a deeper understanding and develop a conviction to help drive transformation – no matter how small. Importantly, there is immense opportunity to innovate at points of intersection between homelessness and various sectors, such as transport, small business, economic opportunity, recycling, substance use, family support interventions, anti-gangsterism efforts, and many more.

A dialogical public participation process allowed those involved to apply self-reflexive practice to their own lives, their ways of thinking, being, and doing. It created a sense of equity amongst those involved – a space where we could all listen with our minds and hearts. On a very practical level, these dialogical approaches on a micro- and macro-level would allow for changes within organisations. At a micro-level, for example, organisational changes may involve the codes of conduct of shelter staff members as well as residents within shelters; organisations may reconsider the big push to reunite individuals with their families when in many cases family trauma was a reason they ended up on the streets. At a macro-level, robust discussions could help highlight the gaps in policy as well as actions to mitigate them.

Integration, Cross-collaboration, and Co-Learning

During The Inkathalo Conversations, it became very clear that there is no shortage of expertise and experience to strengthen interventions. However, a collaborative knowledge management framework should be established collectively by the sector and managed perhaps by a steering group. An accessible repository where explicit and tacit knowledge – intervention best practices, research, advocacy ideas or history, tools, methods, ways of being in the field, and so much more – could be stored, which would serve the sector well. To this effect and using the Friends of Durbanville network as a case study, one participant's presentation began to explore centralised models. It considered an integrative platform to connect and

harness relevant community driven organisations, NGOs, responsible state entities, businesses, and communities in order to address the social, environmental and recreational needs of those experiencing homelessness.

Figure 28: Presentation by Francois Bruwer (participant). Proposing a Central Support Forum for Street Based Persons (SBP)
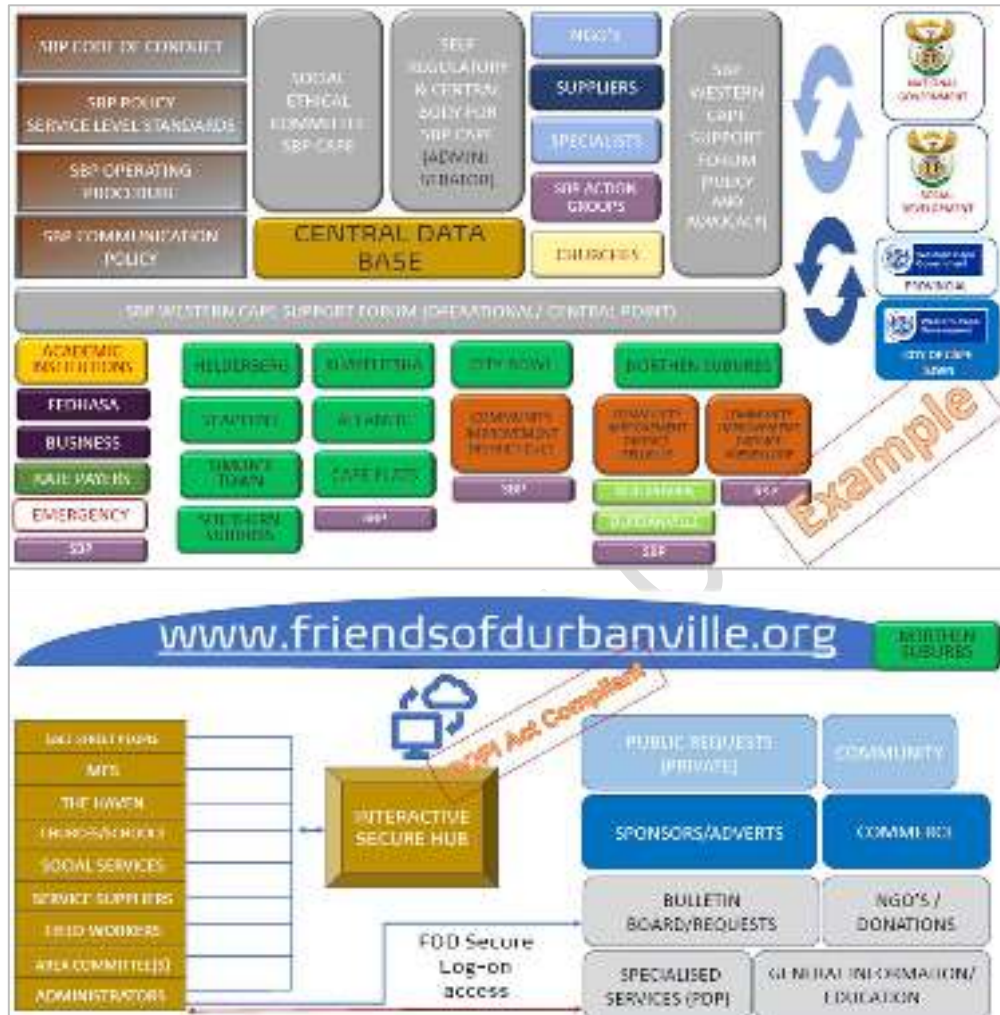
3.5. READER'S REFLECTIONS

Reflection is an important practice in system transformation. The reader is encouraged to consider the following reflection points from a personal, organisational, community and systemic perspective:

- How can we approach interventions in a more collaborative way? Co-creating programmes and services with individuals experiencing homelessness would be of great value as the organisations take into consideration the realities and challenges that their beneficiaries may be experiencing with their existing interventions.
- Do we take enough time to pause and reflect on the way in which the interventions are conceptualised, designed, and implemented?
- How do we consider success? Are we including the inputs of those receiving services from organisations within this sector?
- What might be generated by sector organisations asking their clients 'what does hope look like?'
- What might be generated by sector organisations inviting their clients to ask them 'what does hope look like?'

CHAPTER 4: CRIMINALISATION OF HOMELESSNESS AND INSTITUTIONALISED VIOLENCE

Contents

4.1. INTRODUCTION

> *"[The by-laws] are creating more criminals from people who are really normal citizens that just need intervention."* – Ashley Potts, Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre

South Africa's history is steeped in institutionalised violence that requires strategic efforts to be dismantled in all spheres of society. Many of the current by-laws are still entrenched in the 'vagrancy' legislation of the colonial era that made provision for the arrest of homeless children and adults, those who beg, street vendors, and sex workers (Grobler, 2018). Killander (2019:70) asserts that South African municipal by-laws are *"full of provisions criminalising the poor,"* which he believes is not the solution. Many of those who participated in The Inkathalo Conversations shared this view.

Officials enforce many of the by-laws as a response to public complaints by those who are privileged, while homeless individuals tend to experience a lack of access to the law and pathways to justice. Petty offences contained in by-laws include issues related to *"...nuisance, noise, street trading, and littering... bathing or washing in public; urinating or defecating in public; using abusive or threatening language in public; drunken behaviour, fighting or acting in a riotous manner in public; and drying or spreading laundry in a public space or on a fence on the boundary of a public road"* (Grobler, 2018:17).

The Principles of the Decriminalisation of Petty Offences in Africa [42](2017:10) argues that the criminalisation of petty offences – such as those contained within the City's current municipal by-laws – contributes to *"discrimination and marginalisation by criminalising poverty, homelessness and unemployment, and impact the poorest and most marginalised persons in our communities."* Despite the adoption of the *Principles of the Decriminalisation of Petty Offences in Africa* (2017), in which South Africa is a State party, those experiencing homelessness are still being criminalised in and by the City of Cape Town.

An excerpt from The City of Cape Town's Resilience Strategy document outlines the following prospective strategy for holistic policing within the City.

Resilience Strategy (City of Cape Town)

GOAL 1.2: **Embrace a more holistic approach to policing and crime prevention to break the cycle of violence and decrease recidivism rates and trauma**

By partnering across neighbourhoods, CBOs [community-based organisations], and government departments there is an opportunity to increasingly divert the youth from crime and to strengthen our resilience in times of shock. We need to break the cycle of violence by preventing people from entering the criminal justice system in the first place. If we want to lower our rates of recidivism and of trauma, in general, then we need to take a more holistic approach to crime prevention.

Policing should not be seen as a stand-alone intervention but rather as a pivotal cog in a much larger wheel together with health and social services. Instead of taking a silo approach, police, health, and social services need to partner together around diversionary support for at-risk individuals, especially the youth. The police, law enforcement officials and the criminal justice system can play an important diversionary role as an early intervention mechanism – linking individuals in need to health and social support networks, such as mental

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[42] https://acjr.org.za/resource-centre/decriminalisation-of-petty-offences-web.pdf/view

health support or substance abuse rehabilitation, provided there are sufficient organisations and programmes to receive individuals in need of support. Cape Town has an active network of registered neighbourhood watches and other safety-related organisations which play a very important role in the fight against crime at the local level. These networks provide an opportunity to build resilience by creating formal connections in order to pool resources in times of shock and for responding to continuous stresses. Given the direct interactions that members of these grassroots organisations have with at-risk individuals, they are well positioned to be of assistance in diverting people to support services if networks are well established and if adequate training is in place. Key to disrupting intergenerational trauma is the way we protect and develop our children, especially those in vulnerable communities. Our children must be able to access education without becoming victims of crime or being targets for recruitment into criminal activity.

DESIRED OUTCOME: Increased safety in communities through a holistic approach to law enforcement which includes social as well as enforcement interventions and which produce multiple resilience dividends including decreased trauma.

DESCRIPTION: Reducing crime means tackling a number of social and trauma-related issues which often result in crime and violence. Early intervention is key to these approaches. The Neighbourhood Safety Team (NST) model takes a broad-based neighbourhood safety approach which can be deployed in areas of Cape Town living with high degrees of social disruption, violence and urban decay. It combines existing programmes into an integrated intervention that is sustained for at least three years. It is supported by various other social development programmes such as the "Women for Change" and "Strengthening Families" programmes; an integrated task team in each police sector called a Focus Table; as well as social workers deployed by the WCG Department of Social Development. The NSTs provide a constant presence on the ground with enforcement officers operating on rolling shifts. Enforcement officers are able to build relationships and knowledge of the dynamics at the neighbourhood level which can inform their approach to a variety of shocks and stresses.

This acknowledges the violent culture that exists in parts of the City as well as the impact of intergenerational trauma on both community and policing behaviour. This strategy promotes people-centred policing, caring interventions, localised and relational safety efforts, akin to 'trauma-informed' approaches proposed by participants during The Inkathalo Conversations.

With a goal towards prevention as opposed to reaction, the Resilience Strategy's approach is in contrast to many of the interventions and experiences described by those who are homeless, as captured in this chapter. This presents us yet again with an invitation to explore the dissonance between our reality and the society we long for, to truly hear one another, and to reimagine ways in which to deepen human connection, for the wellbeing and safety of all who live in the City.

Clarification: In this chapter, references to "Law Enforcement" are about an agency of the CoCT; while "law enforcement" speaks to the act of enforcing the law, which is a function of the agency, Law Enforcement, as well as other agencies mandated as such.

4.2. THE RULE OF LAW: AGENCIES AND THEIR ROLES

Throughout The Inkathalo Conversations, homeless individuals and others shared horrific accounts of the treatment of those experiencing homelessness by various law enforcement and security agencies.

> *"Name it as a patriarchal violence… I think that is really important in this conversation… we are talking about patriarchal violence that's manifested through state security and enacted on, in this case, homeless people. But the City's policy right now is being implemented and funded… and… money is given to…what we consider as actors who are entrenched with patriarchal violence. I think that we need to address that.*
>
> *We have to recognize that there are those within the City who have created, framed and continue… to perpetuate that control of violence and the trauma… on the people in this room who shared it, but also so many other people… It's intergenerational, but as we can see, it's continuously complex until we actually name it and name those structures that are continuing to perpetuate it, and that they have no place in responding to issues of homelessness because of what they manifest."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

This section seeks to clarify the various agencies and their roles, in order to give context to some of the experiences described hereafter.

> *"A lot of the…public members don't understand the difference between the different uniforms and what their… responsibilities are, so the confusion does come through… who's doing what and when. And there's also security companies out there that look very similar to Law Enforcement, and they carry out these… duties. So, we've gotta identify who's doing what and when, and then we can address the way they behave."* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

In response to a question posed about the behaviour of Law Enforcement officers, and in particular the practice of early morning raids and the confiscation of possessions reported by homeless individuals, the conversations brought to light the disconnect and inconsistency within Law Enforcement and between various law enforcement agencies.

> *"I can't speak for what other Law Enforcement officers are doing, or other enforcement agencies are doing – so I need to know which law enforcement agencies – is it Police… is it Traffic, is it Law Enforcement, or is it Metro Police that are doing these type of raids. I need to know who's doing what and when."* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

Multiple agencies play a role in keeping the city safe. According to Principle Inspector Wayne Aldridge, "*Cape Town is the only one with so many different entities in uniform*". During The Inkathalo Conversations there appeared to be confusion around the legal mandates and powers of different agencies in enforcing national laws and local by-laws, and upholding the Constitution. The various agencies mentioned throughout the dialogues are described briefly. Information regarding their mandates was taken from available information on their websites or direct quotes during The Inkathalo Conversations.

The Bellville JOC hosted a 'Safety and Security' focus group with multiple law enforcement agencies in order to gain clarity on their mandates and to determine synergistic ways to work together. Their diagram provides a useful overview of the major law enforcement entities and their respective roles:

Figure 29: Focus Group Example from the Bellville JOC, as presented by Ilse Maartens
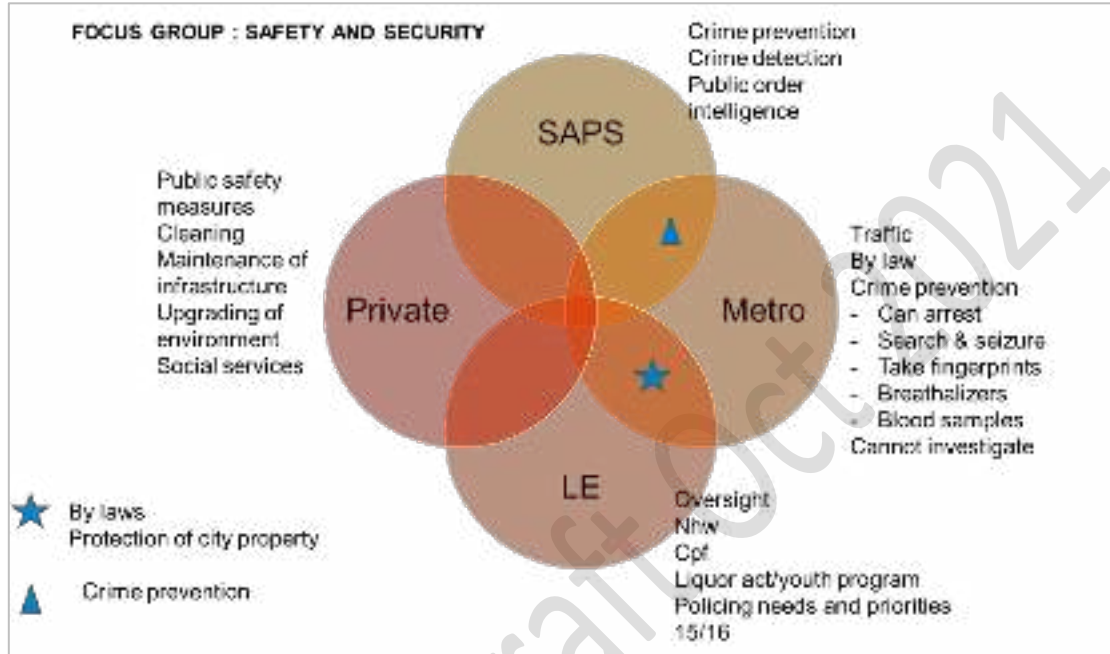
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

> "The police [SAPS] … they're the leading agencies and they can work… across the country. They can investigate a crime; they can do from investigating crime to by-laws. But I don't want to waste a policeman's time by making them do by-laws, they've got other work to do." – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

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Constitutional Framework, SAPS[43]

The South African Police Service is governed by Chapter 11 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) that stipulates the South African Police Service has a responsibility to –

- o prevent, combat and investigate crime;
- o maintain public order;
- o protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property;
- o uphold and enforce the law;
- o create a safe and secure environment for all people in South Africa;
- o prevent anything that may threaten the safety or security of any community;
- o investigate any crimes that threaten the safety or security of any community;
- o ensure criminals are brought to justice; and participation in efforts to address the causes of crime.

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[43] : https://www.saps.gov.za/about/about.php

METRO POLICE

"…The Metro Police - they are employed under the Police Act. The only difference between a policeman and a Metro Police officer is a Metro Police officer works within [the] *jurisdiction of* [the] *City of Cape Town and they cannot investigate a crime."* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

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Metropolitan Police Services Department: What We Do[44]

'We are responsible for crime prevention, by-law and traffic enforcement. In terms of crime prevention, we target and patrol areas based on identified threat analysis and patterns.
They also may:
- Conduct regular stops and searches of suspected clients and dealers…
- Focus on detecting petty offences including by-law offences and minor crimes…
- Assist in curbing general anti-social behaviour, e.g. urinating in public, drinking in public, use of abusive language, etc….'

LAW ENFORCEMENT

"Then you have Law Enforcement, where I fit in. And we are the custodians of the City of Cape Town's by-laws. And within Law Enforcement we have specialised units; I think there's eight at the moment, DPU [Displaced Peoples Unit] *being part of them. And those specialised units concentrate on only one by-law and in my case, I concentrate on the Streets and Public Places by-law. Where the copper theft unit* [referring to the Metal Theft Unit]*, they deal with the copper theft. Then you get the Informal Trading Unit that deals with only informal trading."* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

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Law Enforcement, Traffic and Coordination Department: Law Enforcement[45]
We are responsible for enforcing the City's by-laws and traffic laws, clamping down on offences such as general nuisances, alcohol offences, speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol, illegal parking, reckless driving, problem buildings and illegal informal trading. Our trained Peace Officers have the power to confiscate, arrest, issue compliance notices and fines, and shut down illegal operations where by-laws are infringed upon.
We:
- increase voluntary compliance of road users in respect of road rules;
- provide quality services (law enforcement, logistics and administration, education and licensing);
- reduce traffic offence rates and accident rates.

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[44] http://www.capetown.gov.za/Departments/Metropolitan%20Police%20Services%20Department
[45] http://www.capetown.gov.za/Departments/Law%20Enforcement,%20Traffic%20and%20Coordination%20Department

Law Enforcement consists of:

- Animal impoundment;

- Anti-land invasion;

- Displaced people;

- Facility protection;

- Graffiti enforcement;

- Informal trading;

- Liquor enforcement and compliance;

- Metal theft;

- Neighbourhood safety;

- Problem buildings;

- Rail enforcement;

- Rapid response;

- School resource officers.

Displaced Peoples Unit (DPU)

"The policy what we are guided by is the Street People Policy, of the City of Cape Town and the Streets and Public Places by-law, those are the two policies that we're guided [by] *and it dictates how we engage with the street people. We are a specialised unit within Law Enforcement, we're law enforcement officers and we can deal with all aspects of the by-law across the city. But the Displaced Peoples* [unit] *is dedicated to only dealing with street people across the city. From an enforcement side and from a basic social intervention side. Very, very basic."* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

While there is no description of the Displaced Persons Unit mandate on the City of Cape Town's website, an excerpt from an article published by the City of Cape Town expands on its mandate:

City mulls expansion of Displaced Persons Unit (City of Cape Town, 2018)[46]

The DPU works closely with the City's Social Development and Early Childhood Development Department to respond to complaints and concerns about street people. While the Social Development Department's Reintegration Unit works to offer short- to long-term alternatives to get persons off the street, the DPU's mandate is to enforce the provisions of the By-law relating to Streets, Public Places and Prevention of Noise Nuisances. Section two of the by-law deals with prohibited behaviours like urination in public, erecting structures, making fires etc. – offences that are often committed by people living on the street.

Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge clarified that *"although the Displaced Peoples Unit is a dedicated unit that deals strictly with street people, the whole of Law Enforcement have the authority to do so… if operations are being carried out by other officers at 3 o'clock in the morning… I'm not aware about that… if those types of operations are taking place and the street people's rights are being abused, all you have to do is take down the registration numbers of those vehicles… I need to know who's doing these raids, not raids, operations, and when they're getting conducted… and what is being taken, because we do not take personal belongings…"*

> *"We are trying to… expand* [the DPU] *so it can be better controlled, because there are a lot of other officers that are… pressurised to go do these operations because of the complaints they're getting, and some of them are not following the protocols that we put in place."* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

TRAFFIC SERVICES

> *"The Traffic does the… National Road Traffic Act."* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

Law Enforcement, Traffic and Coordination Department: Traffic Services[47]

The City has a legislative mandate to provide a traffic service, in terms of Section 156 and Schedules 4 and 5 of The Constitution of South Africa. Our aim is to provide safe road usage in the city and we are committed to improving road safety by providing effective driving licence services and traffic enforcement.

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[46] http://www.capetown.gov.za/Media-and-news/City%20mulls%20expansion%20of%20Displaced%20Persons%20Unit
[47] http://www.capetown.gov.za/Departments/Law%20Enforcement,%20Traffic%20and%20Coordination%20Department

We:

- ensure roadworthy compliance of all motor vehicles;
- increase voluntary compliance of road users in respect of road rules;
- provide an effective customer orientated driving licence service;
- provide quality services (law enforcement, logistics and administration, education and licensing);
- reduce traffic offence rates, crash rates and fatalities.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCHES

Communities may choose to monitor the safety of their neighbourhoods through formation of a Neighbourhood Watch.

Neighbourhood Watch, (City of Cape Town)[48]

Concerned residents get together to form a civilian-based security service to reduce crime in their communities. Any resident of a community can join or form a neighbourhood watch, even those who do not own a home or live in the area. A good neighbourhood watch works very closely with our local law enforcement agencies – Metropolitan Police Services, South African Police Service (SAPS) and Special Ratings Areas (SRAs) – and helps to keep our city safe.

Neighbourhood watches assist our law enforcement teams by:

- alerting police to suspicious activity;
- identifying stolen property;
- doing home security surveys;
- implementing local security precautions;
- helping the community feel safer; and
- building a sense of responsibility in the community.

The Western Cape Government Department of Community Safety provides a Neighbourhood Watch Accreditation and Support Programme, aimed at regulating and supporting the functions of accredited Neighbourhood Watch structures.

CITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CID)

> *"A CID is established… in my area, by every single commercial property owner in a CID area. So, I have… just over a thousand commercial property owners that pay the CID every month. They established it, not the City of Cape Town; the City of Cape Town has got nothing to do with the*

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[48] https://www.capetown.gov.za/Local%20and%20communities/Community-health-and-safety/Community-policing/Neighbourhood-watch

establishment of the City Improvement District." – Derek Bock, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

CIDs and their mandate are introduced and explained in Chapter 2 – they are Special Ratings Areas established as non-profit organisations operating within a defined area. CIDs comprise four operational departments, namely Public Safety, Urban Management, Social Development, and Communications.

In terms of enhancing the safety and security of the areas in which they operate, CIDs may subcontract private security firms within the framework of the Private Security Operating in Public Space Policy (Policy Number 60042[49]). The City has an oversight responsibility in respect of CIDs (in terms of Section 11(3) of its Special Rating Area By-Law, 2012[50]), which extends to private security service providers deployed by CIDs in public spaces. In this regard, the City "*could face direct liability for negligent breach of a legal duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that a CID itself takes reasonable steps to prevent employees of a private security service provider appointed by a CID from causing harm to members of the public,*" as per a legal opinion obtained by the City of Cape Town and referred to above. This suggests that the City must fulfil its role in protecting members of the public, such as homeless individuals, in the event that employees or service providers of CIDs are found to be abusive toward them.

SECURITY COMPANIES

In addition, private or contracted security firms were mentioned during The Inkathalo Conversations as entities that also engage with homeless individuals. Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations did not explore these entities and their mandates in detail. The following entities were specifically mentioned during the conversations:

- SANParks Security – No clarity could be found on the SANParks website about the role and extent of its security activities. However, homeless individuals who have lived on the mountains described encounters with uniformed officers or rangers, who sought to remove them from the mountains when they sought refuge there.
- PRASA Security – No clarity could be found on the PRASA website about the role and extent of its security activities. However, homeless individuals described encounters with 'PRASA security guards' as a distinct group of officers, often encountered in respect of their informal trading or 'skarreling' activities.
- PPA Security – During Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations, PPA was specifically mentioned by homeless individuals based on their encounters with security personnel. PPA is a private security company providing planning, back office support and execution of private security details.

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[49] Policy Number 60042:
https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Bylaws%20and%20policies/Private_Security_Operating_in_Public_Space_Policy.pdf
[50] Special Rating Area By-Law, 2012: https://openbylaws.org.za/za-cpt/act/by-law/2012/special-rating-area/eng/

In 2018, the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) reportedly suspended PPA security officers on allegations related to security incidence on Cape Town's Clifton Fourth Beach in December 2018 (IOL, 2019[51]). It is to be noted that the City of Cape Town has not given any private company the authority to enforce its by-laws.

4.3. NOT A CRIME

CRIMINALISATION BY LEGISLATION

It is important to note that no legislation in South Africa contains any suggestion that being homeless is illegal or a criminal offence in South Africa. The City, in its document *The City's Street People Response: Frequently Asked Questions* (CoCT, 2020), confirms that being homeless is not a crime.

> *"It is not illegal to be homeless, meaning the City cannot force anyone off the street or force them to accept social assistance. What the City does do, is enforce its by-laws."* – The City's Street People Response: Frequently Asked Questions, 2020

However, the application and enforcement of the City by-laws impact on the lives of the homeless:

> *"Our by-laws prohibit the erection of tents or structures in public, the making of fires in areas not designated for the purpose, and the blocking of pavements where it interferes with the safe passage of pedestrians. Other by-law provisions address activities and conduct in public places."* – The City's Street People Response: Frequently Asked Questions, 2020

In the City, homeless individuals are often charged in contravention of the following by-laws:

- By-law Relating to Streets, Public places and the Prevention of Noise Nuisances, 2007[52]

- Integrated Waste Management By-law, 2009[53]

The City describes its process and the constraints it experiences when implementing these by-laws:

> **The City's Street People Response: Frequently Asked Questions, 2020**
>
> - The by-laws do not allow for arrest – at least not immediately.
>
> - Enforcement staff will issue a compliance notice first, and in the event of non-compliance, they will issue a notice (fine). This notice is an admission-of-guilt fine, which is paid to admit guilt and avoid an appearance in court.
>
> - Where the fine is not paid, a summons is issued to appear in court. Failure to appear in court results in a warrant of arrest being issued by the court, which is controlled by national

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[51] IOL, 2019: https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/ppa-security-officers-suspended-over-clifton-beach-incident-19120258

[52] BY-LAW RELATING TO STREETS, PUBLIC PLACES AND THE PREVENTION OF NOISE NUISANCES, 2007:
http://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Bylaws%20and%20policies/Streets%20Public%20Places%20and%20the%20Prevention%20of%20Noise%20Nuisances%20By-law.pdf

[53] INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT BY-LAW, 2009:
https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Bylaws%20and%20policies/Integrated%20Waste%20Management%20By-law%202009.pdf

> government. However, most magistrates are reluctant to issue warrants, and so very few of the fines issued for non-compliance with by-laws result in meaningful change.

As is clear from the above, the application of many of these by-laws to those living on the streets of the City is an ineffective tool because homeless people cannot abide by most of these by-laws, thus they in effect criminalise them. For example, the absence of ablution facilities results in urination and defecation in public, which result in the contravention of a by-law. The absence of shelter to mute conversations or disagreements, may result in excessive noise which in turn is a contravention of a by-law. The need to cook food by means of fire in a public space results in contravention of a by-law.

The City's Street People Response: Frequently Asked Questions, 2020

- Even where warrants of arrest are issued and executed, street people appearing before a court seldom face any consequences. These decisions are under the control of the National Prosecuting Authority and the courts, not the City.
- This is one of the reasons why street people keep returning to areas that have been cleared by the City. It is also important to note that street people congregate where there are handouts available or an opportunity to make money.

Offences and penalties associated with the violation of by-laws include fines and imprisonment for up to 6 months. The City outlines the following shared relationship between the City Law Enforcement services and the South African Police Service in this regard:

The City's Street People Response: Frequently Asked Questions, 2020

- SAPS and City enforcement services can and will arrest any person who engages in serious criminal offences, such as assault or robbery. However, with regard to by-law offences, the law only allows for fines to be issued.
- An arrest in relation to a by-law can only take place if a person refuses to supply his or her name and details to an officer attempting to issue a warning or fine. In this case, the arrest is made under the powers of the municipal peace officer in terms of the Criminal Procedures Act.
- An arrest may also follow if the admission of guilt fine is not paid and the person does not appear in court. In this instance, the court will issue a warrant of arrest for contempt of court, as required by national law.

In 2019, an academic research report, *Evaluating the Impacts of the Cape Town Street People Policy on Street People* (Dellacroce et al., 2019), examined the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* and the by-laws, which typically impact those experiencing homelessness; in respect to the by-laws, the study found that:

"There are two bylaws that are closely associated with the Street People Policy, and both are being challenged in the current court case, 'Gelderblom and six others v City of Cape Town'. The Bylaw Relating to Streets, Public Spaces, and the Prevention of Noise Nuisances of 2007 is stipulated in the [Street People Policy] *... The other bylaw in contention, the City of Cape Town Integrated Waste Management Bylaw of 2009, is not annotated anywhere in the policy* [referring to the Street People Policy]*… Section 7.1.4… is a directive which gives certain by-laws power to enforce legal steps for violators of certain public behaviours, which are inherently common to street people. Section 7.1.4 states 'Should the street person be identified due to anti-social behaviour or a violation of the law or by-laws or engaging in criminal behaviour, proceedings may be lodged against that person by the City law enforcement agencies or South African Police Services.' "* – Dellacroce et al., 2019

The charges against homeless individuals in respect of these by-laws may relate to "...*nuisance, noise, street trading, and littering...bathing or washing in public; urinating or defecating in public; using abusive or threatening language in public; drunken behaviour, fighting or acting in a riotous manner in public; and drying or spreading laundry in a public space or on a fence on the boundary of a public road"* (Grobler, 2018:17). It must be noted that within the confines of a privately owned property, these actions are not considered crimes. In charging homeless individuals with these offences, they are effectively being criminalised in respect of these by-laws, without regard for the limitation of their current circumstances, such as lack of access to water, lack of access to shelter, lack of access to ablution facilities, lack of access to cooking facilities and other related issues that are necessary for their compliance with the by-laws and that are common to the living conditions of the housed.

"New by-laws are created to further perpetuate the marginalisation of the poor." – Ashley Potts, Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre

"The city has categorised street peoples' cardboard shelters as waste, therefore when street people temporarily move away from these shelters, the city is authorized to dispose of them." – Dellacroce et al., 2019

"Section two of the [Streets, Public Places and Prevention of Noise Nuisances] *by-law deals with prohibited behaviours like urination in public, erecting structures, making fires etc. – offences that are often committed by people living on the street."* – The City of Cape Town, 2018[54]

Applying a humanistic lens, and paying attention to the language used, the everyday experiences of homeless individuals are characterised through these by-laws as 'nuisances' and 'waste', and as many participants recounted, they are treated as such through the methods of enforcement.

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[54] The City of Cape Town, 2018: http://www.capetown.gov.za/Media-and-news/City%20mulls%20expansion%20of%20Displaced%20Persons%20Unit

"The by-laws are further criminalising the people – we need to challenge the by-laws as they are creating more criminals when they are ordinary citizens who need intervention or support." – Jon Hopkins, U-Turn

"Privilege is entrenched – and it's entrenched in current by-laws. Inequality [is] *entrenched in the by-laws."* – Ian Veary, Social Worker

Some accounts suggest that the eagerness of the City to apply its by-laws demonstrates a disregard for the law, encroaching on the very rights they seek to protect, of those who choose to assist those experiencing homelessness.

"People were actually in the doorways of shops and just in front of the shops which actually wasn't public, wasn't city, wasn't the pavement, and so actually… the by-law was applied to… private property. And then when the shop owners arrived they were actually shocked, because they said, 'the people who sleep here, we actually have… an agreement – people sleep here every night, they leave at 7, they clean up, they actually form a security team for us; our shops are never broken into and so on…" – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

While these are the guidelines within which the laws of the City are exercised, and form part of the ethos of *"a Caring City"* for all, the experiences of how these laws are enacted reveals a disconnect between the *"Caring City"* and the practices of some of its officers.

"Homelessness is a complicated issue and, as an administration, we are in a catch-22 situation. If we enforce the City's by-laws too rigidly, we appear uncaring. If we turn a blind eye, we are accused of inaction by the residents and businesses whose lives are impacted on a daily basis by the actions of small pockets of individuals." – The City of Cape Town, 2018[55]

As is explained in Chapter 2, there appears to be a difference between rhetoric and reality, and specifically between certain City policies or processes, such as those presented by City representatives during the conversations, and practices.

"Law enforcement is never the first step for the City when it addresses or tries to work with the needs of homeless people. Always, no matter if you're calling a ward councillor… [mentions different avenues]*… all of those go through a call centre…"* – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

"There is a team of 47 field workers [in the Social Development Department]*… While interviewing street people, we asked what their experiences have been with law enforcement, social services field workers, and peace officers on the street. We found that the above protocol is not always followed. Several people received no warning before having their belongings confiscated or being*

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[55] The City of Cape Town, 2018: http://www.capetown.gov.za/Media-and-news/City%20mulls%20expansion%20of%20Displaced%20Persons%20Unit

issued a fine, and many were only contacted by law enforcement… Ten of the thirteen people we interviewed have no experience with a social services field worker or peace officer, despite witnessing or being involved with law enforcement in some way." – Dellacroce et al., 2019

It is evident in various parts of this report that responses by the Law Enforcement arm of the City are unconstitutional and that by-laws are often not interpreted correctly or humanely. This affects the way in which the City effectively addresses homelessness. Further to this, it displays an absence of the ethos of care and inclusivity that the City wishes to project as one of its strategic objectives (IDP, 2017[56]). The experiences and accounts captured in this chapter of the report strongly suggest that the City opts to police homelessness, instead of addressing it more holistically. Policing homelessness as a strategy has proven to be significantly more costly than meaningful change interactions. According to an American study, *State of Homelessness* report in 2016, and a separate Finland Ministry report, studies have shown that it is possible to reduce the cost of managing homelessness. **Up to 40% cost reduction is achieved when taking a social approach to homelessness compared to policing and criminalising homelessness.** Later in this chapter, a piece called *What Does Hope Look Like?,* and the recommendations set out in this report, discuss the possibilities and opportunities to reimagine the City's approach to homelessness.

CRIMINAL PROFILING

"Especially with homelessness, this use of a military approach to a social problem, because homelessness is a social problem… you cannot criminalise… homelessness. And what is happening is the City is criminalising homelessness." – Akhona Siswana, Development Action Group (DAG)

Law enforcement officials have the difficult task of upholding the safety and security of all members of society. In a country where crime rates remain high, it is understandable that communities place large amounts of pressure on law enforcement agencies to prevent crime and identify perpetrators of the law. Despite homelessness not being a crime in itself, stakeholders expressed their concern that safety and security agencies, particularly Law Enforcement, are prejudiced against homeless individuals and exercise social profiling. As described in detail in Chapter 1, there exist biased assumptions that all homeless individuals are a threat to society, criminals, or substance users, which threaten the basic human rights of those experiencing homelessness, as entrenched in the Constitution.

"I have seen profiling of street children by law enforcement agencies, I think in the early 2010s… I remember how they used to bundle up kids, take them on camps, under the guise of doing a nice thing, but actually going to profile them – illegally, unconstitutionally." – Ashley Potts, Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre

Sections 10 and 14 of the Constitution affirm the right to human dignity and the right to privacy, which prohibits the search of property without a warrant, the seizure of possessions, and infringement of

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[56] IDP, 2017:
http://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/City%20strategies%2c%20plans%20and%20frameworks/IDP%202017-2022%20Executive%20Summary.pdf

communications. The Western Cape Government clarifies the conditions under which personal property may be searched:

> *"A police official may search you or your property without a search warrant for the purposes of seizing an item connected to a crime, if the police official on reasonable grounds believes that a search warrant would be issued if it was applied for, but that the delay in obtaining the search warrant would defeat the purpose of the search."* – Law Enforcement and Your Rights, Western Cape Government, 2018[57]

The dialogues revealed that homeless individuals' rights to human dignity and privacy are compromised, as individuals reported illegal searches carried out without warrants and on the basis of stereotyping. Many homeless individuals are assumed to be substance users and are searched on these grounds. In addition, the **Special Feature** on the **Economy of 'Skarreling'** brings to light that possessions of homeless individuals are often assumed to be stolen goods, with searches of their possessions conducted on this basis. Should a homeless individual be victim to an unlawful search, they are both financially and systemically in a weaker position to defend their rights, which is discussed in the section to follow.

It would appear that double standards are applied to the implementation of policies by law enforcement agencies. Those who have the privilege of residing in a home can afford to participate in the use of alcohol and other drugs at a lower risk of being arrested for illegal activities. The City of Cape Town's *Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy 2014 – 2017*[58], seeks to suppress drug use through 'stop and search' operations, public space patrolling, and call centre reporting. The housed are largely protected from illegal searches, as they can conduct the same illegal activities out of the view of law enforcement agencies. The *Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy* disproportionately impacts those who use substances or drink alcohol in the public domain, resulting in homeless individuals being arrested for drug and alcohol related crimes.

> *"We're gonna continue to see almost 74%, plus, of our prisons being filled with simple misdemeanours,* [like] *possession charges… The stats is going to be revealing, very shortly, how the charges for people being arrested is stupid actually…"* – Ashley Potts, Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre

While crime statistics can be used positively to monitor and evaluate the context and effectiveness of law enforcement interventions, they may be used to mislead communities by arresting substance users on minor drug possession charges, while ignoring the drug supply chain. Some participants suspected corruption in this regard, noting that customers are arrested while known dealers are not. Carlos Mesquita explained how Law Enforcement would intentionally target and arrest homeless individuals for petty drug crimes to boost their crime statistics. Often these individuals are repeatedly arrested as they are known to the police and make for easy arrests.

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[57] Law Enforcement and Your Rights, Western Cape Government, 2018: https://www.westerncape.gov.za/general-publication/law-enforcement-and-your-rights
[58]

https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/City%20strategies,%20plans%20and%20frameworks/Annexure%20H%20-t%20Alcohol%20and%20Other%20Drugs%20Strategy%202014_2017.pdf

"When we used to go to the Parow and Bellville community meeting, we'd have all the departments come in and when [mentions City Councillor] *came in to do his monthly report on the crime statistics, then they'd have how many arrests they've done etc. – very proud – not how many had actually landed up in jail…* [he] *said that the arrests are very important… In Sea Point, for example, they actually set targets as to how many people they have to arrest every month and when it comes to that time they go for the easy prey; the easy prey is going to stand where they know… dealers are out, for example, near the Golden Acre, there by the cash generator whatever it is. And watch, they don't go for the dealers, because they are getting something in their pockets, but they watch and they see, well, 'you've just bought so we are going to arrest you for a packet or whatever'… So that is the easiest thing because they know those people. After the first arrest, you do drugs, so they go for you."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

During The Inkathalo Conversations, it emerged that some Law Enforcement officers view homeless individuals as either users of drugs or involved in the sale of drugs. It is assumed that homeless individuals obtain their money through illegal activity. A homeless individual shared his experience of this whilst at Strandfontein.

"Diabetic, Stage 2, I got a tumour that is growing, I take it as my strong point. I take my medication, I had an issue with my medication, the Good Lord carried me. They tried to pin me down that I was selling drugs because where is my money coming from? I proved that my kids were helping me, and I had finances saved." – Kevin Pillay, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Whilst many groups of society are hesitant to engage with those experiencing homelessness, perceiving them as dangerous, those who do interact with homeless individuals may find themselves being profiled as criminals as a result. A member of the public conveyed his experience of distributing food to homeless individuals during the national lockdown due to COVID-19, when he and his car were searched for reportedly distributing drugs.

"Along came Law Enforcement… one of the first groups of…Law Enforcement folk that came to us said: 'I'm sorry, can you step out of the car,' …. At that stage I was serving the folk from the Mini [Cooper]… *Could I say that's my private space, so you can't actually say to me I can't give something out of my window from my private space?… He said, '…I'm really sorry to do this but I need to strip search you'… So I realised he's actually checking to see if I've got contraband or drugs, because you know, he's checking the seams of everything… He spent about 45 minutes searching the car, and when he finished he said: 'Sir, wow, I'm really sorry to have had to do this to you – you were reported for handing out drugs'…"* – Peter Wagenaar, Mouille Point Resident/Mini Meltdown

Peter Wagenaar's story highlights just one account of what is a frequent experience of individuals who find shelter in suburban streets. A lack of engagement, education, and empathy has led to stereotyping and suspicion among suburban communities. Neighbourhood watch groups are formed by residents to protect their communities from criminal activity and to keep its residents safe. However, both housed and unhoused participants reported that these groups show prejudice against homeless individuals, with many treating them as a threat to the safety of their neighbourhood.

"Neighbourhood watch, they're gatvol – homeless people should actually call the police against the way in which neighbourhood watches abuse them. They accuse the homeless of crimes that

perhaps they are not guilty of… you are criminalised for walking around – get seen as suspicious even if you're not doing anything criminal." – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

THE CRIMINAL ELEMENT

"The people that are stealing the trolleys are the criminal element. We were discussing just now about a criminal element infiltrating the homeless community – it happens all the time… They'll infiltrate, they'll steal the trolleys even from the homeless person if they've got one… So, that is the one aspect that we have to look at very carefully…" – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Homeless individuals are subjected to unfair treatment under the various by-laws and unjustly profiled as criminals. It is therefore crucial to emphasise that being homeless is not a crime, nor does it make you a criminal. However, during The Inkathalo Conversations it was raised that some homeless individuals do infringe on the law and engage in criminal behaviour. Several admitted to having been arrested for drug possession, while others expressed their regret at some of the actions their desperation has led them to.

One man shared his personal experience:

"When I ended up on the street, I did things that I didn't want to do, that I'm ashamed of… started robbing people, started doing all of these things, because I find that I'm alone in this situation, there's no one to talk with…" – A man experiencing homelessness.

Another participant alluded to the moral conflict one may face as a homeless individual, when wealth and desperation are juxtaposed:

"They leave… their six garage doors open, with everything under the sun there. Then I'll see Law Enforcement or CCID or whatever going past there, and I say to them: 'Sorry, could you please just phone these people and remind them…their garages are open… in an hour you're gonna get a call and say something's been stolen out of my garage.' And I ring the bell, I tell the person [their garage doors are open]*, and the person* [behaves] *arrogant* [towards] *me… It's unfair to put people into that* [situation]*. I mean, they're 'skarreling' in a bin, how can you leave this garage open like that…? Why would you do that if not maliciously?"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

4.4. EXPERIENCES OF THE LAW

"Around unleashing law enforcement agencies on the homeless – there's this culture of criminalising homelessness in South Africa, and this needs to be discouraged across local, provincial and national governments." – Saarah Salie, Wesgro/Western Cape War Room

"I know that what she's saying is exactly how they do train their… people that has to do with law enforcement at the CCID, but what happens at the office and what happens on the street are two very different things." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

This section speaks to the real-life experiences of members of the public, irrespective of what the policies, regulations and laws may state. As described in detail in Chapter 2, there is often a contradiction between 'rhetoric and reality', also referred to as the 'regulatory systems and normative operating relationships'. Regardless of the fact that agencies are separate and have clear mandates, those experiencing homelessness may encounter multiple law enforcement agencies on a regular basis. This creates a compounded traumatic experience for the individual, albeit at the hands of multiple and often disconnected entities. As confirmed by Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge in the previous section, these entities, and even departments within a single entity, can be unaware or ignorant of the actions of one another. For those engaged or accosted, navigating multiple agencies and their mandates makes the pursuit of justice all the more complex.

During The Inkathalo Conversations, it was clarified that when engaging with those experiencing homelessness, Law Enforcement should not be the first point of contact.

> *"Every Monday morning the Displaced Peoples Unit sit down and we discuss our week's plan and that week's plan needs to go to Nazlie du Toit, to Social Development* [referring to the Social Development Department]. *Law Enforcement is not the first port of call. We shouldn't be the first port of call –social development is. The first port of call should be Nazlie du Toit and her team, and Peter Cookson. We only come in when the guys are in violation of the by-law…* [Social Development]*'s supposed to go in first, do the social assessment – we only come in if the people* [are] *in violation of the by-laws; that's when we're supposed to step in…"* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

> *"Law enforcement is never the first line of contact when trying to assist a homeless person – it should be social development."* – Ian Veary, Social Worker

> *"Because we* [the DPU] *specialise with street people, we also give what we call a survey sheet and ask any street person* [to complete it] *that shows interest in social assistance. We fill a survey sheet out asking who they are, where they from, what type of social help would they like. And that information is handed over to Social Development…"* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

However, homeless individuals' experiences of the practical implementation of the law suggest otherwise. The alleged attitudes and behaviours displayed by safety and security bodies – such as Law Enforcement officials, CIDs, neighbourhood watch members, and private security companies – emerged time and again during The Inkathalo Conversations. A number of individuals identifying as homeless described how Law Enforcement officials would physically assault them and tear down their temporary living structures.

A common practice by these various law enforcement agencies seemed to be the confiscation of identity documents and personal belongings of homeless people. These practices are both illegal and against protocol. Some of the accounts detailed by homeless individuals indicated a gross violation of constitutional rights as well as the abuse of power. These experiences are described in the sections to follow. This criminalisation of the homeless in turn implicates the law holders, making them complicit in breaking the law, and renders them criminal agents.

"Law Enforcement are [doing] *illegal* [activities] *themselves, but they do what they do…"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"The mission was that we were gonna expose to what level the authorities were prepared to go … to be able to take someone out that was doing right in society." – Peter Wagenaar, Mouille Point Resident/Mini Meltdown

REMOVAL OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

"It is illegal [for Law Enforcement] *to remove your identification document. One of the outcomes of that is that you cannot vote in this country without an ID. So, basically, it's an act of stripping you from your citizenship. It is* [an] *illegal, unjust* [and] *constitutionally violent activity."* – Lorenzo Davids, Lead Facilitator: The Inkathalo Conversations

During The Inkathalo Conversations, participants spoke of the removal or confiscation of personal belongings by City's Law Enforcement officials. Most alarming was the frequency with which homeless individuals, supported by various stakeholders, cited having their identity documents removed by the City's Law Enforcement officials. This act is illegal, as was confirmed by numerous stakeholders, including Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge.

"I want CCID and Law Enforcement to improve... they are barbaric there in Cape Town… Law Enforcement, when they come through the places where we stay in Cape Town on the street, they take everything, even our IDs. Right now, Ramaphosa has taken out the R350 [referring to the social grant issued in response to COVID-19]*, we cannot get it. We go to Law Enforcement, there by the offices, to say: 'Gentlemen, please, take the clothing, it's better –* [don't] *take the ID and my* [birth] *certificate and…* [and] *throw it away…"* – Individual who has experienced homelessness during Focus Group

"I just [want] *to confirm that that is true – but the second thing that you can't do… is you can't get your grant. So they're denying you that, which is yours."* – Mr Cornelius

"We train our Public Safety Officers at the VR CID that they are not allowed to take IDs, clinic cards, money, cell phone[s]*, or medication… Often what happens is* [that] *there's an altercation, and they get angry with each other, and then, you know, the* [homeless] *person will say, 'just take my stuff'. So, the whole thing about treating* [each other] *with respect, I think is the root of this whole story."* – Wilma Piek, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

"We helped with families, but the City of Cape Town would come at night and take away people's ID documents after we had taken people to get their IDs." – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

"Whatever you issue, mattresses, blankets, food – whatever – they will come at night. Queues at the Home Affairs, we pay for people to go and get their ID documents, tomorrow Law Enforcement will take it away like that." – Mr Cornelius

Prinicpal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, head of the Displaced Peoples Unit, heard the concerns of various stakeholders regarding the removal of identity documents, to which his response was the following:

"In the past…before we changed our strategy in DPU… we were removing those IDs… but again that… happened about five, six years ago." – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

RAIDS AND THE REMOVAL OF PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

"When do we draw the line man?… I know that you have a job to do and I know somebody is calling you and hassling you, but the way that [they] *currently are doing it… they come, they take everything, you must leave the place… When they* [are] *done, there's more mess than what there was. It never used to be like that. Nowadays, it's like inhuman man, they take everything… They take all your stuff... how can you go take all my clothing… and I've got to march with one blanket at 3 o'clock at night?"* – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The word 'raid' was used by participants to describe cases when Law Enforcement agencies enter a site and go through personal belongings, often seizing items or clearing an area of structures or the possessions of homeless individuals located in public spaces. Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge made it clear that although raids are no longer carried out, the DPU does carry out "*integrated operations or interventions*" in line with strict protocols. These DPU operations follow a three-phased approach which involve issuance of a compliance notice or warning, followed by the issuance of a fine and a notice to appear in court, which is followed by "*clean ups.*"

"These clean ups consist of cleaning up the rubbish left by the street people, dumped, accumulated and stored. DPU no longer removes personal belongings or blankets… nor do we now… remove the building materials of your structure. We instruct you to remove your structures, if you do not remove your structures based on the… compliance notice and the 56 [referring to a 56 Notice to appear in court for violation of a by-law] *that you received, we will give you a fine."* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

According to Principal Inspector Wayne Aldrige, these three phases take place over the course of three or four days and take place only between 5 o'clock in the morning and 9 o'clock at night. Also according to Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, the seizure or confiscation of personal belongings (including blankets) during these operations or "*clean ups*" has stopped for two years. While other law enforcement agencies may be involved in alternate operations, he stressed that any abuse during these operations should be reported.

Below are some of the accounts of homeless individuals having had their personal possessions removed:

"In Claremont, operations are done either Wednesday or Thursday, where they come along, they remove structures, they remove plastic, they remove cardboard… If you are not there, they confiscate everything… Most of our stuff is lost because of that. On top of that, there are people that are ill, people that got HIV possibly, that got TB, that are then [left] *sleeping in the open and the cold. They bring alongLaw Enforcement, CCID and Claremont Police. They remove, with a truck, everything that they can, and they dispose of it. You are sent back with one blanket… Is that not violating the constitutional right*[s] *of a person?"* – Michael, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"We were there when 32 Law Enforcement officers arrived in 11 vehicles with a truck. The truck was already half full – there was a mattress on there, there was items of clothing. And when I asked the Captain – and I have his name, and I have the number plates of the vehicles – why there were [personal] *belongings* [on the truck]*, he said that was from another operation, not this one. But according to those who were there, they said that when they came the night before to say they'd be returning at 5am, that they had* [then already] *removed some of those* [personal items]*… Then we were told nobody's having their things confiscated, they can take their belongings. But of course…as things were bagged up, people couldn't carry what they had, so* [all personal belongings that could not be bagged and carried away by homeless people] *were removed* [from them and placed onto the truck].*"* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"Maybe tonight you can't sleep there [the place you usually sleep at] *because Law Enforcement* [plans to] *come there. Maybe you come home tonight…* [where you currently stay and] *there is nothing there, all your stuff…* [removed while you were not there]*. Basically you get clothes now and then tomorrow your whole bag is stolen and you just have the clothes that you have on your back…"* – Beulah, an individual experiencing homelessness.

"I stayed here in Wilderness Lane [Claremont]*. When I came here, me and my partner, we lived there on number 16 in the corner. It was safe to stay there because he had given us permission … but then he sold the property two years ago and then this new company that's here …moved in and they started coming in and taking our things and pushing us around, and that makes it quite difficult for the people on the street. You build wherever you go, like me, we built up a network* [with] *the people where we collect the* [garbage] *drums, push* [them] *out every day… we wash their cars maybe on the Sundays, and that's how we get along. We* [do] *park*[ing] *on odd occasions. But your things is always at risk, you always losing your things.* [You] *come back, Law Enforcement has taken it. That's one of the main problems we have as homeless people on the street – they always come take your things... Law Enforcement they just come and…they take our things.*

The CIDs as well, they wake you up in the middle of the night [and then] *you gotta get up... We have many people like you out there, the more wealthy than us, that give* [to] *us and support us through our journey. As I say to you once again, it's hard to think about it every time you lose, you know, sentimental things that you get, small little things that you get, trinkets and things, and I lose them, and I get, well, upset, but myself says, well, you know, just write it off."* – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Even post getting my permit [to do informal trading] *they would still target me… where I used to keep my stock. Because* [I often did not] *have the money to go and pay for storage, I used to build up my 'hokkie'* [shelter] *for the night with my trolleys and my stock in order to make sure it's safe. And they would come at 1 o'clock in the morning and confiscate the stock because* [they said] *I was building a permanent structure. They use by-law upon by-law to deflate you."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

HARASSMENT AND ABUSE

When asked whether he had experienced violence on the street, Monwabisi Sijaji responded,

"Yho, a lot, especially with the CCID, the securities, because you'll be sleeping sometimes and then they will come and kick you." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Throughout The Inkathalo Conversations, those who have experienced homelessness shared numerous stories of verbal and physical abuse, violence, harassment, and intimidation at the hands of law enforcement agencies across the City. The selected stories that follow demonstrate the widespread nature of violence and support arguments that homeless individuals are victimised.

"I was arrested [by SANParks law enforcement] *on the mountain at Platteklip… last year on the 31st of December… They said I didn't have a permit to park* [cars] *there, whereas I have a permit, but I was not carrying it. The next day I was released, on the 1st* [of January]. *On the 2nd* [of January] *I was sleeping on the mountain on top there, at night, the very same guys, they came again. I still have scars.This is SANParks law enforcement. So those guys came*[while] *I was sleeping there,* [and] *they asked me 'why are you sleeping here?' So, I told them, 'I don't have a place to stay. I sleep here, and there's nothing wrong that I'm doing.' And then they kicked me, they started to kick me and everybody* [neigbouring residents who live at the edge of the mountain] *from that residence, were standing on their balconies watching. When I went to the police station* [to report this]*… I sat there for about three hours without any assistance. Those* [police] *folks… said I must go to* [a] *medical facility first and then I can come back and* [make] *a case… it was a very terrifying experience."* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I got my jaw broken on Christmas Eve… one of the worst [law enforcement] *agencies is SANParks."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"After the person [that you worked for] *has give you money… maybe you get… R500, you must give… half of the R500 to him* [Law Enforcement]*, and* [then] *you're gonna* [be allowed to] *continue to work by that place. But if you don't do that, they* [Law Enforcement] *are chase you away, and they take you with the car, and drop you maybe in Bellville. You must* [then] *come from Bellville with your feet* [walking] *to Cape Town…"* – Nosipho Magade, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I have experience that is similar… the same group of Law Enforcement [officers in uniform but with badges removed] *have been watching me since I've been walking from Culemborg. They stopped me and they say 'do I have a permit now to do this cleaning work?'… They've been watching me the whole week, up and down, from 6 o'clock to 4 o'clock… They took my 'skoppie'… they say: 'This looks like City Council's goed* [things]*'. Then the one guy takes my broom, takes the head* [of the broom] *off… afterwards they searched me and…they found 180* [Rand on me]*… Then I'm thinking now: 'ok now you found no drugs, can I please get my R180* [back]*'… They said: 'No…this money was acquired* [inaudible, implying the money was obtained illegally]*'. I understand you have by-laws, but I don't understand why you have to confiscate my money, you know, and my working equipment…"* – Stanley, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"As I tried to get my tent off their truck… they threw me to the floor. It was a CCID guy and one Law Enforcement [officer]*. And they threw me to the floor and actually opened up my eyes…, each one of them, and, you know, sprayed out a whole canister of pepper spray* [into my eyes]*. I couldn't see for three days. And I was crawling to try and get to the lady…one of the board members of the Parade flea market."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

It is also alleged that the threat of fines or the act of issuing fines is used as a means to bully homeless individuals, under the guise of carrying out Law Enforcement protocols.

"I have gone to court on three occasions already for fines like that, that has not been put on the record [of the] *court – there was no recognition of it. Now, who's fooling who and where's it coming from?"* – Michael, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"He said: 'I'm not interested in your permit'… I said: 'Then, you've been sent with a hidden agenda, because you're not even asking me to look at my permit, the validity of it, what I can [and] *what I can't do'… He was threatening to fine me. He came and he was shouting at me and telling me he's gonna arrest me. I knew what was coming. He took me by the bare arm, and he broke a lot of rules… he said yes he's arresting me… gonna put me in jail, I'm gonna spend the weekend there with him, I'm gonna get a fine and I'll have a criminal record…"* – Peter Wagenaar, Mouille Point Resident/Mini Meltdown

"[On] *the issuing of the fines and* [it] *not reaching the court: Most of the fines that are written out by Law Enforcement officers, they make stupid mistakes and those cases get thrown* [out]*, they don't even see the inside of the court. There's a bigger amount of cases that are just scrapped because of errors the officers made on the fines. So that is the reason, if you go to court… the fine, they won't have it on the roll – it's because it's probably kicked out somewhere down the line because of the mistakes* [made by] *Law Enforcement officers."* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

DENIED ACCESS TO JUSTICE

"How do people whose rights are violated in this way – how are they going to report and get some kind of investigation and follow up and justice around these issues? How do we address these violations that Law Enforcement officers are perpetuating and hold people accountable? How do they get their possessions back?" – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"My guys are trained and my guys have been through court so many times and we've been trained by our Legal Services… plus by our Social Development on how to engage, and what to do and what not to do, and what action will be taken against us if we break those rules." – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

When a crime is committed against any individual, they should have equitable access to justice and legal services. Like any other member of society, those experiencing homelessness should be able to report injustices committed against them and have their complaints duly heard and processed. The Western Cape

Government website outlines the process of reporting misconduct by a law enforcement officer (Western Cape Government, 2018[59]), by lodging a complaint with the Policing Complaints Centre, by calling the complaints line, or by contacting the Western Cape Police Ombudsman. In cases where basic human rights have been violated, individuals are advised to contact the South African Human Rights Commission.

Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge explained the mechanisms in place to report misconduct by Law Enforcement officials in the CoCT.

> *"The behaviour of any Law Enforcement officer, any person in uniform… there are mechanisms in place that you can* [use]*…if any Law Enforcement officer behaves in a manner which offends your rights, you can go lay a charge at the police station… My director, Executive Director, Richard Bosman, takes… these matters very seriously and he has suspended Law Enforcement officers for misbehaving."* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

However, as homeless individuals face systemic disadvantages, including biases and minimal resources, they may be unaware of their rights or departmental protocols, or may lack access to phones and internet services. In addition, homeless individuals who have tried to report injustices reported being dismissed, disrespected, sent from one facility to another, or made to wait for long periods.

A woman who was threatened by a City Councillor who released his dogs into the street to intimidate her while 'skarreling', shared the dismissive response she received when reporting the matter to the police:

> *"By the time I was going to Sea Point police station, I found Kaptein* [mentions surname]*; I tell him, he tell me I must go back to fight there by* [City Councillor]*."* – A woman who has experienced homelessness.

Another individual reported the harassment and verbal abuse received by a Police Captain:

> *"The Magistrate at the Community Court, eventually the 7th time, she said: 'Mr Mesquita, would you say Sea Point Police is harassing you?' and I said 'yes'… When I approached Sea Point police station…and I said 'could I please have my trolley back?' And I asked it three times… and then I handed* [the court order issued by the Magistrate to return his trolley] *to him and, you know, the vile things that were said there, like 'just f-ing give it'…"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

As mentioned in a previous account of a violent attack by SANParks security, an injured man was given little attention when reporting his case and was referred to a medical facility instead. Many homeless individuals cannot afford to wait for hours to lay a complaint – unlike employed persons, who may be able to take paid leave to attend to these kinds of incidents. Homeless individuals' survival depends on their daily 'skarrel' (opportunity to earn an income).

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[59] Western Cape Government, 2018: https://www.westerncape.gov.za/general-publication/law-enforcement-and-your-rights

> *"When I went to the police station* [to report this]*… I sat there for about three hours without any assistance; those* [police] *folks they said I must go to medical facility first and then I can come back and lay a case…"* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Many homeless individuals have concluded that pursuing justice against those in positions that are more powerful is futile and have given up.

During legal proceedings, it is difficult for homeless individuals to access legal resources, even if they are innocent. Simple disadvantages such as a lack of a physical address results in drawn out court proceedings and administrative processes.

> *"When people arrest* [you]*… what* [most] *people don't realise what happens is, if you're homeless and you don't have a street address, even if you are innocent and the judge wants to send you home, they can't. They have to send you up* [to prison] *for 7 days for verification of address. Now you've already said you're homeless, so then you keep appearing, and you only ever leave there after 21 days, because after…they realise but he is homeless. So, ultimately, they do criminalise* [you]*."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

If an individual is a victim of physical abuse and taken to a place of medical care, they should have access to a J88 form to be able to document the injuries sustained as part of the case file. The importance of a J88 form is explained on the Medical Protection website:

Medical Protection South Africa[60]

The J88: Not just another medical form

The J88 is a legal document that is completed by a medical doctor or registered nurse, documenting injuries sustained by the victim in any circumstance where a legal investigation is to follow. It may be the only objective information available in a legal case.

The victim, or family, will open a case at the police station in the district where the injuries were sustained. The case will be issued a case number and an investigating officer (IO), who will collect corresponding oral testimony and evidence from the victim, the alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses. They will also ask you to fill out the J88 to document the injuries sustained by the victim, and in doing so you will provide written and/or pictorial evidence. This carries substantial clout in any case. The completed document will then be added to the docket.

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60   https://www.medicalprotection.org/southafrica/junior-doctor/volume-5-issue-2/the-j88-not-just-another-medical-form

Despite a J88 form playing a crucial role in the justice system, homeless individuals reported that this was not always available when they reported physical abuse at the hands of law enforcement officials. It was also reported that these forms were not provided when requested at the City of Cape Town's Strandfontein homeless camp.

CORRUPTION AND COOLDRINKS

The term 'cooldrink' is a slang term used in the homelessness ecosystem and is commonly associated with bribery and extortion, typically for small amounts of money payable to an authority, and symptomatic of a systemic culture of corruption plaguing various law enforcement agencies. In this case, it is effectively an illegal financial tax and unjustly imposed on those earning a living on the streets by those in a position of power. Individuals who make a living on the street are required to give a portion of their earnings to various law enforcement agencies to avoid being harassed and prevented from working in the locations where law enforcement agents are patrolling.

> *"And these very same people* [referring to SANParks security] *that went to arrest me, are the very same people that have been asking money* [from me] *every day* [when] *I'm going there to park those cars* [at Table Mountain car park]*, and you must give those people a 'cooldrink'* [a monetory payment]*…"* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"*[Regarding] *PRASA station security...* [Carlos] *open*[ed] *a little stall there just outside of where the police station is, by the station [close to]the bridge stairways. Carlos* [was] *busy putting out his stock and all of a sudden this very thin scrawny security* [guard] *comes along,* [standing with] *hands in his pocket,* [saying]*: 'hello, you can't do this'. So, Carlos says: 'what, it's not the first time'… Carlos* [continued] *packing* [and then the security] *said: 'no you can't, you must pay to be here.' So Carlos* [said]*, 'but I never paid before'. So* [the security guard] *says: 'I'm working here, that's my shift, you must have a permit here, otherwise…'* [Carlos says]: *'I'll give you R10'.* [The security guard says]*, 'okay now it's fine'."* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"…To see this thing happening, if you go to the long-distance bus station, there are guys there carrying trolleys* [to take people's luggage to the busses]*. I used to also do that work. For those guys… to get in there to try and assist those people with their trolleys, they must pay a fee to the securities and* [the] *PRASA securities. If you don't pay them anything, they chase you away. So when I used to pay those guys and give them a little something, I got full access to be inside there.I would even sit there and wait for the busses to arrive* [because I paid them]*.*

> *But if you don't pay them anything, unfortunately you stand outside and they chase you away, you are not meant to be there."* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> Question from Lead Facilitator*: "How much did you pay, what percentage was it?"*

> Anda*: "So for a day I paid them [a] R150 to be inside there."*

> Question from Lead Facilitator*: "How much did you make?"*

> Anda*: "If there are* [many] *busses you make let's say about R250."*

> Question from Lead Facilitor: *"So more than 50% is paid over to them* [security guards]*?"*

Anda: *"Yeah you give it to them, and you'll see it happening there in front of your eyes."*

"…the CCID right now… there is no parking marshals in Cape Town [during the pandemic]. *If you are busy taking a break* [from parking cars] *there on Cape Town on the street he* [CCID security guard] *is going to come* [to you and say]*: 'Fifty percent is for me* [and] *fifty percent is for you and that* [is how it]*… is working, you understand?' It is wrong, whatever they are doing. I want for them to be professional… because the City is paying them a lot of money to do their duty to protect us, not to destroy us. Even when we get R5 they want R2.50."* – A Focus Group participant who has experienced homelessness.

'A JOB TO DO'

"SAPS is coming on board; we have a good relationship with them. Law Enforcement, I won't even talk about them – but SAPS, yes." – Kevin Pillay, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Managing the expectations of different members of the community can be challenging for Law Enforcement and other agencies mandated with keeping the city safe and clean. Explored in Chapter 1, the negative perceptions held by society are displayed in their reaction to homeless individuals in their communities. Despite Law Enforcement not being the first port of call for homeless interventions, they are often the first to receive a complaint from homeowners, while CIDs receive calls from businesses and levy payers. According to reports, these complaints mostly do not express concern for those experiencing homelessness, but only seek to have them removed from the area.

"Most of Law Enforcement is reactive, we're not proactive… all my engagements is based on complaints from the community. It's the community that is complaining… they're not interested, they don't want that street person in their vicinity. They strong-arm Law Enforcement to go deal with it because [they say] *'I pay your salary... go do your job'. A lot of the community members don't understand what can and cannot be done, and who's responsible for what."* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

"I get calls, trust me, my phone's on 24 hours a day: 'Derek, I have homeless people sleeping on my stoep come and get rid of them.' These are the calls that I receive that I think Wilma maybe receives them [too]*, and my managers on the ground receive* [it as well]. *You tell Mr.*[caller] *whatever his name is: 'So with all due respect what do I do with them?' 'I don't care, I pay the CID levy and I pay your salary and your staff's salary.' … and puts down the phone, and trust me I get these calls weekly and my staff as well."* – Derek Bock, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

During the conversations, some raised the point that the individuals who enforce the law, or work to maintain the safety of neighbourhoods, are under pressure from their stakeholders and superiors to act on the complaints received from homeowners and business owners.

"Indirectly, I report to a thousand levy payers out there." – Derek Bock, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

Law Enforcement officers are expected to carry out their duties and are subject to the orders of their supervisors. This may prove difficult when instructions conflict with their personal feelings on how the law is implemented or with their own moral principles. Peter Wagenaar relayed his experience of being reported for drug distribution and searched by a Law Enforcement officer who expressed his regret at having to search an innocent man. Peter joked about his breakfast muffins being the only addictive thing he was serving to homeless individuals and recalled the response of the officer:

> *"I give him credit, after our car was burnt … he came back to me and he said to me, 'You know that really touched me, about the muffins being addictive.' And my words were to him, I said, 'My friend, I know that you're just doing your job, but… I tell you what, if you can sleep at night knowing that you're harassing someone like me, who's trying to do better… then you're a bigger human than me. And he said to me those words haunted him, he couldn't sleep for about two or three days."* – Peter Wagenaar, Mouille Point Resident/Mini Meltdown

In some striking comments, homeless individuals displayed a deep level of empathy for Law Enforcement officials and security guards, believing that they too, were being misled by their superiors or were not receiving guidance on how to deal with homeless individuals with sensitivity.

> *"It stems definitely from* [a sense of] *dictatorship… as far as I'm concerned. The police…are briefed in the briefing room… and they're told: 'This is your assignment, this is what you have to do'… They're taught one way. Law Enforcement* [is] *the same. How* [do] *you deal with it… the lack of skill in how to deal with it. I feel so sorry sometimes for Law Enforcement. The guys that they recruit are young, so green… confused. I feel like* [saying] *'It's not your fault, you know, you're still young, you don't really understand what's going on here, it's a bit more complex; but you're just being told that* [that] *person's homeless, and you feel you got that power to do or treat that person however your personality deems, or your ego decides.'… They're learning from…their comrades' way of dealing with things."* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

4.5. WHAT DOES HOPE LOOK LIKE?

CREATING A CULTURE OF EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING

Disruption is needed across the board to combat the criminalisation of marginalised communities and to redefine the way society treats those of perceived lower social or economic status. Stakeholders shared that this starts with compassion, understanding, and hearing the voices of those most affected by homelessness.

> *"From a CID point of view, we are running the JOC, the Joint Operations Committee, and we are really trying to make sure that the social agenda is served on every part of the CID – cleaning, safety and sustainability… It must be integrated, and everybody must be on board."* – Wilma Piek, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

> *"Strandfontein cannot be swept under the carpet, we need to publish a book… there is nothing wrong with homeless*[ness]*, it's about the politics… we have to publish a book and listen to the stories, bring out a documentary… People living on the streets can become researchers if we teach them visual methods… so they can represent themselves."* – Quinton Adams, The Shack Builder

As a starting point, we need to heal the systems that have been created to suppress the voices of those subjected to abuse and trauma at the hands of various stakeholders, acknowledge that what they feel is justified, and create a space to talk transparently about what went wrong. Accountability for the injustices committed against homeless individuals is crucial, from the design and implementation of policies, agency training and execution of operations, right through to reforming how individuals understand and treat every person in society. Dialogues such as The Inkathalo Conversations were acknowledged by homeless individuals as important platforms on which to be heard, seen, and understood.

> *"In terms of Strandfontein, we must really insist on a process like a Truth and Reconciliation thing, that* [focuses] *specifically* [on] *that and where the individuals that were scarred during that process can get the appropriate help as well."* – Wilma Piek, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

> *"The fact of the matter is homeless people are seen when people decide to actually see them and listen to them. But they can't really understand unless they've been there. These talks, and the stakeholders that we have… these are all important. If they have a better understanding, then… they can take better decisions. I call this the 'ICU' – intensive care unit – sort of, of the homeless people… that's what Inkathalo means… this is the ICU of homeless people, maybe for the first time."* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge from the Displaced Peoples Unit gave a glimpse of how this could look practically through Law Enforcement working together with Social Development to gain a deeper understanding of the issues underpinning homelessness and creating appropriate responses.

> *"We are trying to…expand* [the DPU]*… there's going to be 25 teams and each team is going to go to the area, working with social development in the communities, with the street people. And we*

don't wanna be the first in line." – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

The City of Cape Town Resilience Strategy refers to the Hanover Park model, introducing the concept of 'violence interrupters' as a strategy to divert individuals from the criminal justice system with the understanding that education is a viable alternative to recidivism. While the City acknowledges that its current fining and policing strategies do not support effective behaviour change, lessons learnt from other global responses to 'petty offences by the homeless' indicate that homeless individuals can be re-routed to alternative services or interventions to avoid criminalisation.

A broader conversation across all stakeholders is needed to tackle such a complex socio-economic issue, one that requires consistent engagement. Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge outlined potential avenues of open communication between different sectors and agencies through Law Enforcement's involvement in HOMAC.

> *"Law Enforcement has now been invited to HOMAC on a month to month basis, which has all the NGOs, has all the social development, has all the night shelters and safe spaces there. We're now on that committee, so now we can address their problems, and we can address the abuse... that has been pushed towards Law Enforcement."* – Principal Inspector Wayne Aldridge, Law Enforcement: Displaced Peoples Unit

RETHINKING SUBSTANCE USE

A key aspect of the criminal justice system is the use of substances by individuals on the street, as homeless individuals are frequently arrested for possession and subject to punishments that may severely impact their ability to get back on their feet.

> *"We're gonna continue to see almost 74%, plus, of our prisons being filled with simple misdemeanours, [like] possession charges..."* – Ashley Potts, Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre

From his wealth of experience, Ashley Potts, Director of the Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre, stressed the importance of understanding the root causes of substance use disorders, as opposed to treating substance use as a crime. During The Inkathalo Conversations, it became evident that substance use should be treated as a social issue and that it is necessary to look beyond labelling a person as a criminal for using drugs by understanding why they have chosen to do so. For example, some individuals shared that drugs helped them to stay warm in winter, while others referenced both the trauma of their upbringing and the trauma experienced on the streets as reasons for their dependency.

As an example, in 2001 Portugal engaged in drug policy reforms that saw the decriminalisation of all drugs for personal use. Since then, they have seen a considerable improvement in the use of drugs within the community. It is noted that the policy changes on drug use were part of a broader shift in thinking from criminalisation to social reform.

> *"The reality is that Portugal's drug situation has improved significantly in several key areas. Most notably, HIV infections and drug-related deaths have decreased, while the dramatic rise in use feared by some has failed to materialise. However, such improvements are not solely the result of*

the decriminalisation policy… Portugal's shift towards a more health-centred approach to drugs, as well as wider health and social policy changes, are equally, if not more, responsible for the positive changes observed." – Transform Drug Policy Foundation, 2014[61]

For a more health-centred approach to drug use, amongst other social issues bannered under criminal activities such as loitering, a need exists for greater collaboration between different stakeholders that interact with the community and homeless individuals.

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[61] Transform Drug Policy Foundation, 2014: https://transformdrugs.org/product/drug-decriminalisation-in-portugal-setting-the-record-straight/

4.6. READER'S REFLECTIONS

Reflection is an important practice in system transformation. The reader is encouraged to consider the following reflection points from a personal, organisational, community, and systemic perspective:

- Have you ever been in violation of a by-law? What happened to you when you were?
- Do you think the by-laws unfairly discriminate against homeless individuals?
- When a homeless person approaches you, how do you feel?
- What interactions have you had with law enforcement? Do you feel your rights have ever been unjustly infringed on?
- Are you aware of your rights? Do you know the process for reporting the misconduct of Law Enforcement officials?
- Have you ever contacted any agency regarding homeless people? If yes, to whom did you reach out?

SPECIAL FEATURE: HOMELESS TAX

Special Features highlight specific issues, events, or occurrences, which reveal the many faces of homelessness.

"…There is the idea that people experiencing homelessness can simply pick themselves up 'by the bootstraps' if they wanted to, and that they are unhoused simply because they are lazy." – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

A populist narrative exists among suburban communities that the path to exiting homelessness can be achieved by anyone if they work hard enough, are not lazy and if they simply 'pull themselves together'.

Those experiencing homelessness are met with many interrelated challenges as they navigate existing in and attempt to exit this lifestyle. South Africa is a society with multi-layered classes of privilege. Those who live in more privileged areas consider themselves better than those who live in areas that face economic and social challenges. This historical spatial and psychological design of the land space enables cities like Cape Town and Pretoria to function as enclaves of class and privilege while claiming to be meritocracies. A meritocracy is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as a *"social system where people get power or money on the basis of their ability and where everyone with skill and imagination may aspire to reach the highest level."* Factors such as where you were born, educated, housed, and what your appearance looks like, still determines your prosperity and acceptance trajectory, despite the fact that you may have innate abilities, skills and imagination to reach the highest level. These persistent class and privilege narratives suggest that the claim to a merit-based society is a false one, with society still structured, both formally and informally, in ways that prevent those born without some form of privileg, from improving their quality of life.

These systemic blockages, which prevent homeless people from moving from the streets into more structured formal and informal opportunities to improve their circumstances and pathways, were explored during The Inkathalo Conversations.

In the war of words, phrases and meanings, we need to provide careful clarity to what is meant with words. We need to reflect the narrative architecture carefully so that we know what is meant and intended. Three phrases in particular needs clarity:

    a.   'They must improve their lives.'
    b.   'They need improved opportunities.'
    c.   'They need improved circumstances.'

Most homeless people have fairly organised, routine-driven lives, even if their sense of organisation and routine differs from ours. Regularity and predictability are important aspects of their daily existence. Most agencies and communities that seek to help homeless people begin their engagement with an 'I want to help you to improve your life' conversation.

In talking about homeless people we need to see the inverted triangle as a pathway to working with them. The journey to a condition of improved lives is the end result of firstly, improved circumstances and improved conditions. Once that is stabilised, and the person feels safe, we can then talk about improved opportunities. Note that improved opportunities cannot be fully explored if improved conditions are not present. Once circumstances and opportunities are improved, then the possibility of an improved life is a natural outcome of the former two.
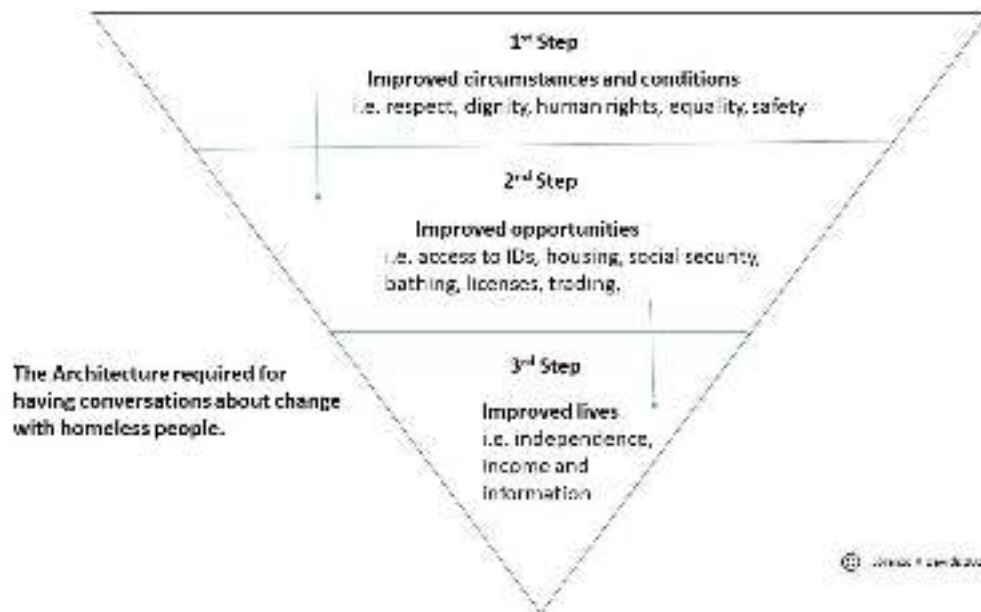
All this sketches an important background to the barriers that prevent homeless people from living improved lives. These barriers, present at the 1st , 2nd and 3rd steps, are economic barriers, that the homeless refer to as a 'homeless tax' they must pay – illegally and under duress and often at the threat of violence by agencies appointed to safeguard the public and maintain public order and safety.

Taxes are defined as *"involuntary fees levied on individuals or corporations and enforced by a government entity—whether local, regional or national—in order to finance government activities"* (Investopedia, 2020[62]). More colloquially, a tax may be referred to as a burden or an additional and often inequitable cost related to a given activity and experienced by a marginalised or less privileged group.

This is captured by terms such as 'black tax', which is commonly used in South Africa to refer to the financial support that black professionals are expected to give their extended families. This 'tax' refers to the obligations of support that are given to black family members who, due to perpetuating cycles of inequality,

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[62] Investopedia, 2020: https://www.investopedia.com/terms/t/taxes.asp

did not achieve a level of financial independence in life and now depend on more successful family members to help sustain their existence.

Homeless people are exposed to a form of 'homeless taxation' that creates hardships, exploitation and injustice on their journeys towards a life style of self-sustainability.The experiences informing these 'homeless tax' regimes paint a picture that suggests that a great deal of resilience is expected from those individuals who may be experiencing the most trying period of their lives. The scenarios described below include monetary and non-monetary costs or burdens experienced by homeless individuals (who are typically unemployed and experiencing numerous societal hardships at once) at various points in the public service system, some of which very clearly constrain their ability to fulfil their potential.

Examples of the 'homeless tax' paid by homeless people:

- **The Poverty Tax**

  The City of Cape Town has consistently used its by-laws in ways that increase hardships, harass, and enact injustices against those experiencing homelessness. Despite a homeless person not having a home to go to and no consistent place of shelter, they can be fined for loitering and other related offences. In essence homeless people are fined for being without a house, when they do the things others would do who have a house, such as rest, lay down and do ablutions. These fines take valuable currency from them which they often cannot afford to pay. Some participants expressed the sense that they were actively being fined for being too poor to have a home. The State is asking a homeless person to pay a fine for not having a place of abode – while such a homeless person needs to practice the deeds of being a human being – rest, eat, talk, work, wash, ablutions – like all other housed human beings – at the same time. This phenomenon is explored more in Chapter 4.

- **The Prison Tax**

  The South African Police Service's website states that, "*once arrested you are required to tell the police your home address.*" Homeless individuals relayed their experiences of being arrested and held in jail for prolonged periods while awaiting verification of their inability to provide a home address. During such time, an individual is unable to earn an income or safeguard their belongings.

  "…when you are arrested and go through a judge, they can't send you home because you don't have a fixed address – it takes seven days to verify (an address), so usually you in stay [in prison] *for 21 days. They know you don't have the resources to fight back."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The police and prison system will hold a homeless individual for 21 days because he does not have a known address, while knowing it's impossible for the person to show an address. In this way, homeless people ends up losing all their possessions during this period and losing any opportunity to get any form of income. After prison, they often have to start the rebuilding of their lives all over again.

The system holds a homeless person for the very thing that they know a homeless person does not have. If a homeless person is three times a year and held for up to 21 days at a time – that equates to 63 days in prison. If a homeless person earns R150 a day parking and washing cars, that is a total loss

of income of R9450 per year – for not having an address. When considering the impact of losing their possessions during this period of incarceration, their ability to move off the streets and to improve their lives is actually scuttled by the very system that accuses them of not wanting to improve their lives.

- **The Identity Document Tax**

  The Western Cape Government states: "*IDs form an important part of each person's daily activities since all transactions require positive identification*."[63] However, in numerous presentations, it was alleged that Law Enforcement and other security agents would confiscate the ID documents of homeless individuals during arrests, searches, altercations, and other encounters. Removal of IDs by Law Enforcement agencies appeared to be a common experience by homeless people. This practice is illegal and further investigation into these allegations is important. Law Enforcement agencies would often indicate to homeless people that they are *"putting it (their IDs) in a bag"* and that the homeless person can come and *"collect it at the office."* Individual accounts of homeless individuals having their IDs removed and never returned to them despite going to *"the office"* can be found in Chapter 4. The overwhelming notion that homeless people experience is that they are not considered worthy of having an ID document. This increases the layers of dehumanisation and narratives of non-citizenship experienced by homeless people.

  Without an identity document:

  - a homeless individual cannot redeem a social grant, increasing their hardship;
  - a homeless individual cannot access education if they so wish;
  - a homeless individual cannot access advanced healthcare services;
  - a homeless individual cannot open a bank account;
  - a homeless individual cannot apply for a job;
  - a homeless individual cannot vote.

  Replacing an identity document is both financially burdensome and time consuming. The cost of a replacement ID is R140. Should an individual need one immediately, a temporary ID costs an additional R70. Homeless individuals might find themselves in positions where they are having their IDs removed and then replaced at least twice a year. The State does not admit to doing this and no provisions are made for homeless individuals who cannot afford the ID replacement costs, thus increasing their poverty. Citizens frequently encounter long waiting periods to access the Department of Home Affairs. For homeless individuals, this is a cost that is hard to bear as it is time away from their 'skarrel' (income generation activities) to meet their basic needs or to find a place to sleep for the night.

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[63] https://www.westerncape.gov.za/service/applying-identity-document

- **The Skarreling Tax**

  Homeless people who generate an income from 'skarreling' or other economic activities reported that they are often exploited by various authorities. This exploitation takes the form of requiring of them to give a portion of their earnings to a person in authority to avoid being harassed and prevented from working there. Chapter 4 explores this as a form of corruption, colloquially known as a 'cooldrink', imposed by various safety and security agencies.

  The exploitation works like this: a homeless person may be parking cars, washing cars, standing as an informal security attendant, or collecting recyclable materials in a particular area of the larger city. CCID officials, Law Enforcement officers and private security officers would demand a portion of the money that homeless people collect on a daily basis.

    CCID: They demand that homeless people hand over a portion of their daily earnings, as much as 50%, to them in order to be 'allowed to operate' in the area where they are working as CCID security officers.

    Law Enforcement: They visit homeless people at the end of a day or come to the sites where homeless people sleep for the night and take both money and goods of value from them on the pretext that it's stolen. However, no arrests are made or receipts given for goods and monies removed.

    Private Security: They act in the same way as the Law Enforcement officers.

    Gangsters: Organised gangs also wait for homeless people to end their day of work and then rob them of their earnings and goods.

  These actions are referred to by these security agents as 'cooldrink money' or collecting a cooldrink from the homeless person.

  One homeless individual explained that gangsters, when they see that you are able to generate a lot of money from 'skarreling', may offer you the 'option' of paying a fee for protection from being robbed.

- **Profiling Tax: Criminal Profiling**

  Chapter 4 highlights the criminal profiling of homeless individuals, which breaches the constitutional right to human dignity, freedom of movement and the right to privacy. This gives the impression that some rights are reserved for homeowners. Ashley Potts, Director of the Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre, described his first-hand experience of law enforcement agencies profiling street youth under false pretences.

  "I have seen profiling of street children by law enforcement agencies, I think in the early 2010s… I remember how they used to bundle up kids, take them on camps, under the guise of doing a nice thing, but actually going to profile them – illegally, unconstitutionally. I have seen…the displacement technique, where they round them up and move them to isolated spaces, just as they've done with Strandfontein…" – Ashley Potts, Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre

The criminalisation of homeless individuals, in particular street youth, has a lasting negative impact on an individual's ability to exit homelessness. Time in prison not only has implications for a person's mental wellbeing, but several homeless individuals and stakeholders expressed concern over the lasting effects of getting a criminal record. After having served their time, individuals wait 10 years before their records are cleared, regardless of whether they have made positive life changes. During this time, access to the job market is hampered. Participants expressed their struggles in obtaining jobs with a criminal record to their name.

- **Trading Tax: Loss of Goods and Trading**

  - The physical nature of homelessness results in little to no secure spaces to be able to store belongings or assets to avoid theft or forcible removal of these assets by Law Enforcement. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. As a result, individuals are unable to secure their possessions or accumulate wealth in order to build a pathway to exit homelessness.

  - Homeless individuals who do not receive social grants reported difficulties in accessing the shelter system, as grant holders and those employed through the EPWP are given preference. This emerged several times during The Inkathalo Conversations.

    "Shelters only taking in people that have social grants from disability, the prejudice is obviously against those who don't… Unless you have some form of social grant, unfortunately… [they] *can't take you."* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

  - Relationships between those experiencing homelessness and a variety of law enforcement agencies are complicated (as explained in Chapter 4), impacting their access to justice. Accessing law enforcement to report abuse or stolen items, or to try and recover confiscated items can be particularly impractical for a homeless individual, as it was reported that individuals are made to wait longer periods of time by officials. Long waiting periods can both diminish faith in the authority's willingness to assist and delay an individual's ability to secure their daily 'skarrel.'

    "You aren't taken seriously because you don't have a house – they keep you there waiting because they know you need to get going to build your house or eat." – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

  - Individuals wishing to recover from substance use disorders face further obstacles. Richard Bolland (New Hope SA) raised the extensive paperwork, social work referrals, access to internet and phone calls required to assist someone into inpatient recovery. Thereafter, a place of residence is a requirement in order to receive outpatient treatment. For those who have no choice but to return to the street, recovery becomes nearly impossible.

  - As explained in detail in the *Special Feature: Economy of 'Skarreling'*, the City of Cape Town insists that individuals must obtain an informal trading permit in order to trade goods in public spaces. In theory, this should provide homeless individuals with an opportunity to generate an income from trading the many recycled goods they gather. In reality, however, very few ever obtain a permit, as the requirements to apply for and be granted a permit are exclusionary i.e requiring internet

access, a rates bill (i.e., proof of residence), and proof of unemployment – all items that do not favour those experiencing homelessness.

Access to the economy through formal employment or the opportunity to pursue one's own entrepreneurial activities are crucial to assisting individuals in exiting a street-based life. Addressing broader issues of economic access may seem like an impossible task, but this special feature highlights some of the more localised and practical obstacles – the additional challenges that come with being homeless, breaking down homeless individuals' chances of helping themselves – which, if removed, could truly make an impact in individual lives.

In order to break the cycle of homelessness we, the housed, must work together with the homeless community to dismantle the systems that prevent the homeless from becoming housed. We need to create the circumstances, conditions and opportunities we claim for ourselves and make them accessible rights for the homeless as well, so that they can adequately function inside a just, safe, and equitable eco-system in order to improve their lives.

Less tax. More transitions.

CHAPTER 5:   SOCIO-ECONOMIC DRIVERS AND OBSTACLES

Contents

5.1. INTRODUCTION

"Homelessness is a job." – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

This chapter looks at the socio-economic landscape of South Africa, with a focus on the City of Cape Town, to understand the landscape that contributes to homelessness. Driven by comments made by various stakeholders during The Inkathalo Conversations, this chapter outlines some of the potential driving factors that have resulted in individuals living on the streets. Exploring the history of Cape Town and the destructive legacy of Apartheid, it seeks to understand the broader context under which so many households are struggling to meet a basic standard of living even 27 years post-Apartheid.

Whilst it is important to recognise that South Africa as a country is faced with mounting socio-economic issues during a difficult economic period globally, factors specifically influencing The City of Cape Town must be explored to understand the external pressures facing the City and the government. Cape Town is one of three key business metros in South Africa, presenting itself as a beacon of economic opportunity, and adding another layer of complexity to how we understand labour force participation, economic mobility, and the socio-economic issue of homelessness. The City of Cape Town is also unique due to its spatial planning and topography, leading to multiple economies operating in a single geography, and reinforcing the need for policies and strategies to be designed on a foundation of equity and inclusivity.

Given the complexity of socio-economic challenges facing the City, it is not surprising that those who find themselves on the streets have a laborious task of uplifting themselves into a stable position for them and their families. Seeking to explore the additional obstacles and challenges that face an individual while they are experiencing homelessness, this chapter looks at the many difficulties homeless individuals encounter as they work towards exiting homelessness.

However, as we will see, homelessness is not an ecosystem entirely without hope, as many homeless individuals seek to create their own economy, having been systematically blocked from entering the formal and even the recognised informal economy. The entrepreneurial dreams of those on the street are often displayed in their eagerness to develop their skills and trades to provide an income for themselves, but many feel that more could be done to help homeless individuals explore and start up their own businesses, thereby becoming self-sufficient. The economic activities of homeless individuals are explored in more detail in the **Special Feature: The Economy of 'Skarreling'.** It is an incredible insight into an economy that provides an essential service to society through the reuse and recycling of goods, despite it being disdained by communities who see it as nothing more than bin scratching – judged simply inappropriate and inconvenient to most housed citizens.

The chapter aims to sensitise the reader to the fact that the path to homelessness is a near reality for many households. Yet those who find themselves homeless are confined to a system that has been designed to keep them where they are and perpetuate their reliance rather than practically assisting them out of homelessness. The **Special Feature: Homeless Tax** reveals realities of homelessness that many may be ignorant of, often leading to unwarranted judgment and misunderstanding of what it means to be homeless. This section challenges the perception that homeless individuals are 'a nuisance factor and

unproductive members of society' by outlining the many challenges that they are expected to overcome, across all areas of their life.

5.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE: DRIVERS OF HOMELESSNESS

"[We] should measure the success of any community by the most vulnerable – we are not very healthy." *– Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk*

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

South Africa is widely recognised as one of the most unequal societies in the world. Despite efforts toward fostering socio-economic and racial equality, the economic and political barriers inherited from the Apartheid era remain a challenge (Ramokgopa, 2013:398; Rotich, Ilieva & Walunywa, 2015).

A report compiled by The World Bank Group[64] in 2018 looked at the progress made since the end of Apartheid towards reducing poverty and inequality:

"First, by any measure, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world. Inequality is high, persistent, and has increased since 1994. Second, although South Africa has made progress in reducing poverty since 1994, the trajectory of poverty reduction was reversed between 2011 and 2015, threatening to erode some of the gains made since 1994." (The World Bank Group, 2018*)*

"The biggest pull-out factor [of the schooling system] *is economic survival... the first is 'the economy for the rich', the second is 'the economy for the poor', but you have the third economy which is 'the criminal economy.' The criminal economy is the biggest pulling factor at the moment for our young people… there is no economic system for young people… That's why the gang and the drugs industry provides economic activity for them."* – Quinton Adams, The Shack Builder

In 2015 the richest 10% of the population held around 71% of the country's net wealth (The World Bank). Stats SA found that the most prominent contributor towards income inequality is the heavily racialised and gender-biased conditions of the labour market. The distribution of earnings based on race and gender indicates that the South African labour market has done little to transform itself since the end of Apartheid, suggesting that racial bias continues to favour men, and particularly white males (Stats SA[65]).

- Female workers earn approximately 30% less, on average, than male workers;
- Male workers are more likely to be employed and have relatively better-paying jobs;
- White racial groups on average earn more than twice as much as coloureds and more than three times as much as black Africans.

The stark contrast between genders and racial groups cannot be ignored and should be seen in the greater context of spatial apartheid and racial inequalities explored throughout the chapter. In South Africa, these

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[64] The World Bank, 2019: https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southafrica/overview
[65] StatsSA: http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=12930

socio-economic problems have persisted in preventing individuals from increasing their standard of living across communities and across generations.

> *"My political awareness was developed on the campus of the 'university of the Cape Flats'. I not only saw but experienced poverty, the dehumanising of communities, the need for belonging which led to the growth of gangsterism, the spike in teenage pregnancies and the rise in incest."* – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

The first Sustainable Development Goal[66] (UNDP, 2015) is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. The United Nations predicted, even prior to COVID-19, that this goal would not be achieved by 2030. Post COVID-19 we have seen the first increase in global poverty in decades. To contextualise the state of poverty faced by communities, and their struggle to meet their basic needs, Janice King of the Western Cape Street Children's Forum (WCSCF) shared data gathered after the easing of hard lockdown in June 2020, which gives an indication of the realities being faced by communities in Cape Town:

> *"The feeding of children in the communities…* [is] *12 200, just with the organisations that we work directly with – so that actually shows how close the children and the families were to crisis."* – Janice King, Western Cape Street Children's Forum (WCSCF)

> *"Homelessness is a growing thing; the amount of people on the streets is not a good indication of actually homelessness and the potential of homeless people still to come."* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Addressing poverty and inequality is essential to both preventing individuals from becoming homeless and creating an environment in which people can exit homelessness.

UNEMPLOYMENT

> *"It's easier to get someone a disability grant than a job."* – Vivien Plüddamenn-Hobbs, Social Worker/Streetscapes

South Africa's high level of unemployment is crucial to understanding the country's economy and its impact on individuals' ability to sustain a decent standard of living to "*improve the quality of life… and free the potential of each person*" as in the Preamble to the Constitution (1996).

Statistics published by Stats SA for the quarter ended March 2020 show an alarming national unemployment rate of 30.1%. Despite the City of Cape Town having the lowest broad unemployment rate of all the metros, at 28.9% it remains a crisis. However, in order to understand the crisis of unemployment

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[66] https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals?utm_source=EN&utm_medium=GSR&utm_content=US_UNDP_PaidSearch_Brand_English&utm_campaign=CENTRAL&c_src=CENTRAL&c_src2=GSR&gclid=Cj0KCQjw1ouKBhC5ARIsAHXNMI8a2ycpQgN1FPOv2xI2gl7Rs0EZJiLPFChuDSNcjlcoyTVxcTDZrwQaAhfGEALw_wcB

in South Africa, context must be given to the definition of what counts a person as being unemployed. The official definition used by Stats SA does not account for:

- Individuals who are available to work but are either discouraged work-seekers or have other reasons for not searching for work;
- Underemployment, consisting of those who are willing and available to work additional hours but are not currently doing so;
- South Africa's informal economy; and
- South Africa's illicit economy.

Considering these factors, it becomes increasingly complex to understand the true figures of unemployment and its effects on the economy. Throughout The Inkathalo Conversations, the issue of unemployment featured in many an individual's experience of homelessness.

> *"I don't think anyone plans for it… losing my job and my place at the same time. The system of trying to network… it becomes more difficult especially after an economic downturn. I found myself going on* [to] *the streets. I was doing maintenance work where I was staying. Unfortunately, the owner's lease came to an end and he gave us like one month to look for other accommodation… which I wasn't successful in finding. Cape Town became much more expensive. It really made it difficult… still looking after* [his] *place and* [having to] *find something for myself."* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

While high unemployment in the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape are symptomatic of national systemic issues, understanding local influencing factors is crucial for developing innovative and inclusive solutions to job creation.

> *"On job creation… where do you get money from? In the sweat of your brow you eat your bread… Everybody says, 'well let's just create jobs,' and I find a big problem with that perception. One cannot create jobs; they are not the kind of thing you can create… A job is a function in a system which creates economic value, requiring the skill to do so, and being able to fulfil this function… is accompanied by the benefit of sharing in that value that is being created… We need an economy and skilled people who create wealth, and we should share in it."* – Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk

Within this context, the changing employment landscape must also be considered, as *"Cape Town, like many mid-size emerging cities in the world, is experiencing sizeable changes in the composition of its*

economy, becoming increasingly reliant on the tertiary sector for economic growth while the primary and secondary economic sectors diminish in importance." (State of Cape Town Report, 2018[67]).

Two additional complexities facing South Africa include its comparatively young population, and the specific challenge of high youth unemployment. According to Stats SA Quarterly Labour Force Survey[68], youth aged 15–24 are the most vulnerable to unemployment.

Figure 30: Unemployment Rate by Education Level and Age Group (Stats SA, 2020)[69]

Within this group, although graduates saw the biggest increase in the unemployment rate, it remains significantly lower than for those with lower education levels. Another great concern is a disconnect between the job market and the education system, within the context of a weak economy.

> *"We have the philosophy of outcomes-based education, but we don't have the praxis… Our education system is a mass production factory for failure, because we don't enhance critical competencies…"* – Quinton Adams, The Shack Builder

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https://issuu.com/capetowncentralcityimprovementdistrict/docs/the_state_of_cape_town_central_city_04d2 f37f1961c5

[68] **Quarterly Labour Force Survey (2020):**
https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Presentation%20QLFS%20Q1_2020.pdf
(STATSA, 2020)

[69] Source: http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Presentation%20QLFS%20Q1_2020.pdf

This shows that further education is still key to improving an individual's prospect in South Africa's labour market. This makes the labour market more accessible for those who are able to afford better educational facilities, such as the private schooling system.

> *"She* [his mother] *has to wake up in the morning and look for money because she wants the school for me* [technical school]*, I was very interested in doing electrical* [at the Technikon]*; she put me in the school but she was struggling because of the fight with her ex* [his mother's former partner]*. So I tried to go back to school* [in] *Paarl… I was not performing as I used to perform… at Paarl I was exposed to drugs, I started smoking dagga, then from dagga I started using buttons… it left me to leave school."* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

SPATIAL APARTHEID AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY

> *"The continued exploitation of the working class through low wages, exorbitant transportation costs to and from their places of work, the rising cost of basic services such as electricity and water have left the greater percentage of our populace severely cash strapped and in many instances eking out existences on virtually nothing. The numbers of backyard dwellers are swelling daily and very often failure to pay those rentals leads to another family seeking living space under a bridge or other such place on the street."* – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

Those privileged enough to live close to their places of study or employment may not experience the many spatial challenges associated with Cape Town's urban design, which entrenches a form of spatial inequality. According to the City of Cape Town's Resilience Strategy, on average 43% of household income in the low-income segment of Cape Town's population is spent on commuting costs (City of Cape Town, 2019[70]). Low-income households are not only faced with greater financial stress, but they also have to endure high levels of congestion, insufficient and unco-ordinated public transport, and regular failures in the system, including safety concerns and frequent delays.

These challenges affect their ability to access opportunities, as explained by a participant at The Inkathalo Conversations. While attending a job readiness programme, several of the participants would arrive late due to trains not running. When they would try to explain the reality of their transport challenges, the NGO did not understand. The participant felt the programme's lack of awareness and understanding was doing more harm than good, while individuals were working hard to pick themselves up.

Access to quality education, among other community-based services, can help low-income households to move up the economic ladder. However, during the dialogues extreme disparities were identified in the level of service delivery between privileged areas surrounding the CBD and low-income areas further out of town.

> *"This whole question of spatial inequality, it's something we are advocating for as NGOs that are working in the urban development sector. The way we see it, the way the City plans projects, the*

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[70] City of Cape Town, 2019:
https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/City%20strategies%2C%20plans%20and%20frameworks/Resilience_Strategy.pdf

way the Province plans the project, they are still perpetuating the spatial inequality, in the sense that the poor are still being driven to the periphery of the city… That is something that we see, not something that you need to even be told or read from a journal: if you are driving up the highway to the N2 you are beginning to see another city, if you are driving towards this side [Southern Suburbs]*, you see another city, and we don't believe that the government is doing enough to…work towards spatial redress."* – Akhona Siswana, Development Action Group (DAG)

According to the 2017 Socio-economic Profile of the City, released by the Western Cape Government, 28% of the Cape Metro's budget was allocated to road upgrades and maintenance projects, while less than 1% was spent on developing infrastructure to support social development. Road upgrades appear to be a consistently high proportion of the annual budget, with the City looking to "*address traffic congestion challenges which are threatening to impact negatively on the region's economic growth ambitions*" (Western Cape Government, 2017[71]). This highlights a culture of fixing a symptom of spatial inequality rather than strategically reversing the legacy of apartheid to address socio-economic challenges that perpetuate Cape Town's high levels of poverty and inequality. The Expanded Public Works Programme provides much needed employment for homeless individuals; however, instead of building infrastructure to redress spatial Apartheid, they are building roads from which many of them will never truly benefit, roads designed to keep them exactly where they are – on the outskirts of Cape Town.

"The City is going the extra mile to be anti-poor and to make us feel not welcome in the so-called white/wealthy areas. We need to be very honest with ourselves if we really want to make a change. The rich people don't want to see us in their areas – so it is not about reintegrating us but actually pushing us away, back to the poverty that we came from. They are clearly saying to us 'we are not going to make a space for you in this area, we are not going to include you in this area because you don't fit the picture.' " – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

When understanding the effects of spatial apartheid and land ownership, homeowners, businesses, and government are frequently called upon to understand their position in a post-Apartheid spatial context. In addition, Caroline Powell explored the role of the faith community and how they are positioned within this conversation.

"Spatial justice in the Southern Suburbs in Cape Town… looking at land justice movements around the city... asking the question 'what do churches in the suburban areas of Cape Town understand by land and spatial justice and the land and space that they occupy and own?'… Find out from them how do they understand themselves spatially in light of forced removals, in light of 25 years or 27 years post the end of the law of Apartheid; what does it mean to still live out the spirit of Apartheid spatially in our suburbs? And where do the churches, the houses of worship, see themselves in that? So, I'm learning a lot through their voices, I am learning both sides – both the critic of what the

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[71] Western Cape Government, 2017: https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/treasury/Documents/Socio-economic-profiles/2017/city_of_cape_town_2017_socio-economic_profile_sep-lg_-_26_january_2018.pdf

church is and isn't doing, but also the internal grapple from the ministers themselves as to why they feel stuck, what they believe versus what they do." – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

See Chapter 6 for how these factors directly impact housing.

RACIAL INEQUALITY

"Homelessness is a result of racial inequality in this country… we cannot separate economic inequality and especially racial inequality, that is why people are calling the Western Cape the paradise for the wealthy." – Quinton Adams, The Shack Builder

The impact of Apartheid on the structure and design of the South African society is most notably a racialised phenomenon. The City of Cape Town is home to a multicultural society that is yet to realise the benefits of engaging as a diverse society. During The Inkathalo Conversations, racial inequality was raised as a prominent societal stressor, with direct reference to a city that has not been able to reverse the spatial, economic, or social effects of Apartheid. Participants expressed frustration about race, power, and privilege being treated as "*white elephants in the room*" – particularly when talking about homelessness and other challenges plaguing South Africa.

"We need to say things and deal with things for what it is… black people, or people of colour… or people that weren't white, were dispossessed from a lot of things and that actually plays out in our daily lives today.

The reason why coloured people walk around scratching in bins, or black people, is because of the injustices of the past… We don't really want to go there… we think that we are miraculously going to get to a point where everything's okay again, but we're gonna have to go back… and see [and] listen. There is where it started, so we need to fix those things again… we need to start somewhere. If we're gonna start talking about things for what it is, then we might be able to move forward. But at the moment nobody is really moving forward because we are all pointing fingers to this one and that one and that one, because nobody wants to take responsibility, nobody wants to be held accountable, nobody wants to actually say things as it is." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"In 1966 we were forced from our family abode due to the Group Areas Act – we moved to Heideveld. My own political shaping and yearning for justice was awakened at the age of 12 when my father had to plead guilty in Wynberg Magistrates Court that he was residing in Claremont illegally, this after the family had been living there for the past 32 years. To the privileged, don't tell me to move on or to the homeless to pull themselves up by the bootstraps – you have not felt the hurt, the rejection." – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

"My concern with the Street People Policy is that political agendas and maintenance of power are the current drivers of policies and systems" – Ian Veary, Social Worker

"I do not yet fully live an Apartheid-reversing lifestyle. I do not yet fully live in a capitalist-reversing lifestyle or a homelessness-reversing lifestyle. I believe that these lifestyles and these choices are things that we could all make in order to reverse the ills of the oppression of what has gone before us through colonialism, through Apartheid, and what we are now choosing as a society. I don't

think that my lifestyle has yet started to deconstruct the violence of inequality and oppression, but I do come here as a 'co-journeyer'… I know that I can't do it alone.' – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

"When I talk about racial inequality... my focus is not just on race and inequality, it's also about skills level and access to skills and access to information. That's why you have thousands of soup kitchens who are not registered. That is the kind of capacity we need to build if we really want to reduce racial injustice… we have to build capacity and social capacity amongst these people." – Quinton Adams, The Shack Builder

Refer to Chapter 6 for a closer look at the origins of homelessness and how racism, by its very nature, is deeply rooted.

MIGRATION AND URBANISATION

A phenomenon experienced by urban centres across the world is the migration of citizens towards the metros, with an expectation of economic opportunity and an increased standard of living. The resultant urbanisation means that the City of Cape Town is under increasing pressure to provide social and economic infrastructure (covered in more depth in Chapter 6).

"I'm coming from Northern Cape, in a place called De Aar, from a location [township]*. I came to Cape Town when my cousin called me, promised me, to say that there was a job here for me. I dropped out of school in Standard 9* [Grade 11]*, but when I came to Cape Town there wasn't a job."* – Meshack Tshantsha, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I am coming from Eastern Cape and I came to Cape Town because I thought there would be opportunities in Cape Town. There is someone now that is currently on the bus to Cape Town, [thinking] *that there are opportunities in these big cities, these big metros… How do we as civil society organisations work with the state, if they are willing, in terms of trying to address that. It's not going to stop unfortunately, so the sooner the City and the Province recognise urbanisation is here to stay, we* [then] *need to think about how do we address that."* – Akhona Siswana, Development Action Group (DAG)

While many move to Cape Town in the hopes of upward economic mobility, the cost of living is often not taken into account. According to crowd-sourced data, those living in Johannesburg earn a higher average income, despite rent in the City centre being 35% higher in Cape Town than Johannesburg. All costs considered, in order to sustain the same standard of living in Cape Town as Johannesburg, one would need

to have an additional 9.5% of disposable income (Numbeo, 2020 [72]). The exclusionary nature of living in the City of Cape Town is explored in Chapter 6.

In addition, homeowners have been under financial strain due to increasing tariffs. Despite the devastating economic effects of COVID-19, 2020/2021 rates have increased by 4%, electricity by 4.8%, water and sanitation by 4.5%, and refuse removal by 3.5% (News24, 2020[73]).

> *"The continued exploitation of the working class through low wages, exorbitant transportation costs to and from their places of work,* [occurs amidst] *the City, in the most inhumane manner, continuing to push up the rising cost of basic services, such as electricity. We hear boasts being made of our dams almost reaching 100%, yet there is the persistence to continually apply the water tariff.* [If] *these are the inequities that we, as those who are housed, feel, how much more is this not felt by persons who find themselves on the street?"* – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

GANGSTERISM

> *"We gotta go back into the community, and see what's happening there; so that we can stop the influx… it's an ongoing saga. The government's gotta go there, and into the communities, and work there, then there doesn't have to be all of us here* [on the streets]*... they got to focus there."* – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The City of Cape Town is referenced as having two cities in one, split by poverty, inequality and violence. On the one hand Cape Town is rated the seventh most beautiful city in the world, boasting beautiful landscapes and attracting travellers from all over the world (The South African, 2019[74]); while on the other hand, the City holds the title of being the 15th most dangerous city in the world in 2020, by murder rate per 100 000 inhabitants (Statista, 2020[75]).

During The Inkathalo Conversations, participants frequently raised the need to address the factors that push people to live on the streets. Homeless individuals who identified as coming from low-income communities described gangsterism and gang-related violence as plaguing every aspect of their homes,

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[72] https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/

[73] https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/city-of-cape-town-says-rates-and-tariffs-increases-are-conservative-20200708

[74] The South African, 2019: https://www.thesouthafrican.com/lifestyle/cape-town-world-50-most-beautiful-cities/

[75] Statista, 2020: https://www.statista.com/statistics/243797/ranking-of-the-most-dangerous-cities-in-the-world-by-murder-rate-per-capita/

schools and communities. The City of Cape Town's Resilience Strategy recognises the outflow of violence from gangs into communities, stating, "*The prevalence of gangs not only places the lives of gang members at risk but also the residents of communities in which gangs operate, due to the high incidence of innocent bystanders hurt or killed in the crossfire between rival gangs*" (City of Cape Town, 2019[76]).

> "*Raised in Mitchells Plain, as normal, I was a curious kid, I used to put a lot of value onto friendship or friends, got me into a lot of trouble, where, how I landed on the streets – where I lived, it was gang-infested, gang-infested violence.*" – Donovan, a participant experiencing homelessness

> "*…He wasn't a gangster* [but] *because his cousins being involved… in gangsterism, most of the time there would have been guns by his one cousin's house.*" – Alice (not her real name), an individual experiencing homelessness.

In 2013, the Western Cape Government and the City of Cape Town released a joint statement outlining the interventions implemented to address the "*gang violence crisis in the province*" (Western Cape Government, 2013[77]). According to the National Annual Crime Statistics for 2017/2018, the Western Cape was responsible for 83% of South Africa's gang related murders (Western Cape Government, 2018[78]). The Prevention of Organised Crime Act governs criminal gang activity, with a focus on combatting organised crime. At present it is estimated that 100 000 people are involved in 130 gangs, with networks running across the outskirts of urban Cape Town. The strength of these established networks and supply chains makes it difficult to uproot. Furthermore, one of the challenges cited by local and provincial government is the lack of authority to investigate and prosecute, leaving many feeling powerless.

> "*The Criminal Justice System (the police, the prosecution authorities, and the courts) is a national government competency. Both the provincial and local spheres have very limited scope when it comes to law enforcement… The South African Police Service (SAPS) has the primary mandate for policing across the country. This is crime prevention, crime detection, crime investigation, and evidence gathering to secure successful prosecutions. Both the Western Cape Government and the City of Cape Town have no powers when it comes to investigating crimes and securing convictions in a court of law.*" – Western Cape Government, 2013[79]

> "*There is no solution, it's so deeply embedded, you can take them to America, I tell you that it is so… when I get caught here in Claremont and I'm in Wynberg, and the judge sentences me – the minute I get into… the truck, then they know in Pollsmoor already – it's a network that would take years to break down – if we should even try tackling that – because it's been years, man, many*

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[76] City of Cape Town, 2019:
https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/City%20strategies%2C%20plans%20and%20frameworks/Resilience_Strategy.pdf

[77] Western Cape Government, 2013: https://www.westerncape.gov.za/news/gang-violence-western-cape-government-and-city-cape-town-intervene

[78] Western Cape Government, 2018: https://www.westerncape.gov.za/news/statement-minister-dan-plato-crime-statistics-2018

[79] https://www.westerncape.gov.za/news/gang-violence-western-cape-government-and-city-cape-town-intervene

years that's been established and there's an order, and only the top people know, you must take your orders, that is also the reason we chose the option of leaving…" – Name withheld, a participant experiencing homelessness.

Gangs are at the heart of drug transportation and distribution, continuously engaged in violence to retain their territories and enhance their control over communities. The *Criminal Profiling* section in Chapter 4 speaks to the reluctance of law enforcement to arrest drug distributors due to bribery. To avoid prosecution, it was revealed that gang networks recruit younger and younger members.

"The gangsters using the young children… is not anymore teenagers, it's from eight 'til 12, eight years old to 12 years old. You'll [be] *shock*[ed] *when you go there and see who handles the situations, and gang related situations – it's not teenagers, it's babies – it's from eight 'til 12, because the big ones knows that kids can't go to jail."* – Alice (not her real name), an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The recruitment of children also sees the expansion of gang networks.

"[Name withheld] *shelter itself turned out to be* [similar to] *the street life because we would leave for two or three days, come back. Reason of leaving, people like to find out why did you leave – you had all these options and resources. The time you on the street, gangsters are teaching you how to survive. I called it the constitution* [of the] *26s, where we kill, we steal, you know. And as a girl back then I had to make sure… I must produce the, you know, car radio I stole… stole some hardware stuff so he* [the handler] *can sell or change for whatever, buttons* [etc.]. *For that we got the opportunity to get a button and be safe under the bridge when we all sleep because it was everybody."* – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

"*The children who are in the CBD, in ways, are clever, because they are actually getting away from the gangs in the communities, or leaving abusive homes, or leaving a neglectful situation. The children going to the CBDs are brave and active in getting away from what's going on in the home."* – Janice King, Western Cape Street Children's Forum (WCSCF)

The City of Cape Town's Resilience Strategy addresses the harmful effect of gangsterism on communities under its first pillar, aimed at creating "*a compassionate, holistically-healthy city.*" Goal 1.2.2 in particular looks to re-establish a ceasefire programme in Cape Town with the desired outcome to *"*[divert] *high-risk youth from gangs through social interventions and community engagement that result in increased alternative, positive opportunities for the targeted youths, and a decrease in violence and trauma*."

Early social interventions that seek to reduce the recruitment of individuals into gangs are crucial in preventing people from facing the ultimatum described by Derek Ronnie during dialogues:

"If we could prevent the Luciens [a homeless participant] *and others from coming here then we can solve the problem – we need to go back to the community and see what is going on there and stop the influx. The government does nothing for anyone out here or there because that is why they end up here – they steal and get into a line to survive… many are running away from peer pressure where the gangs are telling them what they need to do."* – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

Making the decision to become a member of a gang, often at an early stage without having the ability to understand the ramifications, is particularly dangerous as it is seen as a lifelong commitment. Those who want to leave a gang that they are a member of are often compelled to flee their communities, having to make the choice to uproot their lives or put their lives in danger of possible death. As explored more in Chapters 3 and 7, a common intervention in response to homelessness is the reunification of families and reintegration of individuals into their communities. However, this is not a viable solution for those who have absconded from gangs or those sought by gangs, as they are unable to return to their communities out of fear for their safety and the safety of their families.

> *"I realised it's me myself, if I tell myself, when I go back I'm going to give in, going to fall, you think this guy is going to kill* [you]*, but I don't want to be part of* [them] *anymore, so either you die or be part of them – I don't know what they solution is for that."* – Lucien, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"I don't want to bring that trouble to my mommy… where she lives there are the Capitals… don't* [know] *if you understand… they are the JFKs… they infested that whole area… my past and them – we've clashed a few times to a point where I can't go there* [anymore]*. If I* [go] *to my mommy they know I'm there, if I get on the train to Retreat, by the time I get to Retreat station when I get off they're there. If I go, I tell her to get me at Plumstead… it's now to a point where it's not only my own safety but my mother's safety* [that is at risk]*."* – Name withheld, an individual experiencing homelessness.

The Inkathalo Conversations unveiled the damaging effects of gangsterism on women and families. Like Donovan's mother, women are exposed to dangerous, life-threating or trauma-inflicting conditions due to their relationships with, largely, men who are involved in gangsterism. In referring to her husband, a participant shared the following:

> *"He's also warning me from the people who are supposed to actually protect me. Even like his friends in Lavender Hill, he keeps on telling me, 'you don't go into Lavender Hill, you don't go like there where my ma and them lives', but that's then supposed to be his friends there that side. Because during the course of him being in jail they're supposed to protect me. Now how can you warn me from people that are suppose look after me now? I'm not even supposed to be going to my mother but I'm a mother… I feel more safe now* [on the streets] *than feeling* [safe] *in Lavender Hill, you understand."* – Alice (not her real name), an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"Getting caught up with gangsterism and being attracted to men that is a gangster, that has this gangster ways... I got so deep in that, Joh! You won't believe the stuff that happened to me. I was raped, I was assaulted, basically, I was bruised and battered already so for me – I won't say that's it's not tough on the street – but for me, this is child's play in comparison to what I've been through… So ya, I could've been dead already but it's through the grace of God that I'm still here today…"* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

TOURISM

> *"The City of Cape Town is portrayed as a beautiful place to come to and enjoy in tourist brochures, but at the same time we still live with spatial inequalities and a great divide between those who have and those who have not."* – Ian Veary, Social Worker

In 2019, Cape Town was awarded the title 'Best City', as voted by readers of The Telegraph (British Newspaper). However, a major concern for the tourism industry is the high levels of crime, threatening to discourage people from visiting the City.

"*If we don't do something about safety and security, the SA tourism industry will go south and we will see fewer and fewer tourists coming here*" (Fin24, 2019[80]).

As described in Chapters 1 and 4, homeless individuals are perceived to be a problem to society, suspected by many to be criminals or petty thieves having an effect on tourism.

In media reports from 2010, the City of Cape Town was highly criticised for the removal of homeless individuals from the area surrounding the Green Point Stadium in preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. In an effort to "*hide the homeless*"*,* the media reported that Cape Town police were arresting homeless people and relocating some of them to Blikkiesdrorp on the outskirts of Cape Town[81]. The Mail & Guardian [82] spoke to residents of Blikkiesdorp, also referred to as "*Tin Can Town*"*,* with one resident remarking, "*this is basically like a concentration camp*."

Figure 31: Blikkiesdorp[83]

Just as the removal of homeless individuals happened in 2010 to accommodate tourists during the Soccer World Cup, so 2020 saw the removal of homeless individuals to Strandfontein during the COVID-19 national lockdown.

In both instances:

- The City says individuals had the choice whether or not to move to the new sites; however, homeless individuals reported that they were forcibly removed and given no choice.

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[80] https://www.news24.com/fin24/economy/sa-tourism-hamstrung-by-safety-and-security-issues-20191120

[81] For example, https://www.playthegame.org/news/news-articles/2010/cape-town-homeless-relocated-during-world-cup/ and https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=127593697

[82] Source: https://www.groundup.org.za/article/not-place-human-beings/

[83] Source: https://www.groundup.org.za/article/not-place-human-beings/

- Both sites were intended to be temporary or transitioning sites. In 2010, residents of Blikkiesdorp were waiting for permanent government housing; in 2020, the City indicated that they would assist homeless individuals into smaller shelters. However, only a small number of homeless individuals at Blikkiesdorp have received housing, and those kept at Strandfontein reported that a significant number of them were 'dumped' at the Culemborg bridge after the Strandfontein site was closed following a court order.

- Although 10 years apart, homeless individuals speaking at The Inkathalo Conversations commented that the treatment of homeless individuals by the City of Cape Town during both the Soccer World Cup and the Covid-19 pandemic was akin to conditions of a concentration camp.

5.3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC OBSTACLES TO EXITING HOMELESSNESS

AN EXCLUSIVE JOB MARKET

The evolving nature of the job market composition poses a threat to those seeking employment, as certain skill sets become misaligned with the requirements of the economy. While a mismatch in skills may result in individuals being unable to find suitable employment and ending up on the streets, it is also a concern for those who are already experiencing homelessness and seeking employment as a pathway out of homelessness. Concerns surrounding the skill set needed to participate in the modern-day economy were raised during the dialogues, questioning whether interventions are adapting to the changing landscape, and whether interventions have considered the impact of the 4th Industrial Revolution on those they serve.

> *"Very rapidly the job market is looking very different, it's looking much more like a cone. And the term that's being used is it's 'professionalising'… I am observing it in my work as well – the hardest part is finding a person a job, getting them to actually cross that line. So this has meant that so many people from the low skill, low income group have just been pushed into unemployment… More and more we need higher levels of education to fit within this kind of structure…"* – Vivien Plüddamenn-Hobbs, Social Worker/Streetscapes

As low-skilled work continues to be threatened by mechanisation and automation, Vivien Plüddamenn-Hobbs raised the need for alternatives to traditional approaches to reintegration, which often sees low-skilled work as an entry-point, particularly for homeless individuals who do not, in many cases, have higher levels of education.

> *"A lot of people have been excluded from high quality education and are now at such a disadvantage… How do we come up with maybe alternative models to* [the demands of the] *open labour market?"* – Vivien Plüddamenn-Hobbs, Social Worker/Streetscapes

The predicted mismatch of skills is shown in a report compiled by McKinsey & Company (2019)[84], which shows it is expected that South Africa will benefit from considerable productivity growth over the next decade. However, this could lead to significant displacement of jobs due to digitisation and automation, most notably in the manufacturing and retail sectors. The shift in the labour market is shown in Figure 32, suggesting that higher levels of education will be required to access employment opportunities.

In addition, there is growing literature that warns us that the formal labour market will not be the go-to place for employment in the future, as jobs growth in that sector will diminish and alternative income-generating opportunities will have to be designed.

Figure 32: The Changing Employment Landscape in South Africa (McKinsey & Company, 2019)
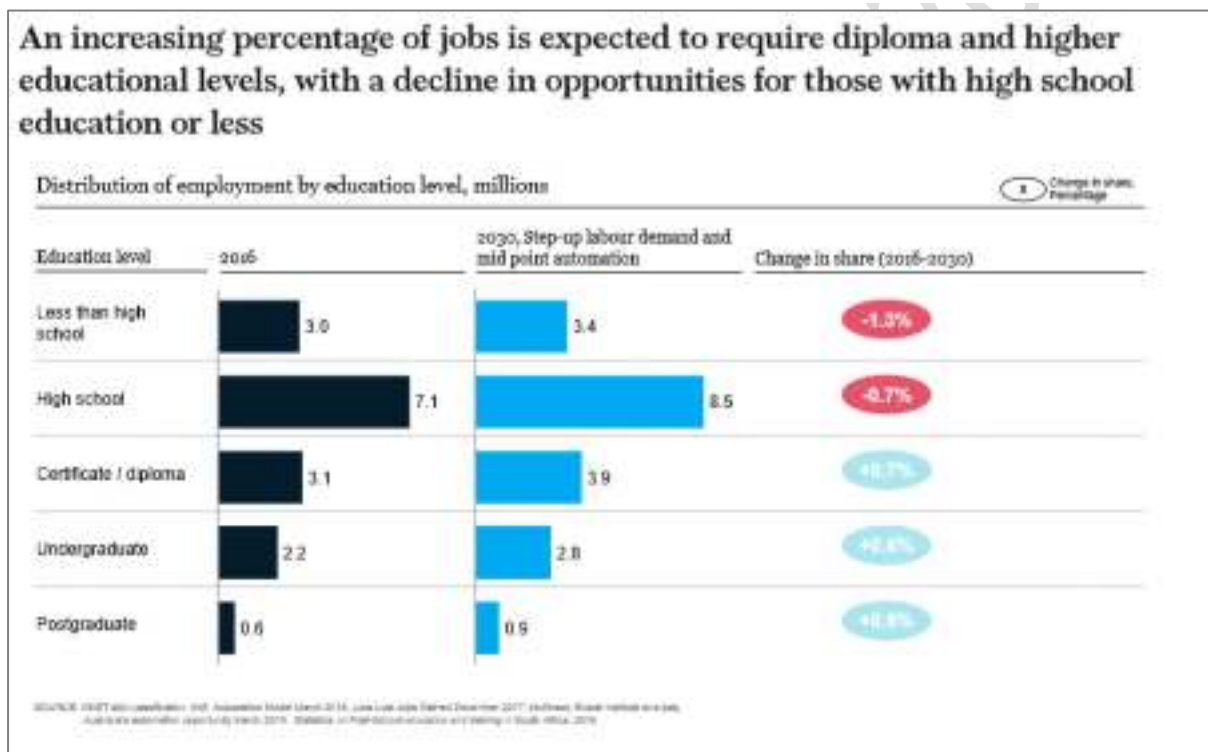
The issue of education and labour requirements is complex and requires cross-sectoral and systemic re-evaluation. However, if we continue to neglect this skill mismatch, unemployment among low-skilled workers will increase and the number of people who find themselves without a job and forced to the streets could rise. One solution proposed during dialogues was the reintroduction of apprenticeships.

> *"Once upon a time… we had 300 00, 400 000 apprentices in this country, which basically* [meant] *three or four years down the line* [that] *you had 300 000, 400 000 additional qualified skilled*

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artisans. We don't have that any longer; there is a very rapid closing window of skills to transfer and that needs to happen now." – Warren Conrad, The Hope Exchange

THE WORKING POOR

"The economic growth that we are seeing in this country [does not result in us] *seeing the trickle-down effect. The bottom of the economic pyramid is getting larger and larger and people in the middle income* [group]*, are falling through the cracks."* – Quinton Adams, The Shack Builder

In a country like South Africa, where a high unemployment rate persists, simply having a job may be seen as a privilege to many. However, employment does not guarantee adequate support, sustainability, or career progression. Low wage employment and the unavailability of decent jobs that facilitate economic mobilit, have resulted in what has been termed 'the working poor'.

"*Some workers are paid wages below the amount that's necessary to maintain a decent living standard. They are also not entitled to health or retirement benefits. Low-wage work is also associated with poor working conditions and job insecurity. These include poor health and safety standards, discrimination, and excessive work hours.*" (Yu, 2019[85])

In 2015, 24% of workers were considered 'low wage poor employed', using the minimum wage of R 3 500 per month (Yu, 2019). Chapters 1 and 4 in this report highlight the corrupt and/or abusive actions of those who are employed in safety, security and oversight roles in the City. Many homeless individuals participating in the conversations attested to the existence of sub-economies and exploitative practices in this band of the economy. In spite of this, participants showed empathy towards those perpetrating these injustices.

"On the streets, the CCIDs… the reason they stay in their low paying jobs, is because they've got the extra funds coming in from the homeless people. I mean if you are 'skarreling' on the station downstairs, selling earphones or whatever, you can only do that if you pay half of your amount to the CCIDs that are walking around there… They will ask you for money even before you put your stand up." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"It starts with the injustice of paying them minimum wage for their job… the employed people need to skarrel… they are not advancing, you see them years later and they haven't made any progress, there is nowhere to move up to." – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

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[85] Yu, 2019: https://theconversation.com/employed-but-still-poor-the-state-of-low-wage-working-poverty-in-south-africa-118018

GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

"You need to secure your employment because money is the thing that talks." – Participant in a Focus Group Discussion

"I know what is my downfall and what's gonna uplift me, so now I need a job to keep me busy, to be out of my mother's sight, to maintain my life and my kids' life, and then I'm gonna better myself." – Tina Brandt, an individual experiencing homelessness.

An individual's ability to earn an income does not only affect on their economic status and physical wellbeing; it also has a considerable effect on their mental health.

While there was an overwhelming call for the holistic development of homeless individuals, one of the most prominent needs expressed was for employment. Homeless individuals highlighted how crucial it is for them to be able to earn their own living and become independent. Through gainful employment or entrepreneurial efforts, homeless individuals have the opportunity to earn their own income as opposed to relying on donations or grants.

"They didn't ask for social workers, food, accommodation; they wanted a job, they know what they need." – Jesse Laitenen, Streetscapes

"At the new site where we are now, I am in a position now with Mr Booysen. We secured 65 EPWP [jobs], we are using the people who are living on the streets, and we created another 20 jobs as monitors where there are salaries – people can be independent, it brings such joy to people to see that they can be independent." – Kevin Pillay, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The **Special Feature: Economy of 'Skarreling**' speaks to the economic potential of gathering second-hand objects from bins for resale, but it is noted that this does not always pay off, as earnings are highly inconsistent and not always proportional to the time and effort required to scour the bins of the city. In addition, the activity of 'skarreling' is an insecure form of livelihood.

"I would be off the streets gladly – scratching in the bins doesn't always pay off." – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

OBSTACLES TO ACCESSING EMPLOYMENT

Education Levels

With high unemployment rates stifling South Africa's job seekers, even those with higher education are finding it increasingly more difficult to gain employment. The educational achievements of homeless individuals vary greatly, from those who did not complete secondary schooling to those with professional qualifications and registrations. However, as shown earlier, the majority of those who are unemployed have not completed matric, meaning that homeless individuals who are less qualified face the barriers of job requirements, economic prejudice, and social stigmas in accessing meaningful and longer-term employment.

Online Opportunities

Access to job opportunities is more difficult for homeless individuals who do not readily have access to online job advertisements, internet facilities, or the facilities to create a curriculum vitae (hard copies or online). In addition, many are not in possession of an identity document required by most employers.

> *"One of things that I'd like to see secured is the access to the internet, with that comes the e-learning. I'm not looking for a handout, I'll find the jobs myself. But just having access to the technology… When you fall below a certain point in life, to get up, just to that little ledge, where your fingernails, your fingers are bleeding, and just to have that ability to pick yourself up again would be great."* – A formerly homeless individual during Focus Group Discussion 1

Interviews

Those who are given the opportunity to interview for a job may struggle to prepare as they are without a home and do not have access to restful sleep, washing facilities, and appropriate clothing. As mentioned earlier, those exiting homelessness may also experience challenges with transport to get to interviews.

> *"Without a home, it's hard to find a job – a decent job; I'm willing to work in* [a] *factory."* – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In addition, there are the mental and emotional barriers to re-joining the work force, such as a lack of confidence and self-doubt, highlighting the importance of being supported through this transitionary phase.

> *"After I graduated* [from the shelter programmes] *I decided… I need to find myself a job. Very, very nervous, because my confidence was obviously trampled on* [while on the streets]*… I wasn't really confident in anything I was doing.* [I went for five interviews]*,* [and after] *every interview I asked myself: 'why am I not getting this job?'. I have experience, I worked for my mom… I had experience in admin, and* [I did an] *Office Basics* [programme] *at Fisantekraal… George* [shelter manager] *is so* [kind]*. He helped me by saying, 'What is it that you say to them? And how are you sitting? And how are you speaking?' And it just really really helped me… thinking that I know what I'm doing. I'm now working in Cape Gate, I'm the receptionist at a barber shop – amazing job guys, wow."* – Cindy Barnard, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Criminal Records

During the recruitment process, individuals with criminal records are often excluded. During a focus group with homeless individuals, some expressed their frustration at the fact that a prison record remains for 10 years, despite having served punishment. Explored in more depth in Chapter 4 and the **Special Feature: Homeless Tax**, the majority of prisoners are held for minor drug charges.

> *"[I] aced the first and second interview and on the third interview they do a criminal check before they employ you, and all my records popped up. They said they couldn't employ me in a financial company because of me having a criminal record, especially theft and so on. And you can't give financial advice when you have a record like that – so that went out of the window."* – Jean, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Many people who have been incarcerated find that when they leave these places of incarceration that there is no place to go to because society has rejected them." – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

Age

There are no provisions made for those who are elderly on the streets. Often, employment is not a viable option for older individuals living on the streets, as they are considered less employable.

"I am 50 now... who is going to hire me?" – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Income opportunities for those who are older but under the age of 60 are even more disadvantaged, as they are less employable and yet ineligible for an older person's grant. The older person's grant is a minimal amount that is not enough for a person to meet their basic needs, let alone live a dignified life.

EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is a national initiative that works across all spheres of government to support the unemployed, providing temporary work in an attempt to reduce poverty.

*"The programme provides an important avenue for labour absorption and income transfers to poor households, in the short to medium-term." (*South African Government, 2019[86]*)*

The National Department of Public Works coordinates the programme and monitors the quality of the programmes, encourages participation, and promotes community ownership.

Numerous individuals who participated in The Inkathalo Conversations indicated that at some point they had been employed through the EPWP Programme. These opportunities are often linked with shelter stays. However, the conversations revealed that the length of EPWP employment contracts is problematic. While it succeeds in providing short-term employment for unemployed homeless individuals, it does little to actually assist people to lift themselves out of poverty and off the street, with employment durations ranging between three and six months.

‘'If you look at the employment – according to the street-people process flow as stated in the policy, it states that there should be 'predictable, constant income stream'. And then two streams are [indicated]: grants and EPWP programme… There are challenges in terms of the EPWP programme – we have contractual challenges, the salary's relatively low, there's delays in payment. And then if we look at the skills transfer – somebody is currently removing invasive vegetation on Table Mountain as part of the EPWP programme for a few months. That person is going to be reintegrated soon, maybe after three months he's moving to Kimberley or a city; so how is that skill transferrable in order to increase their chances of employment in their places of origin or where

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[86] South African Government, 2019: https://www.gov.za/about-government/government-programmes/expanded-public-works-programme

they think they should be established going forward?" – Theodore Sass, PhD Candidate, University of the Western Cape

Others reported unsuccessful attempts at partaking in the EPWP:

"I put my name on the waiting list, even for [EPWP], for how many years, how many years ago? I filled in five papers, every year I fill in a paper, I go to that place… I never get a job…" – Tina Brandt, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In addition, the Expanded Public Works Programme has the following challenges as a solution for those experiencing homelessness,:

- According the Western Cape Government, only those who are between the ages of 16 and 35 are eligible to apply for a contract in the EPWP.
- EPWP workers are paid at the end of each month for work completed. While being paid at the end of each month is a common practice in the normal workplace, homeless individuals typically live from income they earn on a daily basis from their own skarreling activities. The EPWP environment of daily work and income only at month end, is a difficult system for homeless people to adjust to due to the lack of daily cash at hand. Issues like lack of access to budgeting and banking facilities to store or manage large sums of money while on the streets, makes the EPWP payment system a negative experience for a significant number of homeless people.
- Recent documentation[87] states that the minimum wage applicable to the EPWP is R92.31 per day or per task. While considered a stipend, this is below the national minimum monthly wage and is unliveable. Additionally, this is significantly less than what most homeless people would make from daily skarreling and begging activities.
- Participants in the conversations reported that when residing in a shelter, portions of their EPWP income were automatically diverted to shelter fees.

EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

"[If] the exit plan is only ever to find your own job… how are we then taking the context into consideration, that it might not be possible for everybody?" – Vivien Plüddamenn-Hobbs, Social Worker/Streetscapes

Gaining employment is frequently seen as the key liberator for homeless individuals, but it is not that simple. Many factors undermine an individual's employment status. Those who manage to gain employment may be at risk due to other factors such as mental health challenges, unresolved and latent trauma, continued substance use, and more localised economic and social conditions.

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[87] Source:
http://www.epwp.gov.za/documents/Infrastructure/Infrastructure%20incentive%20manual/EPWP_Integrated_Grant_Manual_2019_20_Version_11April2019.pdf

Substance Use Disorder

Some individuals expressed how they continued to use substances once employed, initially being able to function while balancing work and substance use. However, often the use of substances led to the loss of their employment opportunity.

"I worked at the restaurant and then literally a month into that I started using tik again… I would go drinking and started using tik but I tried to maintain a balance. But… I would say after four months of using, three months of using tik, it became a noticeable problem." – Jean, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I worked there for about a month and I was using tik every day, and I would come late, here and there, but he [the boss] would let it slide 'cause I would get him clients. And so on the day of signing – I had to sign a contract for [the sale of] a house and then after completing the house they would give us a contract for seven house,s which was like R2.4 million worth of work. I would [then be getting] my first proper commission. So, on that morning [the morning of the contract signing], I cut out because I was on a tik bender for 5 or 6 days. I hadn't slept and 6 o'clock that morning I cut out and I only woke up at 1 o'clock that afternoon, [with] him banging on the door because he's…[got a]… tracker on the bakkie. And when that happened, he just said he's really disappointed in me." – Jean, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I regained my health and my self-confidence, and I started working again, a real job now. I got a job in a call centre. But in that environment… it was [an] extremely pressurised environment. I started continuing my drug uses you know… I was a functional user, could still use and still function normally. But it didn't last long, and I found myself not wanting to go to work again. This whole work thing was just way too much... I just couldn't go to work every day and not be able to use, you know. It's too restricted so I stopped [working]… I don't want to do this anymore, I can't do this anymore… I went back to the dealer and bought some stuff and never went back to work again." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"So, after that I start to get job here, get job there, put money together, making my ID – and after that I go on with my life… I used to be an alcoholic and enjoying the people with the money. I've got money now. I'm going to Long Street, that was my vibe, I don't want to lie. I am going to Long Street to party tomorrow… I come by the place with ice cream, take a bucket, take water, wash me… I'm going again to work, I get money, I going tonight still in Long Street. So that was my behaviour." – Nosipho Magade, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Localisation and Access

South Africa has seen fluctuations of xenophobia over the years, with the issue of employment being particularly contentious among local low-income earners. There are South Africans who advance untrue narritives that foreign nationals receive opportunities in their stead, or that they prefer to provide jobs for one another, particularly in the informal sector. During the conversations, it was raised that within the homeless community there are complexities regarding nationality. In the **Special Feature: Economy of**

'Skarreling', commercial relations between foreign informal traders and homeless individuals suggest that there may exist unfair or exploitative practices.

Insecure Accommodation

Being employed does not necessarily mean that one can secure a home. Anda Mazantsana shared his experience of working as a field worker for the City of Cape Town's Department of Social Development assisting homeless people to access resources, while he himself was homeless.

Furthermore, individuals who secure both shelter residence and work through the EPWP, find that the time periods may overlap – should a three-month shelter stay, and a three-month employment contract be insufficient for escaping homelessness, individuals are left homeless and unemployed yet again.

FINANCIAL ALTERNATIVES TO EMPLOYMENT (SOCIAL GRANT SYSTEM)

Over 18 million social grants are paid each month as a form of financial assistance made available to qualifying individuals by the South African Government. The Western Cape is home to over 1.6 million grant recipients (Kelly, 2017), including some who are experiencing homelessness. The intention of these grants is to alleviate poverty; however, through dialogues with participants as well as desktop research conducted, the following issues have been identified:

- Refugees are able to access social grants upon being granted official refugee status by the South African government. However, this application process faces a backlog resulting in extensive time delays in the processing of applications, during which time individuals do not qualify to receive assistance.
- Proof of identity is required in order to apply for a grant – it was frequently noted throughout the dialogues that many homeless individuals do not have identity documents. Many individuals experienced the removal of their identity documents by Law Enforcement officers. Some issues noted are:
  - No provision is made for unemployed persons who cannot afford the R140 to attain an identity document.
  - Homeless individuals face long waiting periods at the Department of Home affairs, while they do not have the luxury of taking time away from working, 'skarreling,' or meeting their basic needs such as preparing their sleeping place for the night.

    "They keep you there waiting [intentionally], because they know you need to get going to build your house or eat." – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

- Homeless individuals not in receipt of social grants are often excluded from accessing shelters. This emerged a number of times during The Inkathalo Conversations.

  "Shelters [are] *only taking in people that have social grants from disability; the prejudice is obviously against those who don't. It is a huge, huge issue… I mean social services came to pick me up one day, well I chose to go with* [them]*, it's actually happened on two occasions… There are these two places,* [names the two shelters] *– off we went, I already had a good feeling this wasn't*

going to happen but I heard them talking on the phone [saying]*, 'yes, I have a two places… you can drop two guys', but knowing the* [names the shelter]*, they expect you to have the R700, R800 cash type thing every month for them, and they want some sort of* [payment] *security for them.*

So, when we got there, the manager on duty said, 'and you are?'. 'I'm so and so from Social Development these are the two guys'… [the shelter manager said]*, 'let me check for you'.* [Social Development worker said]*, 'but you said you had two beds available?' 'No, no let me check... I am sorry they are taken.' We had* [already] *filled out a form and obviously says what social grants you are getting... it was a waste of time, again. 'Unless you have some form of social grant unfortunately, we can't take you.' "* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

- Informal sector workers do not qualify for the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). This has particularly disadvantaged informal sector workers who were not able to receive assistance during the COVID-19 national lockdown.

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES ON THE STREETS

Women make up a smaller proportion of the homeless community, according to City of Cape Town enumeration reports[88]. Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations did not delve into the experiences specific to women who have lived on the streets, which has been identified as a topic for further consideration in future phases. Nonetheless, what emerged from Phase One is notable and is discussed here.

"My name is Grizelda Grootboom, survivor of human trafficking and prostitution and drug trafficking… I'm also [a] *survivor of gender-based violence and abortion… those titles obviously came through by being homeless first."* – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

In discussing the female experience of homelessness, the paradox surfaces of the unmistakable resilience of women versus the broader narrative of women as a 'vulnerable group,' as presented by Dr Heidi Sauls and referred to in Chapters 2 and 8. In this piece, these two sides of the proverbial coin are presented, while this paradox remains unresolved in the absence of deeper probing.

The strength, tenacity and ingenuity of women who have experienced homelessness was evident during the conversations, as participants shared their stories. One participant shared her opinion of what it takes to survive as a woman on the street:

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[88] https://resource.capetown.gov.za/cityassets/Media%20Centre%20Assets/Enumeration%20Presentation-Janine.pdf

"Vir my, wat 'n vrou is, om te skarrel, jy moet n bietjie, as jy a vroumens is, jou stem 'n bietjie harder maak. As jy gaan sag is, dan gaan jy nie survive op straat nie… as jy gat 'n vroumens is en jy's sag, en jy't niemand om jou nie, wat by jou bystaan nie, daar gaan jy nie survive nie…"

[Translated: "For me, who's a woman, to 'skarrel,' if you're a woman, you must make your voice a little louder. If you're going to be soft, then you won't survive on the street… If you're a woman and you're soft, and you have no one around you, standing by you, you won't survive."] – Nosipho Magade, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Another woman shared her courage in leaving behind a gang ridden family life and all that was familiar in search of her own peace of mind. Yet another trusted her ability to protect and uplift herself on the streets of Claremont, where she has experienced personal growth and freedom from her traumatic past by her own strength.

It was noted by others that women on the street are often the backbone of relationships and families:

"'Can I just say something about women on the street, and any of you who have worked with people on the street will know. If there [is] strength [in] women, it is the women on the street. I don't know of one relationship, the men might think they're in control of those relationships, but I promise you if it wasn't for the strength of those women nothing would happen in those households… I cannot believe the woman I'm sitting next to, I mean I used to [live] next to Nosipho on the mountain for a very long time… I cannot tell you what strength it's taken for her to become the person that she is today…" – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

On the other side of this paradox is the growing conversation about the vulnerability of women in our society. The safety of women in South Africa has gained increasing media and political attention under the banner of gender-based violence (GBV). A presentation by the University of Cape Town (Figure 33) highlights the prevalence of violence against women and children.

Figure 33: Presentation by University of Cape Town[89]

The dangers and violence experienced by women in their communities and at home have been cited as potential reasons for some women seeking safety in safe houses, women's shelters and even migrating to the streets. In cases where women who are financially dependent on their partners elect to leave their homes, they are often rendered income-less. One participant's account demonstrated the link between her spouse's actions and her own financial independence:

> *"Even after rehabilitating myself, I told myself I need a job. I got a job, and for how long didn't I work [while] I was sober, until my husband went to jail and then I had to give up everything and going back…"* – Alice (not her real name), an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In addition, women may experience further oppression and unfair treatment in seeking out justice, as alluded to by a participant in the conversations:

> *"A woman wants to get divorced; the court doesn't give her the level of respect… The first thing they ask is 'what's your surname?' The minute they find out the surname is this, they look at this person, [and see] he has enough power to make sure that this case gets closed. Automatically that woman becomes homeless. Her children becomes homeless."* – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

Anti-trafficking NGO, A21, notes that "*an individual becomes vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation when they are exposed to risk factors like instability, violence and abuse, poor education, substance misuse, poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and isolation*" (A21, 2020[90]). Notably, homelessness is among these risk factors.

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[89] Source: https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/day_2_session_2_gbv_lillian_artz.pdf
[90] A21, 2020: https://www.a21.org/content/human-trafficking/gqe0rc

According to A21, 53% of the total population is vulnerable to human trafficking, with a rescue rate of less than 1%. Grizelda Grootboom shared her story during The Inkathalo Conversations, amplifying the voices of the 99% who do not manage to escape a life of human trafficking. Trafficking is accompanied by the forced use of substances, sexual exploitation, and a complete lack of safety and security.

> "I got kicked out of the house in the middle of the night. They brought another younger girl in. But you don't have time for emotion when your whole system is filled with drugs and you smell like semen and you wet yourself through the town." – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

Sexual exploitation occurs not only in the context of trafficking but is also found on the streets. Those engaged in sex work face these dangers but due to sex work being a criminal act, the abuses encountered by sex workers go unreported. Finding justice for these individuals is therefore very difficult, as explained in an emotional account of a murdered woman:

> "I befriended a girl… called Nonki, and she was a sex worker, and she got killed… by a very… she got killed um, and it was, it was... it was um it was a very very… one of these famous artists that actually murdered her…" [At this point Rudy was too emotional to continue].

> "So I met Nonki… and she was… a sex worker…she used to work, sometimes in the Gardens, sometimes in Darling Street… and this particular night I walked past… and I walked on… Next morning, I came back and I heard that… she wasn't back yet and I couldn't find her. I then heard that… they found her… in one of the factories and someone had killed [her]... [We] went to the police station and this long story… but one of our friends that's involve with another NGO… we've got a friend that's involved at SWEAT, which is a NGO that helps sex workers… they started helping us try and find… the person that did it and what actually went on and that kind of thing.

> I started frequenting… SWEAT's projects and… that's where I actually started realising that there's a lot of injustices and stuff… that society thinks it's okay to hide they don't want to touch that stuff… I realised how, how people that are not your… that doesn't look like [you], or that doesn't talk like [you], or doesn't work like [you], or doesn't speak like the normal people spea,… how their dignity, how their value, how they are just taken for nothing. How they are seen as not worthy of dignity. They just not seen basically. And that was the start of about four years of running to court and you know lobbying… in 2017 I think it was, I think the case ran on for about four years… the perpetrator was found guilty in the high court." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Throughout The Inkathalo Conversations, homeless individuals raised how the systems were not designed to help them. For victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation these systems criminalise those who may not choose their position instead of seeking to understand the harsh conditions under which these women may live, thereby preventing them from having a safe way to access justice.

> "There are times when you get locked up in a brothel and you know the raids would come and nobody's there that looks like a female in the police station, and asking who's your name. Because

you're a criminal, you know you were found in the brothel, you a prostitute.… And now we all know back then, [you're] *26, black, no ID, you're blacklisted, you have a criminal record. You don't even* [remember] *your name, there is no assistance for you, you're not going to get it. You are a problem to society; you are a problem to the system."* – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

5.4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

"I started a business and I am going to employ a homeless person..." – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The Inkathalo Conversations came to learn how homeless individuals, many with great entrepreneurial rigour and spirit, found ways to be economically active in their spaces. Within the homeless community there exists a world of innovative and creative possibilities concerning economic reconstruction and reform. Many homeless individuals are skilled with expertise, insights, knowledge, and experience.

While South Africa's high unemployment rate presents disappointing prospects, it can be seen as an opportunity to focus on job creation and support local entrepreneurs on their various journies to self-employment. During The Inkathalo Conversations, several individuals expressed their aspirations to start their own businesses, allowing them to exercise autonomy in raising their standard of living and employing others around them to do the same. A strong sense of agency arose as individuals expressed their desires as homeless individuals, with the appropriate support from government and NGOs, to further develop their own business ideas and become self-sufficient.

> *"How about self-sustaining the homeless [people]?… If I come with a business plan to you as a street person, saying, I've been 'skarreling' here, I've been working on the deck, I've been washing taxis for x and x and x amount, this is how much money I've made and I feel that my fellow homeless brother or sister can benefit from this… [What] I want to know is, the information and the tools, that we always say the NGOs should be helping us with this – what do you think is the best way for the homeless person like myself, who has a brilliant concept to grow his fellow brother, develop him, to take him off the street – and if I come with that business plan as a homeless person… What if I come with an idea of creating jobs? …Why isn't there businesses strictly for the homeless and only by the homeless?"* – Stanley, an individual who has experienced homelessness, during The Hope Exchange's presentation.

Homeless individuals expressed dreams of businesses run by homeless individuals for other homeless individuals. However, when explaining why they have not yet been successful in starting their businesses, responses included a lack of support, no access to financing, or a lack of some critical skills and tools to grow their ideas.

> *"My dream is to start a company where we homeless people can park cars. You get a location you can park cars there whatever and then from [there] you do your rehab. I have dreams, I have goals and the sad thing about it is that any NGO I go to and I tell them 'here is my business plan, can you help me with it?' They gonna look at me 'no guy I can't help you.' 'Why can't you help me?' 'Because you on the street.' So, it's kinda bitter sweet because here I am trying to get off the street coming to you for help to get off the street but the only thing you see is the street."* – Donovan, a participant experiencing homelessness.

Chapter 3 explores various interventions presented by sector stakeholders during The Inkathalo Conversations. Such programmes focused predominantly on skills development and vocational training. Homeless individuals voiced their frustration with job-readiness programmes as they felt they were developed 'for the homeless' instead of 'with them'. As a result, some felt that they do not focus on the appropriate skill sets and assistance for individuals taking into account their needs, interests, passions and goals. NGOs assisting with employment appear to be unable to assist specifically with the needs of homeless individuals with entrepreneurial ventures.

> *"…don't you think, if someone comes into your space, saying: 'this is what I have' and [then] you can mentor them into building something bigger for not only themselves but [also] for other people. Don't you think that will be better than just asking the City: 'listen here we need your money to do this…' "* – Stanley, an individual who has experienced homelessness, asking Warren Conrad a question during The Hope Exchange's presentation.

The often-misunderstood informal economy of 'skarreling' shows the entrepreneurial spirit of those on the street, engaging in resourceful, non-traditional economic activities without the support of the sector or the government. During a conversation on the economy of 'skarreling', several individuals expressed their frustration with the societal perception that homeless people are lazy and that their actions of 'scratching through bins' irritate homeowners (explored in Chapter 1, as well as the **Special Feature: Economy of 'Skarreling'**). Despite homeless individuals being perceived in this light, their contribution through the reuse and recycling of used goods is beneficial both socio-economically and environmentally. Not enough is being done to assist homeless individuals to grow and improve the efficiency of their recycling efforts, as 'skarreling' is not seen as a proper job.

> *"Ultimately, they are recycling. If you see the things that come out of bins, even the broken things that people change and make into artefacts."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Recycling is just one of many ways homeless individuals are economically active and have in effect taken it upon themselves to fulfil a need within society while meeting their own basic needs. The **Special Feature on the Economy of 'Skarreling'** explores ways in which homeless individuals generate an income through skarreling in homeowners' bins to find objects that can be refurbished, reused or resold.

Access to the 'Informal' Economy

Should a homeless individual wish to start their own business as a street vendor, they are required by the City of Cape Town to obtain an informal trading permit. Below is the by-law that governs the sale of goods in public places, which would apply to homeless individuals who may wish to sell their 'skarrel' findings.

CONTROL OF GOODS OFFERED FOR SALE – Streets, Public Places and the Prevention of Noise Nuisance By–law[91]

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[91] https://openbylaws.org.za/za-cpt/act/by-law/2007/streets-public-places-noise-nuisances/eng/

16. (a) The City may, after consideration and consultation and implementing the necessary enabling licensing system, designate public places, public roads or road intersections where no person shall display or offer for sale any goods or produce except as may be prescribed by the City, provided this will not apply to the selling of newspapers at intersections or to the sale of goods by non-governmental organisations or developmental organisations which may apply for exemption for all their traders.

(b) Notwithstanding paragraph (a), the City may issue licenses for the sale of goods and produce and in so doing, the City may limit the number of permits for an area and stipulate such conditions as it may from time to time prescribe.

However, during the conversation, individuals explained the near impossibility of obtaining one of these permits. The Inkathalo Conversations team attempted to apply for an informal trading permit to test the process, through the City of Cape Town application portal[92]. From the outset, it was obvious that the process systematically excluded those who are homeless in the following ways:

1. Step One: "*Before you can apply, you must register for e-services*": this requires that a homeless individual must have access to the internet in order to create an account, create an application and manage their application. Homeless individuals would have to incur the cost of data to access the site.

2. Upon registering for e-services, the City's website states that the *"application does not fully support mobile phones"*, prompting users to, "*please use your laptop or desktop instead.*" Access to a mobile phone is a lot more attainable than a laptop or desktop. An individual would therefore need to make use of an internet café at an additional cost.

3. In order to register for e-services the City also requires "*up-to-date contact information*" and "*municipal account and property information close at hand,*" for the purpose of supplying a proof of residence. Without a residence, a homeless individual is excluded yet again.

Without an informal trading permit, Law Enforcement, through the implementation of by-laws, are entitled to confiscate a trader's stock. This makes becoming a street vendor unviable, requiring immense resilience to continually have to restart a business on top of the costs incurred with procuring new stock.

> *"…it's the access, where you are prejudiced when you try and apply for these permits. From day one, I wanted to be a legal trader because if you're not a legal trader, they're going to confiscate your stock – that's what Law Enforcement does and they've got the right to do so, it's a by-law – and unfortunately whilst you are in the process of doing it [registering], Law Enforcement will make [attempts] to derail that [registration]. And they did so, although I had a paper proving I was in the process of applying for my permit, I was constantly harassed, my stock was constantly taken away,*

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[92] https://www.capetown.gov.za/City-Connect/Apply/Licences-and-permits/Business-and-trade/Apply-for-an-informal-trading-permit

it was start up again and start up again." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Should a homeless individual be successful in setting up a profile, the City of Cape Town Informal Trading FAQ[93] page pre-empted the following challenges:

4. Once registered as a business partner, available trading bays will be advertised on the City's e-Service portal. In order to be able to check when bays open, homeless individuals must have access to the internet. There does not appear to be a matching system to receive a bay close to where one resides, nor a waiting list to notify an applicant when one becomes available.

5. The City generally does not provide storage facilities so one needs to provide one's own. Trading structures must comply with City by-laws and be removed at the end of the day's trading, requiring the storage of stock. Given their precarious living conditions, homeless individuals typically do not have a safe space to store their stock during the night, either risking theft or having to manually transport their stock to storage, and possibly incurring storage costs.

As discussed in detail throughout this report, entrepreneurial homeless individuals are often harassed. Additionally, the application process for trading permits is prohibitive and they experience informal 'taxation' from the security infrastructure.

> *"But what can you do, no one is standing up for that small entrepreneur that's trying… the same group of Law Enforcement [allegedly Law Enforcement officers in uniform but with badges removed] that have been watching me since I've been walking from Culemborg… they stopped me and they say do I have a permit now to do this cleaning work… they've been watching me the whole week, up and down, from 6'oclock to 4 o'clock… they took my 'skoppie'… they say 'no this looks like City Council's goed [things]'… then the one guy takes my broom, takes the head off… afterwards they searched me and…they found the 180 [Rand]… then I'm thinking now, okay now you found no drugs, can I please get my 180… they said no…this money was acquired [inaudible, implying the money was obtained illegally]…*
>
> *I understand you have by-laws right, but I don't understand why you have to confiscate my money, you know, and my working equipment, you know, it's not like I harass people, I ask them if I can clean… I wake up every morning, I put in a goal and process for myself to… also be an example to another person…"* – Stanley, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The above processes beg the question: how accessible is the informal sector for unemployed, vulnerable people? The City of Cape Town's Resilience Strategy outlines the legislative context of different spheres of government. Here it states that local government must make and administer by-laws, as well as hold local government competencies including that of street trading. It is therefore within the local government mandate to address these obstacles to entrepreneurship faced by homeless individuals.

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[93] City of Cape Town Informal Trading FAQ:
http://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Procedures%2c%20guidelines%20and%20regulations/Informal_Trading_FAQs.pdf

5.5. WHAT DOES HOPE LOOK LIKE?

Like many cities across the world, the City of Cape Town faces many challenges in achieving social and economic inclusion. However, during The Inkathalo Conversations a glimmmer of hope was identified through the work of individuals and organisations in bringing about socio-economic development.

An Informal Economy and an Entrepreneurial Flare

The **Special Feature on The Economy of 'Skarreling'** presents interesting insights into the lively informal economic activities at play among those experiencing homelessness. By redeeming discarded items from waste bins and sidewalks, then reselling these items among one another or at existing markets, homeless individuals play an important role in recycling.

Despite the numerous challenges faced by homeless individuals in obtaining informal trading permits (discussed in this chapter), one individual successfully elevated his business from street-based selling to market-based selling, trading for some time at Greenmarket Square. Albeit an outlying example, this may present a case for easing access to similar trading opportunities for those experiencing homelessness, presenting an opportunity to achieve upward economic mobility and a change in lifestyle.

> *"It can become a huge business for you, and you can actually work yourself out of homelessness; and everyone wants to do that, don't let anybody tell you that they don't…."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Furthermore, various entrepreneurial initiatives and ideas presented by homeless individuals during The Inkathalo Conversations – from familiar businesses such as car washes to dreams of innovative, site-based drug rehabilitation services – not only showcase a flare for creativity and contextual value creation, but also a desire to be agents of their own social and economic development.

Collaboration towards Inclusive Development

Andrea Couvert from the Friends of Trafalgar Park[94] community organisation started his presentation by reflecting on the City of Cape Town's directive to use its budget to promote socio-economic inclusion. Andrea highlighted The City's obligation to spend correctly and strategically in order to meet its constitutional mandates.

> *"It is a requirement [of] our Constitution… section 153 state[s] that one of the rule[s] of the local government is to promote social and economic development and to organise themselves in order to achieve this."* – Andrea Couvert, Friends of Trafalgar Park

Chapter 7 of the South African Constitution – Local Government[95]
Section 153 – Developmental Duties of Municipalities

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[94] https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofTrafalgarPark
[95] https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/constitution/SAConstitution-web-eng-07.pdf

A municipality must –

    (a) Structure and manage its administration and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community; and

    (b) Participate in national and provincial development programmes

Andrea Couvert promoted the need for economic activities like coffee shops and food stalls in suitable public areas, such as parks or promenades. Although many such activities exist in Cape Town, his proposal aimed to be deliberate in its inclusion of those experiencing homelessness, facilitating their participation in the ownership and running of these small enterprises. He identified two barriers to implementation, noting how these may be mitigated:

(1) The perception that the public will have a problem with these activities.

    In Andrea's experience, working with the public to promote this kind of activity may not be as difficult as one might think.

(2) Reliance on public funds.

    In order to promote sustainability and relieve the burden on public funds, Andrea believes that interventions designed to stimulate economic activity should be linked to the private market and could benefit from the establishment of social enterprises.

As a member of the Friends of Trafalgar Park, Andrea shared his experience of the successful collaboration between the communities of Woodstock and District Six, and the City to create an Integrated Management Framework to drive the vision for the development and landscaping of the park. The public park situated in Woodstock aims to offer coffee shops, a restaurant, historical tours, a local market and concerts, in addition to the existing public pool and play facilities – all of which present numerous economic opportunities. Andrea believes the incorporation of social enterprises that are inclusive of all would serve the community to lead and drive such a project, and sees those experiencing homelessness as key participants and co-beneficiaries in the realisation of this development.

Figure 34: Aerial view of the proposed development of Trafalgar Park; Friends of Trafalgar Park Facebook Group[96]

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[96] Friends of Trafalgar Park Facebook Group: https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofTrafalgarPark/

"The Friends of Trafalgar Park is a community group working to see Woodstock's Trafalgar Park go from strength to strength and be realised as a wonderful park for all to enjoy." – Friends of Trafalgar Park Facebook Page

While Chapter 1 explores the perceptions and actions of society towards homeless individuals, Chapter 2 explores the mandates towards homelessness among different spheres of government. The Friends of Trafalgar Park initiative in some ways begins to challenge some of the key issues explored in those chapters. Through community agency, collaboration with stakeholders, and taking responsibility for the wellbeing of their communities, they have managed to demonstrate hope for improving the livelihoods of those within their sphere of influence.

5.6. READER'S REFLECTIONS

Reflection is an important practice in system transformation. The reader is encouraged to consider the following reflection points from a personal, organisational, community, and systemic perspective:

1. What does an Apartheid-reversing lifestyle look like and am I living one?
2. In what ways has the City made progress towards reducing poverty and inequality?
3. What challenges have I experienced in gaining employment, including gender bias, pay disparities, or difficulties accessing employment?
4. Does my neighbourhood allow me to easily commute to work or studies? How affordable is my daily cost of mobility?
5. Am I aware of any racial privileges that I may have? Have I explored the discrimination some individuals may face as a result of their race?
6. How has gangsterism affected my community?
7. Is it fair to prioritise tourists over those who live and work in the City?
8. In what ways does 'skarreling' compare to my own recycling efforts?
9. Having read the obstacles facing homeless individuals, how would I attempt to better my own life if in their situation?
10. What opportunities might exist to support the entrepreneurial goals of those experiencing homelessness?

SPECIAL FEATURE: ECONOMY OF 'SKARRELING'

Special Features highlight specific issues, events, or occurrences, which reveal the many faces of homelessness.

"The art of survival and sustenance." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

How do people experiencing homelessness earn an income? While significant numbers of homeless people are South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) grant recipients (grant for older persons; disability grant; war veterans grant; care dependency grant; foster child grant; child support grant; grant-in-aid; social relief or distress grant) or Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) participants for which they get paid, they also earn an income from the informal economy through a system called 'skarreling.'

Modern society has a formal economy with an organised system of employment through which its participants earn an income.

It also has an informal economy comprised of a *"diversified set of economic activities, enterprises, jobs, and workers that are not regulated or protected by the State. The concept 'informal economy' originally applied to self-employment in small unregistered enterprises. It has been expanded to include waged employment in unprotected jobs."* (Wiego)[97]

It is estimated that 61% of the global workforce earn their income from the informal economy (Wiego).

The homeless community who participated in the Inkathalo Conversations reported on the very expansive and active 'skarreling economy' that they operate and participate in across the city.

To be clear, 'skarreling' is a word used by homeless people to refer to their attempts to earn an income. They also refer to the jobs in the formal economy as 'the skarrel of the rich people' and say 'everyone has a skarrel'. The word 'skarrel' is closely related to the word 'hustle' used by modern society to indicate 'hard work or side jobs to formal employment, often associated with having to push through difficulties to earn an income in order to survive'.

At the outset of this section, The Inkathalo Conversations wishes to place on record that it reports on the economy of 'skarreling' in order to accurately describe the economic activities many homeless individuals undertake in order to survive. This does not in any way imply that The Inkathalo Conversations considers this an acceptable way to earn an income – no human being should have to scratch through another's bin for scraps of food or items to sell. The practice of 'skarreling' is testament to the ingenuity, strength and determination of individuals experiencing homeless, attributes that would advance them and their communities around them were they given the opportunity to perform dignified work. It remains our view that dignified work should be the preferred pathway out of homelessness.

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[97] https://www.wiego.org/informal-economy

The skarreling economy is a big part of the local economy. Globally this particular class of workers are referred to as waste pickers. Many of the waste picker workers in South Africa are individuals without formal housing or are regarded as homeless people in the traditional sense of the word. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (Unido) estimates[98] that South Africa has around 60 000 waste pickers from both the formal and informal sectors who are responsible for up to 90% of the country's recycling output.

The Informal Economy Monitoring Study done in India, (IEMS[99]) stated that 65% of the waste pickers surveyed indicated that earnings from waste picking were the main source of household income.

The 'skarreling' economy is a key income and jobs provider for homeless people. It increases meaning and mental stability, provides an income – so much so that some have sufficient income to leave the streets permanently or semi-permanently.

Waste pickers also provide reusable materials to other enterprises. Many reported selling their collected goods on to plastic, metal, and other forms of recycling companies.

In Belo Horizonte, Brazil and Nakuru, Kenya, collected material is sold to artists and groups to recreate and re-imagine art work.[100] Others also profit from waste pickers' work – many waste pickers sell to buyers, who then sell the material for a profit. Waste pickers also pay private carriers and transport drivers.

Homeless people 'skarreling' through bins divert a significant quantity of materials from the waste stream to the recycling system. The WIEGO report on Waste Pickers [101] found waste pickers recovered approximately 20 per cent of all waste material in three of six cities studied (Cluj Napoca, Romania; Lima, Peru; Quezon City, Philippines; Cairo, Egypt; Lusaka, Zambia; Pune, India). The study found more than 80 000 people were responsible for recycling about three million tons of waste per year across the six cities.

'Skarreling' items that get removed from waste bins for recycling is also one of the cheapest and fastest ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Recycling reduces emissions 25 times more than incineration does. (Tellus Institute 2008 in WIEGO Report on Waste Pickers)

Where most homeowners see scratching through street-side waste bins as a nuisance factor and an act of disturbance, experienced homeless individuals take it upon themselves to reuse, repurpose, and recycle goods that others have discarded.

The term 'skarreling' may also encompass more traditional economic activities, including washing and parking cars, doing handy work, and odd jobs. It was continuously emphasised during the conversations

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[98]   https://www.iol.co.za/news/environment/for-waste-pickers-one-mans-trash-becomes-another-ones-treasure-52886b8f-2243-4d55-b108-4eca0f90693c

[99]https://www.wiego.org/informal-economy/occupational-groups/waste-pickers

[100] https://www.wiego.org/informal-economy/occupational-groups/waste-pickers

[101] https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2011-cwg-booklet-economicaspects.pdf

that 'skarreling' is a term used by homeless people to refer to engaging in meaningful work to sustain themselves.

> *"'Skarreling' is a term that is used to describe how homeless people gain access to resources that they need to survive while they are homeless. It could include the basic activity of scratching through bins through to a defined economic activity such as… washing cars, asking people if they can wash cars or park cars… all the way through to a traditionally defined activity. Because in homeless language even scratching through your bin is economic activity."* – Lorenzo Davids, Lead Facilitator: The Inkathalo Conversations

The Inkathalo Conversations hosted a specific dialogue to better understand the structuring and positioning of 'skarreling' as a sub-economy. South Africa has an estimated 200 000 waste pickers or waste reclaimers, of which the large majority are homeless people who navigate the racial, economic, and physical divides of South Africa's largest and wealthiest cities to sell metals, plastic, and paper to recycling depots.

A Reuters article in 2019 estimated that the skarreling economy (waste picking) "*recycle 80 to 90% of plastic and packaging in South Africa, saving authorities up to 750 million Rand ($53 million) in landfill costs*", the Pretoria-based Council for Scientific and Industrial Research estimates[102].

Tamsin Oxford reflects on the research done by Dr Melanie Samson, a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography in the School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies at WITS University, which found that *"reclaimers collect around 80 to 90 percent of all post-consumer packaging and paper left behind. If they stopped tomorrow, there would be no recycling industry in South Africa[103]."*

"They are the unseen but essential connection between the waste management system and the economy and they're subsidising the entire thing. They're not being paid for the work that they do, only a very small portion of the sale price on the recyclables they collect. Considering how much money they save government, they are performing a critical role and yet they are largely stigmatised and harassed and not seen as people," she says. *"Despite the valuable service reclaimers provide, they are stigmatized - on the street and at home."*

It emerged that 'skarreling' presents an opportunity for the vast majority of homeless people to practice autonomy in spite of their lack of housing and to engage in meaningful work that not only has financial rewards but also contributes to a sense of agency, purpose, and even pride.

> *"You see, my friend, what you're doing is working, we call it 'skarreling'… but I say it's work, because everybody here 'skarrels.' And if you think about it, everybody does 'skarrel,' no matter if you working at Pick 'n Pay, no matter if you working in Parliament, you're still 'skarreling' to… sustain yourself for the future… When I was staying in Town I started a company, Front of House*

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[102] https://www.reuters.com/article/us-safrica-waste-cities-feature-idUSKCN1T00XF
[103] https://www.wits.ac.za/curiosity/stories/the-war-on-waste-pickers.html

Cleaning… it was just out of desperation, because, you know, I need to eat. So, everything I got, from the bucket, from the brick, from the… paint brush, everything, I went to the 'skarrel'… I went out 'skarreling'… Everybody 'skarrels'… 'Skarrel,' for me, means work… Even 'till this day, I'm still 'skarreling' for a bigger cause." – Stanley, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Chapter 5 and the **Special Feature on Homeless Tax** explore the obstacles to accessing the formal economy and earning a wage for those who live on the street. 'Skarreling' provides the opportunity to engage in economic activity, giving individuals something to work towards, keeping them occupied and engaged. Carlos Mesquita explained the benefits of having something to keep him busy and focused on something other than his substance dependency:

"I now had something to do… [found a way to] earn, that was London Street in Sea Point… They suggested a dustbin – you couldn't have told me anything worse… it wouldn't have been my preferred option. But let me tell you, it turned out to be the best thing that I could have done; I ended up building up a business from it and survived because of it. I think I survived my addiction because… I had something to do every day. I woke up at 5 o'clock in the morning, was on the parade at 7 or 6 o'clock and only left at about 6 o'clock [at night]; I had my customers – I refused to be high with my customers – so I would only do drugs after the workday. So, it gave structure to my life." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Several homeless individuals explained that they needed to gain the necessary skills and experience before they saw the fruits of their labour. Donovan recounted his first experience of parking cars in Claremont, saying, "*I put on a bib; I was standing here like: 'what do I do?'. I don't know how to do this, what do I do*?" Soon, from watching other guards and developing his own style, he began to understand his trade and to take pride in the service he provides.

"… I try to do everything to the best of my ability. Because I only have that, I look at it that way: I only have that. If you allow me to guard your car that is all I have, so if I'm going to let anything happen to your car that is the way you're going to look at me… 'You wash my car, but look here my windows is broken, my tires [are] flat…' So, I try, or we try to provide a service that is not only good but can put a smile on your face. That's why whenever you get out of your car and I parked you, I engage with you, I try to keep a conversation, I try to put a smile on your face, so you feel… like you want to park here… For me that is a big thing." – Donovan, an individual experiencing homelessness.

"When I came to Claremont, for me parking cars, there was a guy Erik who used to park at the back, so he gave me this piece of parking. Like Donovan said also, he didn't know how to park, he didn't know how to speak. So, I first started greeting the people, and then afterwards I decided, no, I would like to give my testimony to them, just explain to them. And I would tell the people they can pay what they want to pay, they don't have to pay… For me, parking is like, it's the only thing I have, so I will put a lot into it, and I will get more out." – Lucien, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The Value of 'Skarreling'

During the conversations, those experiencing homelessness were asked about the financial benefit of various forms of 'skarreling.' As a form of income, 'skarreling' proved to be sustainable for some individuals, but many acknowledged the inconsistency of what one could expect to earn.

> *"For me the stuff that I get for the week, I put it together on Friday – I got my own people, I take my stuff to them and sometimes I sell my stuff to Carlos, maybe he give me R100, maybe next week I take my stuff to one of them, they give me R200. Sometimes, if they don't have money, I take the amount that they have, [to] survive."* – Nosipho Magade, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"On a good I day… R150, on a bad day, maybe an R80 – that's me alone from parking."* – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"So the most I make is on one day maybe R700 and the least was R200."* – Lucien, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"Scratching in the drums doesn't always pay off."* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

A hypothetical example of the value of the Skarreling Economy

The 'skarreling' economy can place as much as R1 million a week in the hands of homeless people in the larger Cape Town Metro. If 2000 homeless people participate in the daily 'skarreling' opportunities and make on average R50 a day from the recyclable items they salvage from the bins in the suburbs and in front of businesses, reclaiming from it, sometimes repurposing it, and then on-selling of those goods – paper,

plastics, metal - to various recycling sites and other businesses, it will net on average R550 000 a week to the 'skarreling economy'. This type of waste picking – skarreling – from bins produces will approximately R2.2 million a month for the Cape Town skarreling economy. That's on average R1 100 per waste picker per month at R50 a day for 22 working days. And it keeps the recycling industry in business. For waste pickers who make as much as R200 a day from recycling, they stand to earn R4 400 per month from recycling. As the WITS study proved: if we stop the 'skarreling economy', the recycling industry will collapse. Waste pickers are an essential part of our recycling ecosystem, whether we wish to recognise it or not.

Some raised that household and business rubbish bins often contain valuable items that are still in a good condition, such as broken electronic items that can be repaired and sold at a profit. In particular, high value items could be sourced from more affluent areas such as Sea Point, which was referred to as 'the Mecca of Skarreling'. Carlos Mesquita explained how he was able to make a business out of finding electronic goods and restoring them to a working condition; not only was he able to provide an income for himself but he was able to employ other homeless individuals in his business.

> *"From the beginning I tried to think, how can I change this into something viable? This thing of going to sell something for R100 or R20 etc. and then having to go back wasn't working. So from the beginning, I actually started with 17 items – I'll actually never forget it – on the [station] deck… I think in the first that I did this, I would pray to make R100 to R150 a day, and people would say, 'are you mad, you can do this with direct selling', but I persisted and it grew to the point that I, in February of last year, that's when they moved the taxis down because they were redoing the deck, and so it was huge because I was right at the entrance to the taxi entrance. I mean on any day I could take R5 000 to R7 000 a day... This was all 'skarrel' items. Now, you must understand that these items might have been broken toasters, radios etc., so I was employing people to actually fix them and then reselling them. I got to the point where I was no longer 'skarreling' myself because I was too busy at the store, so I would buy, I would go back into Sea Point and tell the guys whatever you 'skarrel' bring it to me, I will buy it from you and give you a better price than… [others]… were giving to them."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The skarreling economy can provide entrepreneurial individuals who are living on the streets with sufficient income to survive on the streets. Homeless people often have additional responsibilities of providing for family members who live at homes. Several individuals spoke of sending money that they earned from skarreling home to their families or to children through their social worker when they have the opportunity.

> *"A lot of us have kids; a lot of us have responsibilities and families that can't put money on the table, that maybe is living off grants, pension, stuff like that. So, when the 'skarrel' is good, on a good day maybe R3 000 to R4 000, then a lot of us do send money back. I've personally – I have a son that's 14 years old, I can't [go home]… because of gangster stupidity when I was younger. But I give money to my mommy and I get my mommy to buy whatever he needs."* – Donovan, an individual experiencing homelessness.

Understanding the ins and outs of 'skarreling' is crucial for communities to change the narrative of the role homeless individuals play in the city – their waste reduction and reuse initiatives contribute positively to

both the environment and the recycling economy. A significant part of the recycling industry depends on the goods homeless people bring into the ecosystem. Explored in Chapter 1, the dialogues revealed that communities are not aware of the value these activities provide to society as a whole. Many who have experienced homelessness expressed the need to elevate the way people look at a 'skarreler' and what they do with their items.

> *"The thing about homeless people [that they are] lazy [is] a lie from the pit of hell. It is very challenging for homeless people to look after themselves without any support from any areas of society. Homeless people play a big role in a lot of ways and they are not being acknowledged. One big example is recycling. There is a lot of recycling that is being done by homeless people, they scratch in the bin. We DON'T look for food, but actually to find recyclable items. They are not getting support from the City – often chased away instead."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"One man's dirt is the next man's treasure... so, don't always… look at it that 'yho I must scratch in the bin'… I'm saying that, it's just how deep inside of you… how much do you want to survive? How badly do you want to survive? How badly do you want to become something in life?"* – Donovan, an individual experiencing homelessness.

A pocket of hope exists among some members of the public who have seen the value of these initiatives and seek to support this form of entrepreneurship.

> *"I have a lady that's actually involved in parliament and… a known artist, who used to come to me… every single week, to buy from me. A lot of people that would support… the idea… it kept me busy, they saw the growth of my stall. And others who just like the items that I had, because you really get phenomenal items and I really used to choose depending on my customers."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Recycling is a fundamental part of 'skarreling'. Individuals undertake door-to-door collection of recyclable items such as cardboard, aluminium and glass, trading these in to recycling businesses in exchange for money. Knowledge is required about which items are recyclable, and a great deal of physical labour is involved in collecting and transporting these goods for long distances to recycling points. During the dialogues, it noted that the immense effort and patience required in collecting items is undervalued. Many individuals experiencing homelessness are not in a position to demand fair pay for their efforts and are often taken advantage of because of their financial insecurity and their desperation to meet their basic needs.

> *"If they don't have money, I take the amount that they have to survive."* – Nosipho Magade, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"…If you take the people who are doing cardboard collection and recycling collection at the moment. If you go onto the parade and you see all these groups of guys that every night are sitting there with their cardboard, with their coke cans etc. for the aluminium; and you've got these businesses, these big businesses, and unfortunately mostly coloured business, that take total*

advantage of the fact that these people are homeless – they abuse the fact that they are homeless. The rates they pay… they are using them to do everything from collecting the stuff, to weighing the stuff, to getting it ready for them. They just come there with their trucks and pick up the stuff. And then you look at the rates that are being paid by SA Metals for example and you look at what they are giving… but people are desperate, so they do it. So there is a huge abuse… people don't respect the person." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

While it must be noted not all homeless individuals are substance users, some require an income to be able to sustain their habit – this further diminishes a homeless individual's bargaining power, as they may accept whatever money is offered in order to manage their addiction.

> *"…the Nigerians and the Congolese gentlemen on the deck… like to keep you in addiction because they get items that they never would have been able to own on the monies they earn. But they actually become 'bosses', as we put it, through our activities. It's a terrible sort of economy but it is an economy, a very, very strong economy."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Challenges of the 'Skarrel'

The Inkathalo Conversations revealed some of the obstacles homeless individuals had to overcome in order to go about their daily 'skarrel.' Despite all public roads being public access points in South Africa, it was reported that often access to the use of public rods may be denied to homeless individuals by private security companies, particularly in certain parts of the city:

"[Private Security] are given that, that is their mandate – they say, 'you do not allow people to come down this street.' So, you [are] not allowed to go further than a specific street here in Oranjezicht, Vredehoek, in Sea Point as well, you cannot go beyond a certain street. They will refuse entry to you. And once I posed a question, 'but this isn't a gated neighbourhood, if you want it to be gated make your application to the City and see if you can get it down, but whilst it's not gated, if I wanna get to Camps Bay, I have the right to walk down that road.' They will not permit you to walk down that road." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

According to a number of participants, private security firms and some residents deny homeless individuals access to certain neighbourhood streets or actively deter them from 'skarreling.' This is explored extensively in Chapter 1, where some 'skarrelers' recount horrendous experiences – from threats by residents to the deliberate placement of dangerous items in bins.

"It's not specifically left for you and you can see it, when cell phones are thrown in amongst the tomato peels." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

It is illegal to block access to a road for any citizen or vehicle unless such private access has been proclaimed by law. Vigilante access control is an illegal activity. Private security companies do not have the right to police access control to public roads.

Because of these and other limitations, many homeless individuals may become territorial over the areas in which they 'skarrel' in order to protect their potential income. Similarly, there is limited availability of parking bays for those who make a living from guarding cars. The dialogues revealed a great deal of competition amongst homeless individuals within the economy of 'skarreling.'

"One of the first introductions I had with her in 'skarreling'… is that she wanted to break a beer bottle over my head for taking her dustbin, because she claimed that. That's how people are when they 'skarrel,' they claim that bin as theirs or that whole area as theirs… leads to a great deal of antagonism." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"A lot has happened in this parking – there are guys that come here fighting for the parking and as I stood my ground in this parking… I have been stabbed in the parking, I've been a hole in my head in the parking – I still stood my ground in the parking, because everyone wants this piece because it is now mine. They used to come bother us, but I am still here." – Lucien, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"We started two things with the car guards – we have a structured one on Elmond Street, and we got the IDs of the people, we make sure we know who they are, they each get a photo and a bib and I know there are various CIDs that try that. It is quite a challenge because to keep only the people on the programme and not offend those that come in, and to also think of your shoppers who come there and don't want to be harassed by two people fighting over who is going to look after your car. That is the reality we have to deal with." – Wilma Piek, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

During the conversations some shared that competition among 'skarrelers' was increasing as others who are not living on the streets also engage in similar activities.

> *"…There are homeless people that started the 'skarreling', and there's people that's, they live in their homes but they come all the way from their houses to come and 'skarrel.' So, a 'skarrel' is anything… you can make a decent amount out of 'skarreling'… they don't allow you to make money or the criminal aspect comes out, and they rob you."* – Donovan, an individual experiencing homelessness.

> *"What is happening at the moment is it's become such a good economy that in Sea Point we've had to actually go to some of the boards of some of the buildings because the people that are managing the facilities are going through the bins even before they come out. And so, people are putting the stuff out specifically for 'skarrelers', [but] 'skarrelers' aren't getting it because the person behind the gates is getting it. The other is, in Sea Point you will be charged by the trucker collector bins because those are the biggest 'skarrelers' on the planet. So, the city truck that comes to collect your bins, I've almost been run over by them to try and get to a bin where they see I'm getting electronic stuff in. So, there's also that and Nosipho will tell you, I mean they've got the stuff and they try and sell it to us out of their van. So, they start trying to do their 'skarrel' business there with us in Sea Point already."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

A homeless individual who has retrieved recyclable goods that he wishes to trade through a stall or booth cannot do so without a trading permit. Once a homeless individual has been able to retrieve goods for resale, they are faced with obstacles to keep and trade their goods. The City of Cape Town requires an official informal trading permit in order to sell goods to the public, but the process of obtaining one is particularly difficult for homeless individuals; this is explored systematically in Chapter 5. Trading without a permit gives Law Enforcement legal rights to enforce by-laws and confiscate an individual's stock.

> *"From day one I wanted to be a legal trader because if you're not a legal trader they going to confiscate your stock, that's what Law Enforcement does and they've got the right to do so, it's a by-law; and unfortunately, while you are in the process of doing it, Law Enforcement… could do anything to derail that… although I had a paper proving I was in the process of applying for my permit, I was constantly harassed, my stock was constantly taken away; it was start up again and start up again."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

On the rare occasion that an individual should obtain an informal trading permit, they are met with the challenge of where to store their stock outside of trading hours, as the City of Cape Town and the local economy does not provide storage locations for informal traders. Often goods are stored at other business premises at enormous premiums. Participants reported that their 'skarrel' stock was suspected to be stolen property, leaving them vulnerable to searches and confiscation of their items by law enforcement agencies.

> *"Even post getting my permit, they would still target me at where I used to keep my stock, because now I don't have the money to go and pay for storage. So, I used to build up my 'hokkie' [shelter] for the night with my trolleys and my stock, in order to make sure it's safe, and they would come in*

at one o'clock in the morning and confiscate the stock, because I was building a permanent structure they said. And so, they use by-law on by-law to actually deflate you... I think I am the only homeless person that's ever been given permission to trade on the parade – and you go through this hectic, hectic procedure to get on there.

And even there, I mean the one morning I woke up… there was some activity rebuilding around the parade… (I used to sleep at the end of the parade, which is beyond the parameters of the parade), and they came in one morning (I had four trolleys at that stage), and one morning they went right past everybody else and they came directly to me – I'd already packed up, my 'hokkie' was down, and I had my trolleys ready to go, and they just start taking my stock and throwing it into the back of the van because I wasn't supposed to be on the parade that early in the morning." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"[Unidentified Law Enforcement officials] took my 'skoppie'… they say 'no this looks like City Council's goed [things]'… then the one guy takes my broom, takes the head off… afterwards they searched me and…they found the 180 [Rand]… then I'm thinking now, ok now you found no drugs, can I please get my 180… they said no…this money was acquired [inaudible, implying the money was obtained illegally]… I understand you have by-laws right, but I don't understand why you have to confiscate my money, you know, and my working equipment…" – Stanley, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In the life of a 'skarreler,' a means to keep and carry one's goods becomes invaluable. Acting as a temporary storage space as well as a means of transporting goods to either keep or sell on, trolleys were discussed as part of the conversations.

"My trolley was my most valuable possession. But then when they put you in prison, you lose that trolley because somebody is going to steal it from you. Even if you leave it at the police station… There is no doubt about it, you know, anyone who 'skarrels' for a living would appreciate a trolley and they would guard it with their lives.'' – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Similar to 'skarrel' items, trolleys may also be alleged to be stolen, leading to confrontations with public and private security agencies.

"CIDs have [said] they steal the trolleys from Checkers and so forth, and then they say because you've stolen the trolley you can pay for the trolley… With the trolleys, we came up with the idea to get legal trolleys and we partnered with [Pick 'n Pay]; they donated these trolleys to us..." – Wilma Piek, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

"Let me tell you about trolleys – the SAPS and Law Enforcement attitude towards that is very, very bad… I think I was arrested seven weekends in a row, for being in possession of suspected stolen goods – that's what they call a trolley – despite the fact that I had that trolley in my possession, from Pick 'n Pay, with Pick 'n Pay's permission. A lot of the old wire trolleys they've written off, and

if they approach them, they are quite eager to give it to you. And I had paperwork… It was suspected stolen goods they knew that it wasn't.

All I have ever been arrested for [is] possession of drugs, not stolen goods, and they know I had a stall. But, they take that, because they know you are going to go into the system… and they taking you off the street for such and such a time… So much so, that the Magistrate at the Community Court eventually, on the seventh time, she said 'Mr. Mesquita, would you say Sea Point police are harassing you?' and I said yes. And she said to me, 'Can I give you something to demand your trolley back?'… and she said, '…I am making it an order of the court'. And when I approached him at Sea Point police station, I came in there and I said, 'Well can I speak to captain x?' And he came in there, 'What the 'F' are you doing here?' And I asked, 'Can I please have my trolley back?' and I asked that three times. And he kept on escalating his attitude towards me with the F-word. And then I handed [the court order] to him and you know the vile things that were said there… But let me tell you, they've never arrested me since." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Formalising 'Skarreling'

Throughout the discussions, 'skarreling' iwas referred to as an informal economy. Wilma Piek from the VR CID expressed their attempts to start structuring car parking through identifying people to be part a formal business programme. During the conversations, she asked, "*Do you think it is worthwhile to try and make it work and structure it in such a way, and see this are the people in the programme, or is it a total waste of time*?" to which Carlos Mesquita, who has experienced homelessness responded:

"Because of my experience with 'skarrel' and the bins, I will tell you it is definitely worth structuring. But be careful of the way you sort of even approach that. I think the 'skarrel' – a homeless person feels like they have an entitlement to it, so you coming in now and telling them to do it this way that way is an intrusion…You would have to have very, very, very clever discussions with all the role players – and that is the people that 'skarre'l – so that, because already you see two people [who would get into a fight – referring to his confrontation with Nosipho when they 'skarreled' in the same area], she was ready to, and I promise you she was, she would break that bottle on my head.

And so that is how possessive they are over that 'skarrel,' because they know after a while you realise okay, well, that's a flat where people like to throw [certain items of value]… you can't just go and tell people, 'okay, well that's where you're going to 'skarrel' and that's where you're going to 'skarrel'' – you'd have to… get to know the people, understand where they see themselves at. As I said, some of them have streets, [for example] *London Street belongs to this one… understand the dynamics before you go in there, but a structure would be good."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Throughout the conversations, homeless individuals consistently emphasised the need to be involved in the design of the interventions, processes, and policies that affect their lives. Many insisted that they be consulted on interventions that are implemented, desiring the co-creation of solutions, "*for the homeless by the homeless*". The structuring of the 'skarreling' sector could prove to be beneficial in overcoming some

of the challenges above, but as stressed by Carlos, should only be considered in consultation with the individuals concerned.

In the waste picking economy, 'skarreling' plays a major in the way homeless people earn an income. It is, for many, their formal work, their day jobs. It's how they support themselves and their dependants financially. And the recycling industry cannot do without their work. As Dr Samson stated, the recycling sector would collapse without this work. While it is rooted in the informal economy, it is a job – a career – in every real sense of the word and its produces real revenue for the homeless community.

CHAPTER 6:   'HOUSELESSNESS': THE PHYSICAL NATURE OF HOMELESSNESS

Contents

6.1. INTRODUCTION

"Homelessness is not Houselessness… The houseless need economic opportunities and affordable housing – this is an economic, not a social issue. The homeless need emotional restoration and household economy skills – this is a community, not a social issue." **–** Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk

In considering homelessness, the most obvious solution may seem to be the provision of housing. For those living on streets, the absence of shelter is the physical manifestation of a variety of personal circumstances. However, in the South African context, those living on the streets of cities and suburbs are not the only people in need of housing. South Africa faces a very visible national housing crisis, as seen in the sprawling informal settlements that grow along urban peripheries and have even been found on long-standing vacant land parcels in urban areas.

This raises the question about whose basic right to housing, as expressed in the Constitution, is to be resolved first, and how. This chapter provides contextual insight into the origins of homelessness, the extent of the housing crisis, and government's housing delivery mandate. It also explores some of the broader spatial and economic challenges that affect property and housing development, particularly for those most in need.

The chapter also explores the very physical nature of homelessness – what it means not to have a house or a home to live in. The stories of those experiencing homelessness raise the dangers of sleeping on the street, the search for safety and community, the lack of certainty and routine, challenges of privacy, and the affronts to dignity without a place to maintain one's hygiene. The chapter also explores the temporary nature of a life on the streets – where tenure, possessions, and even shelter interventions are all short-lived. Participants in the conversations shared the effect that this experience has on one's psychological well-being and the ability to recover from substance use disorders.

During The Inkathalo Conversations, it became apparent that a form of shelter alone is an incomplete solution, as many participants expressed the need for progressive accommodation options that support a journey out of homelessness. The various forms of shelter available, emerging, and desired are explored, along with some international examples of accommodation solutions for persons experiencing homelessness.

In approaching this chapter, we hold in mind and heart the Vision Statement of the *National Development Plan 2030,*[104] which holds this hope for every person:

> *"We enjoy the same quality of service. We are connected through our caring. The beating heart of our country is a community that has all the enablers of modern life:*
>
> - *We have water.*

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[104] National Development Plan 2030: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf

- *We use a toilet.*
- *We have food on the table.*
- *We fall asleep without fear.*
- *We listen to the rain on the roof.*
- *We gather together in front of heat." – National Development Plan 2030*

6.2. THE RIGHT TO HOUSING

A NATIONAL HOUSING CRISIS

"Research shows that the most stressful thing that any human can go through is not having a stable place to live – a roof over their heads. According to Maslow [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs], *at the most basic level, humans need to have their physiological needs met, that include access to shelter, food, water, warmth in order to self-actualize to their full potential and meet the additional needs required to live a good quality of life."* – Saarah Salie, Wesgro/Western Cape War Room

Figure 35: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
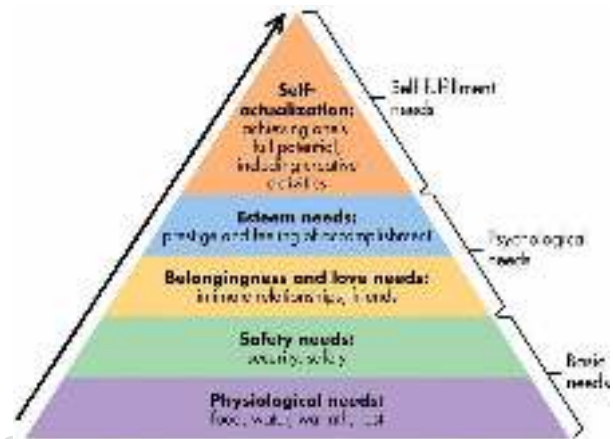
Housing seems for many to be the most obvious solution to homelessness, as a fundamental need for decent shelter is recognised from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs[105] (1943, 1954) through to the Constitution (1996).

Section 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) stipulates that:

"1) Everyone has a right to have access to adequate housing.

2) The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of this right.

3) No one may be evicted from their home or have their home demolished without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances. No legislation may permit arbitrary evictions."

This is often quoted when holding government entities to account for the provision of housing. Pressing social factors; government's lack of capacity and political will; and economic, political and broader social concerns all contribute to the housing crisis in South Africa. The Development Action Group (DAG) participated in The Inkathalo Conversations and brought to light some of the physical and socio-economic challenges around housing development. DAG pointed out that Government has delivered two million houses since 1994. Part of the housing crisis in South Africa is the large housing backlog – though numbers are debated. Some cite the backlog to be at over 400 000 housing units, with discrepancies between

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[105] Image source: https://images.app.goo.gl/fUBR7EmZcs7yZJdE7

national, provincial, and local waiting lists. Millions of households still live in inadequate housing environments (slums, backyards, etc.). In 2015 there were over 200 informal settlements in the Cape Metro, housing over 146 000 households[106]. According to DAG, it takes on average 50 years to completely upgrade an informal settlement.

Tenure security remains a national challenge as the country struggles to redress Apartheid planning policies, which sought to undermine African tenure in urban areas by limiting title ownership to 30 years, before completely revoking the right to title in 1968 (Olufemi, 1998). Today, mismanagement of rental housing has resulted in evictions that leave families stranded, while run-down rental stock is being dumped on financially strained tenants under the guise of transitioning them to homeowners. While exploitative housing practices continue well into the third decade of our democracy, those without homes suffer from an even greater deprivation of democracy's tangible benefits.

"Globally, 1.6 billion people worldwide live in inadequate housing conditions, with about 15 million forcefully evicted every year, according to UN-Habitat, which has noted an alarming rise in homelessness in the last 10 years." – Saarah Salie, Wesgro/Western Cape War Room

One participant expressed some of the personal frustrations of qualifying for and accessing affordable housing.

"That's all I'm asking for – dignity... stop making us feel that we are the reason for you not to help us. Stop making us feel that for me, as a single parent, with such a bad record, going to housing departments and saying, I don't have an address, but I have a shack, can you help me? I will do whatever you want me to do – screen me, verify me – I just need a home. For me and my child. I haven't had an income; you're questioning me for why I haven't had an income. I don't have an income because I've been in a relationship of gender-based violence for so many years. And that is dignity. So, people are getting homeless because, they know." – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In addition to murky divisions of responsibility in the public sector, and the nation as a whole experiencing 'a housing crisis', mandates for the provision of housing and other services to homeless individuals are a particular point of contention (discussed in Chapter 2).

"At the moment there is a fight for houses – the backyard dwellers are on the list. But once again the street homeless person is not on that list and we are not part of those conversations. Homeless people are excluded from a lot of developments, even affordable housing is not available or accessible. By excluding them you are keeping them where they are." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"In the early 2000s, some homeless people in the CBD did receive houses, but where were these houses located? It was areas like Manenberg, Heideveld etc... People moved from these areas initially to avoid the gangsterism, or running away from it... Also, there weren't...means to maintain

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[106] ismaps.org.za, 2015: http://ismaps.org.za/desktop.html#dashboard

the houses, as they didn't have other sources of income. So, what…is important, if we think of infrastructure in terms of housing: it's how do the people maintain their livelihoods, and then also the socio-economic challenges of the areas where these infrastructures are located." – Theodore Sass, PhD Candidate, University of the Western Cape

In the South African context, the question remains: who should receive a house first – the person experiencing homelessness or the informal settlement dweller?

"…they don't count all of the slums as homeless, and the problem when you start talking about social housing, is then the whole Khayelitsha says, 'hold on…I shouldn't have to go backwards in order to go forward'; if you're giving a social house to the guy on the street, then what about the whole of the township that has been in it… for years… then people say 'well if you're giving houses to the homeless you should also give houses to the shack dwellers' …the problem is too big…" – Sam Voss, U-Turn, during a Focus Group Discussion (quotation emphasis by The Inkathalo Conversations).

In a study by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a homeless individual is defined according to certain criteria which include someone who "*lacks a fixed night-time address; who lives in a 'place not usually designated for regular habitation' such as a car, abandoned building, or park, those residing in emergency shelters, transitional housing, safe havens, and hotels/motels; those who are evicted and unlikely to find housing within 14 days; and unaccompanied youth or families who have been precariously housed and are unlikely to find housing owing to chronic disabilities, physical or mental health issues, substance abuse, domestic violence, or child abuse*" (Bassuk et al., 2020).

Theodore Sass, a PhD candidate at the University of the Western Cape, has centred his research on the multi-dimensional wellbeing of the homeless in the Cape Town CBD. He stressed the importance of contextualising homelessness in the local context, at a city and provincial level, and not to confuse people experiencing homelessness with those internationally defined as 'slum dwellers.'

The HUD definition suggests that large numbers of people informally housed or living in 'slum dwelling' households in South Africa are in fact homeless. This tension emerged consistently during the conversations and is supported in a number of South African studies. While typically referred to as an 'informal settlement' or 'township' in the South African context, a 'slum' is defined as "*informal (and often illegal) housing*", characterised by "*unsafe and/or unhealthy homes (e.g. lack of windows, dirt floor, leaky walls and roofs); overcrowded homes; limited or no access to basic services: water, toilets, electricity, transportation; unstable homes: weak structures are often blown away or destroyed during storms and earthquakes; no secure land tenure (i.e. the land rights to live there*)" (Habitat for Humanity Great Britain, 2017[107]).

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[107] Habitat for Humanity Great Britain, 2017: https://www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk/what-we-do/slum-rehabilitation/what-is-a-slum/

> *"The whole 'housing first' movement… includes those in temporary accommodation, in backyard dwellings, in boarding houses; which means immediately when you're trying to work out our population… you are jumping from 0.0007% immediately to 70% if you want to utilise that definition… The solution lies for me not in 'either or', but 'and-and'… they pivot the ladder model against housing first in Europe."* – Ilse Maartens, MES

This also begs the question: Are many of the makeshift structures erected by homeless persons across the City not equivalent to what are typically defined as informal settlements?

HOUSING AND THE LEGACY OF APARTHEID

> *"The problem of squatting and homelessness in South Africa dates back to the Apartheid period"* (Olufemi, 1998).

Although discussed in detail in Chapter 5, this piece seeks to delve specifically into the spatial conditions and their effect on homelessness, recognising that the legacy of the Apartheid regime is a major contributor to the national housing crisis, and also has links with the beginnings of inner-city homelessness in Cape Town.

The Group Areas Act of 1950 saw the forced removal of Black, Coloured and Indian families and communities from their homes to the outlying areas of cities. What is significant in Cape Town is that these forced removals point to the origins of homelessness in the CBD. This is detailed by Lorenzo Davids in an article in The Big Issue (June/July 2020[108]): "*In 1975…* [NICRO] *discovered that hundreds of people who refused to be forcibly removed to the Cape Flats were being rendered homeless by the destruction of District Six. All of these residents were now living on the streets of the city.*" With families dispersed and relocated, many breadwinners stayed in the CBD in order to be closer to their places of employment in the city. In addition, "*the indescribable trauma of forced removals… the loss of community and identity with the people and things you valued – caused some to sink deep into the pavements of the CBD, unable to move on*".

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[108] The Big Issue, June/July 2020: https://issuu.com/eltena/docs/big_issue_publication_on_homelessness, Page 6–7

The first shelters in the City were started in 1975 in direct response to the displacement caused by Apartheid. The [names shelter]Night Shelter finds its origins here too, while some of the newer programmatic interventions (discussed in Chapter 3) essentially seek to address the generational legacy of homelessness that has resulted – "*today, the second, third and fourth generations of historically traumatised people are still on our city streets.*" (Davids, 2020)

Figure 36: Time Magazine Cover (May, 2019)

"*I specifically put the legacy of Apartheid at the top of the list* [of drivers of homelessness] *because I don't think we can deny that history has perpetuated this problem for many South Africans. Due to segregation policies, people of colour were isolated on poor-located land, far from economic and social opportunities, in addition, the creation of townships, overcrowding and a mushrooming of backyard dwellers still prevails today.*" – Saarah Salie, Wesgro/Western Cape War Room

Coupled with the unique geography and layout of the City of Cape Town, what persists to this day is a form of 'Spatial Apartheid.' This term speaks to the spatial and economic segregation so visibly depicted on the cover of Time Magazine in 2019.[109]

As frequently mentioned during The Inkathalo Conversations, this inherited spatial inequality is perpetuated through exclusionary policies that result in a lack of affordable housing options for low-income earners and the poor setting of these housing options, mainly on urban peripheries. Today, rapid urbanisation and inadequate infrastructure increases pressure on service delivery, especially in Metros, where large portions of land do not have the required services to develop settlements. Very little in the way of public consultation and engagement is made to address these challenges, as evidenced by community unrest across the country.

"*…We see it in the unrest, because the unrest is symptomatic of some other complex issues, and I think we have to address the housing crisis.*" – Quinton Adams, The Shack Builder

"*Post '94 there were pronouncements, 'by this time we will build 1 million houses'… there's something wrong that happened there – they said, 'we're going to build that for you', not, 'with you'; I think that's where the problems started.*" – Akhona Siswana, Development Action Group (DAG)

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[109] Time Magazine in 2019: https://time.com/5581483/time-cover-south-africa/

The City of Cape Town's *Resilience Strategy* recognises the legacy of apartheid urban planning, noting that it provided a spatial context where the "*poorer population largely resides further away from economic and employment hubs, with uneven access to basic services as well as affordable housing, health, education, transport, social, cultural and recreational facilities.*" (Resilience Strategy, 2019).

> "*…this '40-40-40 Rule'… When the government responds for housing…they will build you a house 40km away from the City centre… a house that is 40m², where you will spend 40% of your wages traveling to town for work opportunities.*" – Akhona Siswana, Development Action Group (DAG)

> "*With… the guys in our programme who've reached independence… we had a guy move in to Klapmuts, which is by Stellenbosch…It was super far for him to travel but he knew people in that community, and he wanted to stay there. We've had someone move into Diep River… it is quite a far way away from where they were working, but that's because our hands were kind of… tied up with the lack of affordable housing… One needs to keep advocating for affordable housing closer to the CBD and places of work.*" – Richard Bolland, New Hope SA

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Western Cape Government and the City of Cape Town have come under fire in recent years for failing to provide social and affordable housing in close proximity to the CBD in 25 years. Although government-subsidised housing makes up 41% of the affordable segment – houses valued under R600 000, and 87% of properties in the entry market – houses valued under R300 000 (CAHF, 2019[110]), both the sufficiency and the location of these affordable housing solutions have been called into question. This is further discussed in relation to 'Property Markets' below.

Multiple advocacy organisations, such as the Federation of the Urban Poor (FEDUP), Development Action Group (DAG), Reclaim the City, and Ndifuna Ukwazi have challenged government on this matter. Notably, the contentious Tafelberg case in 2019 challenged the sale of provincially-owned land on the Atlantic Seaboard for development of a private school without consulting the provincial housing department or the Social Housing Regulatory Authority of the City, referred to by Derek Ronnie as "*selling off City property to the highest bidder*". The Court ruled that the City and Province had failed to deliver on their constitutional mandate and ordered the two agencies to develop a combined affordable housing policy, which is expected in 2021. Court cases like this one and the testimonies of citizens during the dialogues highlight the lack of progress made by local and provincial government to develop policies that reverse the spatial legacy of Apartheid.

This was echoed by stakeholder sentiments:

> "*We have the National Development Plan and its Outcome 8, which is 'sustainable human settlements and improved quality of household life'. Outcome 8 provides a vision for transforming human settlements and spatial economy to create more functionally integrated balance and more*

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[110] https://housingfinanceafrica.org/app/uploads/2020/10/Cape-Town-Property-Report-2020.pdf

vibrant urban settlements by 2030. So how about we add in…'just and equitable and affordable' and use the term 'reversing Spatial Apartheid'. There seems to be a reluctance to actually verbalise that and we think it's about time we did." – Warren Conrad, The Hope Exchange

"…the state of homelessness has been aggravated by numerous factors, namely, accelerating unemployment, exploitation by unscrupulous landlords, the increased migration to urban areas, the inability… [and] *the unwillingness by housing authorities to construct affordable housing…, abetted by the gentrification of certain suburbs, as high earners start to seek accommodation closer to the City..."* – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

"I know the City is in the process of drafting a policy that will only get taken to Council next year before the elections. That's a very long lead tim,e though." – Saarah Salie, Wesgro/Western Cape War Room

DAG has a 30-year record of accomplishment in developing social housing solutions for South Africa. They were invited to present the landscape for social housing in South Africa, as an important feature for the holistic redress of homelessness in the City. They reported that within the inner city, 11 sites were identified for social housing three to four years ago; in some cases, proposals, plans and funding models have been submitted with no movement from the City since.

"If the sector is really serious, they would advocate for inclusive housing in areas where we currently don't have access to housing. If the sector were really serious they would advocate for a more inclusive society where the rich and the poor could live together and decide where they want to live without these lines of separation." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

As a new approach, the conversion of empty inner-city buildings or government buildings into affordable housing or accommodation solutions for homeless persons became a topic of conversation. Councillor Zahid Badroodien expressed that the City was investigating the use of vacant buildings and properties for use by NGOs serving the homeless, which is discussed in more detail in this report, as part of *Progressive Accommodation Options*.

Poor economic growth, market failures, and investor low confidence among private developers are among the many obstacles to meeting housing needs. Although more progressive integrated housing models have been developed, a limited variety of housing instruments are being implemented, imitating a 'one size fits all' approach.

"The City of Cape Town does not have a [Inclusionary Housing] *policy at present, and has not to date implemented a single project, despite other metros like Johannesburg having implemented several flagship projects. What's important here is that developers need to buy in to this, but without policy certainty they have zero incentive to build and include social/low-income housing solutions in Cape Town… For me, it is shocking that the City of Cape Town, which is considered a luxury property market with significant land values, perpetuates this imbalance for the majority of residents* [who are] *working class, low income earners, living on poor-located land.* [This is] *an outcome of the Apartheid spatial*

planning and is a major challenge and is reflected in South Africa's inequality gap." – Saarah Salie, Wesgro/Western Cape War Room

This comment raises another aspect of the battle for affordable housing in the City: Cape Town's wealth-skewed property market, which is discussed below.

PROPERTY MARKETS

"They build infrastructure for the wealthy, and that's why we get the result of gentrification… gentrification is for the super-rich people…" – Quinton Adams, The Shack Builder

Cape Town's property market is one of the most contentious in the country. Quinton Adams, a participant in the conversations, reflected on the prices of houses in Fresnaye – with some selling for R40 million – in the context of over 146 000 households living in informal settlements; the depth of economic inequality in the City is clearly expressed in its housing profile.

In December 2019, the Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa published the following charts, which compare the residential property markets of Cape Town and Johannesburg. It must be noted that these charts exclude rental-housing stock. A staggering 51% of Cape Town's residential properties are in the high-end and luxury market, compared to 39% in Johannesburg (CAHF, 2019). According to CAHF, "*Cape Town's residential property market was valued at R1.161 billion in 2019. The market was less affordable, with only 37% of all residential properties valued below R600 000.*"

Figure 37: Number of Residential Properties by Market Segment, City of Cape Town and Johannesburg, 2019 (CAHF, 2019[111])

Due to the exclusivity of Cape Town's property market, only accessible to those able to afford the high costs of renting or buying close to areas of economic activity, it is a privilege to have options when considering where to live. For the majority of those living in Cape Town, their choices are limited to none,

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[111] CAHF, 2019: http://housingfinanceafrica.org/app/uploads/Cape-Town-Property-Report-2020-1.pdf

and accessing housing in well-located areas can be achieved only through improving one's earning potential and economic status.

In the map to follow, CAHF depicts the distribution of residential properties across Cape Town – notably, the prominence of red in the image represents the luxury market, while blue and green represent the affordable and entry markets, respectively. From the colour-coded map, it is clearly visible that "*the majority of entry market houses are located in the Cape Flats area, while the high-end residential properties are grouped in the northern, Atlantic Seaboard and CBD areas.*" (CAHF, 2019).

Figure 38: Distribution of Residential Properties by Market Segment (CAHF, 2019)
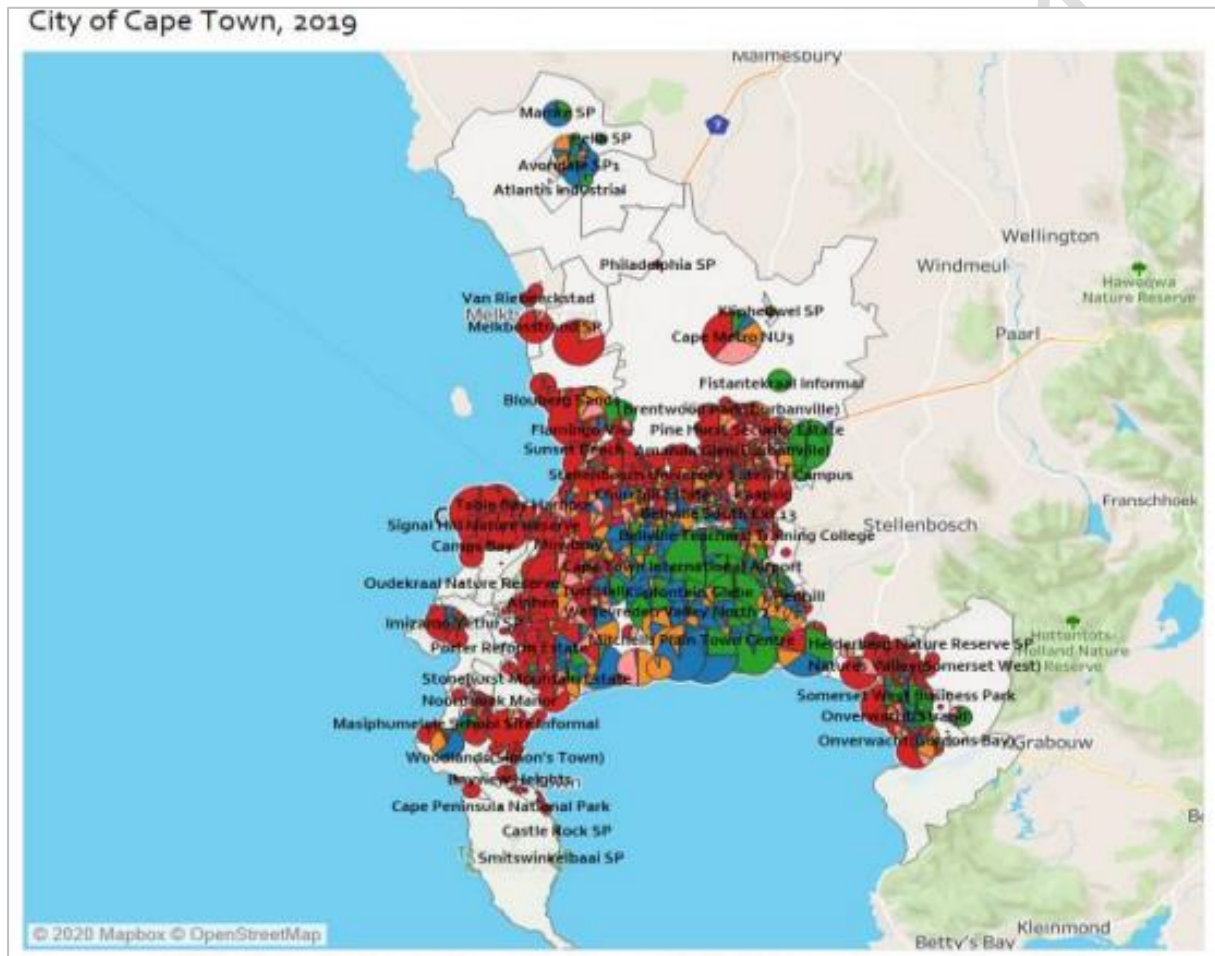
In addition, gentrification projects in historic areas such as Woodstock and Bo-Kaap have been criticised as threatening the heritage of these areas and incentivising working-class families (albeit poorly) to move out of their communities to make way for the wealthy, in what could be seen as a modern-day 'forced removal' by economic undercutting.

Not only is the housing market inaccessible to the unhoused for the reasons described above, but homelessness itself is seen as a threat to property prices. This phenomenon was well described by Caroline Powell, a participant in The Inkathalo Conversations, who gave an example of how negative attitudes of homeowners and housed communities both originate and become entrenched. She simulated the reasoning of homeowners she encountered, in the following way:

"[Their conversations go something like this]: It's the fear of the future… this strange identity that perhaps I, as a suburban person have… I'm in a secure place and I want to secure a safe place for my children, [and] for my family. Whether it be that I have inherited wealth… or I have moved into a space to be safer than I was before – the threat that that could be taken away from [me] is very deep. So, this fear of the drop of property prices – my future is tied up in the property that I have invested in, that becomes the inheritance that I can pass on the nest egg that I have. And if that were to be taken away, I can't sell my house. And the person sleeping on the doorstep… of the church opposite my house means that when somebody comes to view my house that I'm trying to sell, that knocks some amount of money off the…value of that house…"

She continued, touching on how this micro-system or individual fear has consequences at the macro-system level, where citywide decisions are made regarding the treatment and exclusion of homeless individuals from so many neighbourhoods:

And then you're working with business, with estate agents, property development… then you're hitting into everything about the right to the city, the right to live in the city, who does the city belong to, the allure of the foreign investor… what does property ownership mean in Cape Town… that becomes the departure point for decisions that are made…" – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

The City must look critically at inclusivity and its claim to be "*united in our diversity*" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) through a spatial lens, and interrogate why the visible divide of rich and poor does not haunt the conscience of political leaders. Paulo Freire (1968) asks the question, "*How can I dialogue if I am afraid of being displaced, the mere possibility causing me torment and weakness*?" In order for housed individuals, often residing in well-located, affluent communities in Cape Town, to dialogue meaningfully with and understand the struggles of those who are currently displaced, the question becomes: are we each willing to embrace a journey towards justice, respect, safety, inclusivity, and equity for the sake of a more prosperous society?

A HOUSING DELIVERY MANDATE

"Constitutionally speaking, the Bill of Rights requires all state organs and spheres of government to uphold the following rights for citizens that are vulnerable, namely, human dignity, access to basic human rights such as shelter, water, sanitation, equality." – Saarah Salie, Wesgro/Western Cape War Room

As is evident from Chapter 2, typically the Social Development departments in government engage and provide services to homeless persons. This is accomplished by funding or providing interventions focused on temporary shelter, social needs, and economic access. However, the interventions do not translate into any sustainable accommodation solutions. The mandate for housing delivery lies with Human Settlements departments and their agencies within the three spheres of government: national, provincial and municipal.

This piece describes the landscape for how housing is delivered in South Africa and what the roles of various government agencies are in doing so. It highlights some of the actions that could be taken at various levels of government in seeing to the basic human right to shelter, as it pertains to those experiencing

homelessness. The apparent disconnect between government's delivery of housing and social services, both which are needed in addressing homelessness, is seen as one of the gaps within the homelessness ecosystem, as responsibilities remain murky. A comment by Hannes van der Merwe encapsulates this duality:

> *"Homelessness is not Houselessness… The houseless need economic opportunities and affordable housing... The homeless need emotional restoration and household economy skills…"* – Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk

The Department of Human Settlements

The National Department of Human Settlements (NDHS) typically implements housing through a variety of agencies and entities, each with a specific mandates and functions. These are summarised below, along with the grant funding made available to these agencies (specifically for the year 2018/2019). DAG provided some context on the policy shift from housing delivery to human settlements over the past two decades:

> *"There was a shift… from building houses to building human settlements… By just building a house for you, I'm not responding to other social ills that are within our community, so let us build human settlements, that speaks to… a house – we're ticking that box; that speaks to other socio-economic needs of our communities – we tick that box; that speaks to a vibrant street life – we have not seen that; that speaks to a vibrant economic climate; that speaks to this house being in a well-located area…"* – Akhona Siswana, Development Action Group (DAG)

What is evident is that the NDHS does not have a function that assumes responsibility for homelessness interventions, as confirmed by the earlier comment made by Minister Lindiwe Sisulu in her parliamentary response, that there is "*currently no clarity at National level in terms of the lead Department dealing with Homelessness.*"

Within the NDHS's mandate, it has the following inputs from the United Nations Expert Working Group Meeting on providing affordable housing in South Africa:

Addressing Homelessness Through Public Works Programmes in South Africa (Obioha, 2019[112]):

National Housing Needs Register (NHNR): The central database that offers households the opportunity to register their need for adequate shelter by providing information about their current living conditions, household composition and to indicate the type of housing assistance they require from government.

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[112] Presented by Professor Emeka Obioha at a United Nations Expert Working Group Meeting on "*Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for all to Address Homelessness*" in 2019; : https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/06/Prof-Emeka-E-Obioha-Emeka-Obioha-ADDRESSING-HOMELESSNESS-THROUGH-PUBLIC-WORKS-PROGRAMMES-IN-SOUTH-AFRICA.pdf

> **National Upgrading Support Programme** (NUSP): Through the NUSP, the Department of Human Settlement (DHS) aims, amongst others, to promote incremental upgrading and strengthen capacity of government and professional practitioners to implement community-based upgrading. The NUSP was expected to provide project level technical support to municipalities over the medium term for planning the upgrading of informal settlements

In addition, the NHDS implements its interventions through the establishment and maintenance of housing entities, which act as the implementing agencies of the department. The various housing entities established through the NDHS are presented in the table to follow, along with their functions and their grantee status with the NDHS for the year 2018/19.

Figure 39: Housing Entities under the National Department of Human Settlements (Obioha, 2019)[113]

Entity	Functions	Grant from NDHS 2018/19
National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC)	• Provides warranty protection to consumers against defined defects in new homes. • Regulates the home building industry • Provides training and capacity building to promote compliance with technical standards	NHBRC does not receive financial assistance from the NDHS
Community Schemes Ombud Service	• Provides a dispute-resolution service for community schemes • Monitors and controls the quality of all governance documentation relating to sectional title schemes; and • Takes custody of, preserves and provides public access to scheme governance documentation.	R29.4 million
Estate Agency Affairs Board	• Regulates, maintains and promotes the conduct of estate agents • Issues certificates from the Estate Agents Fidelity Fund • Prescribes the standard of education and training for estate agents. • Investigates complaints lodged against estate agents, and • Manages and controls the Estate Agents Fidelity Fund.	Nil. Does not receive financial assistance from the NDHS
Housing Development Agency	• Identifies, acquires, holds, develops and releases state-owned and privately owned land for residential and community purposes and project Manages housing developments for the creation of sustainable human settlements.	R210.87 million
National Housing Finance Corporation (NHFC)	• Broadens and deepens access to affordable housing finance for low to middle income households by facilitating private-sector lending for housing purposes.	R150 million
National Urban Reconstruction and Housing Agency (NURCHA)	• Provides bridging finance to contractors building low to moderate income housing, infrastructure and community facilities.	Nil
Rural Housing Loan Fund (RHLF)	• Facilitates access to housing credit to low income rural households by providing wholesale finance through a network of retail intermediaries and community-based organisations.	R50 million
Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA)	• Regulates the social housing sector, and ensures a sustainable and regulated flow of investment into the social housing sector • Providing capital grant to accredited social housing institutions.	R926.96 million

The NDHS has developed several housing models designed to cater to specific economic groups and socio-economic needs. The table below provides an overview of the housing types, how these are typically funded, and what the nature of tenure is for each:

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[113] Obioha, 2019: https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/06/Prof-Emeka-E-Obioha-Emeka-Obioha-ADDRESSING-HOMELESSNESS-THROUGH-PUBLIC-WORKS-PROGRAMMES-IN-SOUTH-AFRICA.pdf

Figure 40: Housing delivery methods, funding mechanisms and tenure options (Obioha, 2019)[114]

Table 2: Formal Housing Delivery Methods, Funding Mechanisms and Tenure Options attached		
Formal Housing Delivery Method	Funding Mechanism	Tenure Option / Type of Response Solution
Subsidised Income Group (R0 – R3500 – per household per month)		
"RDP" Housing Delivery - National	Subsidy provided by National government for the construction of housing with (top structure)	Full ownership. New house on owned stand
Backyard Rental Programme (Gauteng Only)	The Affordable Rental Accommodation Grant is given to qualifying landlords to repair and rebuild backyard accommodation	Rental. Informal and backyard solution
Upgrading of Informal Settlements (UISP) - National	Municipalities will assume role of developer and will identify informal settlements to be upgraded and apply to the Provincial Housing Department for funding. Subsidies given to individuals.	Full ownership. Informal and backyard solution
People's Housing Process – National	A support organisation must be established that then approaches the Provincial / Regional office to make a project application on behalf of applicants. Access is then provided to subsidies as well as other support measures.	Full ownership. New house on owned stand
Community Residential Units (CRU) – National	Development or refurbishment of public housing stock including hostels CRU programme provides a subsidy for the total capital costs of project preparation and development of public property and a once-off maintenance grant after 5 years.	Rental / sectional title / full ownership. upgrading / Regeneration
Enhanced Extended Discount Benefit Scheme - National	This scheme promotes home ownership among tenants of publicly-owned rental housing (municipal and provincial). Facilitated by Consolidation subsidy – transfer of long-term state funded housing. Purchasers can receive a discount on the selling price of the property.	Rent-to-buy
Integrated Residential Development Programme (IRDP) – National	This IRDP enables the development of well-located, socially diverse projects that provide a mix of income groups and land uses.	Rental / sectional title / full ownership. upgrading / regeneration
Urban Settlement Development Grant (USDG) –	Developed as an instrument to address linkage between public housing and economic growth to simultaneously contribute to Human Settlements.	
Gap Income Group R3,501 – R10,000 – per household per month		
Social Housing Institutions (SHIs) – National	The subsidy is paid to approved institutions to provide subsidised housing on deed of sale, rental or rent-to-buy options, on condition that the beneficiaries may not be competent to pay the full purchase price and to take transfer within the first four years of receiving subsidy	Rental / sectional title / full ownership. upgrading / regeneration
Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme (FLISP) – National	In order for those within the gap market to acquire existing properties or to buy a serviced site. The Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme (FLISP) applies to people who earn R 3 501 and R 7 000 per month.	Full ownership
Gap: Inclusionary Housing	Inclusionary housing projects include both affordable housing and accommodation for middle income households. This is usually done by regulating projects done by private developers to provide a percentage of affordable units benefiting households earning below R15 000 per month.	
Private Market R10,000 + (per household per month)		
Developer Implementation. Market Driven: private Sector.	Bonded. Privately funded. Usually provided for people earning between R7, 500 and R45, 000 per month.	Rental / sectional title / upgrading /

The provincial department receives its mandate and implementing powers from the national framework. The Western Cape Department of Human Settlements (WCDHS) is responsible for developing sustainable integrated human settlements in the province, and creating human settlements that allow residents to access social and economic opportunities close to where they live.

At a municipal level, the City of Cape Town provides housing opportunities in the form of City-owned rental accommodation, social housing, and access to state-subsidised Breaking New Ground (BNG, formerly or more commonly known as RDP) houses. City residents can apply for housing on the City's Housing Needs Register, accessible online.[115] The website outlines the qualifying criteria for various types of housing, which include:

- being a South African citizen or permanent resident;
- being legally competent to enter into a contract;
- being married or cohabiting, or have dependents (does not apply to applicants over the age of 60 or who have disabilities);
- being over the age of 18;
- having a combined household income of less than R3 500 per month (for BNG housing);
- never having owned a property;

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[114] Obioha, 2019: https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/06/Prof-Emeka-E-Obioha-Emeka-Obioha-ADDRESSING-HOMELESSNESS-THROUGH-PUBLIC-WORKS-PROGRAMMES-IN-SOUTH-AFRICA.pdf

[115] Housing Needs Register: https://www.capetown.gov.za/City-Connect/Register/Housing-and-property/Register-on-the-housing-database/Register%20on%20the%20housing%20database

- never having benefitted from a government housing subsidy before.

The City has numerous housing-related policies, including the *Allocation Policy: Housing Opportunities, Policy Number 11969*[116] (City of Cape Town, 2015) and *Issuing of Housing Kits Policy, Policy Number 20005*[117] (City of Cape Town, 2014).

Acknowledging the inter-governmental relationships at play, Saarah Salie (Wesgro) raised the following cross-cutting actions for various national and provincial government agencies to take heed of in addressing homelessness. It is through these coordinated efforts that the experiences of those who live on the streets may be more holistically addressed.

Figure 41: Extract from Saarah Salie's Presentation

These recommendations have been incorporated in Part 4 of this report.

At local government level, a more contextualised and coalface approach can be taken, and the following coordinated actions by local government would address the local system in a meaningful way:

Figure 42: Extract from Saarah Salie's Presentation

These recommendations have also been incorporated in Part 4 of this report.

An appreciation for this inter- and intra-governmental approach was echoed by Derek Ronnie:

"…the causes of homelessness reflect an intricate interplay between structural factors, systems failures, and individual circumstances… Homelessness again is not defined strictly by an absolute fact of shelter… but rather the intersection of a range of social exclusionary factors and behaviours… These behaviours and factors exacerbate poverty, they limit opportunities, and they create barriers to allow these persons a more fuller participation in the broader society." – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

6.3. WHAT'S IN A HOME?

"The essentials of a 'home': It is a household with a hierarchy of relationships shaping it; a household economy sustaining it. Homelessness is the absence of these – homelessness is an emotional/relational deficiency and an economic deficiency." – Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk

A SENSE OF PLACE

The physical nature of homelessness manifests most visibly in a lack of shelter: from cardboard beds lining the pavements of inner-city streets, to items of clothing stretched across park fences, to obscure arrangements of plastic and paper half-hidden under bridges, and tiny fires burning in riverside valleys on cold nights. There is nothing permanent about these living places, as those residing there must be ready to move at any moment, risk the destruction of their makeshift structures and the confiscation, theft or removal of their belongings (see Chapter 4).

The lives of homeless individuals are ridden with temporary safeties: social and economic interventions are temporary, possessions are temporary, and tenure remains unsecured, as all forms of shelter are attached to some kind of timeframe. Becoming homeless is more than losing one's house; it is the "*loss of safety,*

reassuring routines, belongings, relationships, friends, pets, comfort, and privacy" (Bassuk, Hart & Donovan, 2020:248).

The shelter system seeks to solve the immediate need for a roof over the heads of those who are fortunate enough to access an available space. With only a 3–6 month shelter term, what often persists is a temporary lifestyle with temporary possessions. What differentiates housing from shelter, to a large degree, is the sense of permanence and belonging. While a safe place to sleep at night often seems to be the most immediate need, there is a sense of consistency, comfort, safety, and ownership that accompanies a secure place of residence, which any temporary shelter would be strained to provide.

> *"Other people look at you and they have a heart for you – it's not every day that I can look the way I do… I don't have facilities at home. When I had it, I took it for granted, the use of water – we had access to water, a warm bed, TV – the moving colours – you will never know how much I miss it! But at the end of the day, I have to make do with what I have."* – Lucien, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The lack of permanence in the lives of homeless individuals emerged as a concern, leading to experiences of insecurity and anxiety, and contributing to both a physical and psychological barrier to exiting such a lifestyle.

> *"My attention isn't there where it must be because at times I feel I am too comfortable, you see, in this life, in this lifestyle of maybe tonight you can't sleep there because Law Enforcement come there, maybe you come home tonight to your stuff and you see there is nothing there, all your stuff is gone. Or, maybe you get clothes now and tomorrow your whole bag is stolen, and you just have the clothes on your back. And you know those are all just challenges."* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Where do homeless individuals keep their belongings? In drains and manholes, hidden in trees, stashed away in mountain caves, or on them.

> *"…Your things is always at risk, you're always losing your things – you come back, Law Enforcement has taken it. That is one of the main problems that we have as homeless people on the street* [starts crying] *– they always come and take your things…"* – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

An added consequence to the lack of a physical address is that encounters with the law result in drawn out court proceedings and administrative processes, as described in Chapter 4.

> *"…If you're homeless and you don't have a street address, even if you are innocent and the judge wants to send you home, they can't. They have to send you up for 7 days for verification of address."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

A SENSE OF DIGNITY

> *"The first thing you lose as a homeless person is your privacy… The exposure you have, the shame… you're so conscious of the fact that you don't have anything…"* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Within the confines of a home, many basic freedoms may be taken for granted. The *Streets, Public Places and the Prevention of Noise Nuisance By-law (2007)* states the following:

> **"**No person shall in a public place**—** (a) use abusive or threatening language; (b) fight or act in a riotous or physically threatening manner; (c) urinate or defecate, except in a toilet; (d) bath or wash himself or herself, except— (i) in a bath or shower; or (ii) as part of a cultural initiation ceremony…; (e) spit; (f) perform any sexual act; (g) appear in the nude or expose his or her genitalia…; (h) consume any liquor or drugs; (i) be drunk or be under the influence of drugs; (j) solicit or importune any person for the purpose of prostitution or immorality; (k) engage in gambling."

Without the protection of a home, even some of the most basic human activities can become a crime, as individuals must seek out facilities and enclosed spaces where these activities are deemed appropriate. These and other challenges associated with temporary living can be difficult for housed persons to grasp, leading to further stigmatisation and social rejection.

> *"As I'm sitting here… respectfully I'm just trying to look neat and clean… on the streets we try as well, as much as possible. I do believe you see the guys washing, hanging their clothes everywhere; some people complain, but how can you complain about something like that? It is something that's like, it's human… it's what gives us some sort of dignity… look man, irrespective of their circumstances, they're making an effort. There are people with washing machines what don't use them, they come to work with dirty clothes…"* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"…it's important that* [society] *see positive views of homeless people; that can only be done if you have a place to be accommodated, have access to employment…"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness, during Focus Group Discussion 1.

Many homeless individuals recounted their daily struggles with meeting simple hygiene needs. A homeless participant relayed a story of an engagement he had about a homeless woman relieving herself next to a bridge, in full view of the passing traffic. He responded, "*that's unfortunate that the person did that… could you maybe point them in the direction of a public facility where they could do their business*?" The locking of public ablution facilities presented a major challenge to homeless individuals who have no access to basic sanitation. A focus group participant shared her opinions and experiences on this matter:

> *"There are people that are on the street, not many of them find it into a shelter because there are not enough bed space available. However, there are those who would like to be clean, so that they can go and actually find a job…*

I'll use the example of a lady that recently came into our dorm – she was on the street, and if she had the ability to be able to go wash herself sometimes at a bathroom, or maybe just go use a toilet facility, she would've gotten what she's got now, which is a job... There are so many public facilities, I'm talking about toilets, I'm talking about public bathrooms, but what are they? They're locked. They've got policemen there…

These people that can't make it into a Haven, why can't there be another structure whereby those who are on the street – there might not be bed space for them – but make it possible for them to clean themselves, to be able to dress themselves, to brush their teeth, boil a cup of water, or just use a bathroom." – A woman residing in a shelter during Focus Group Discussion 1 with people experiencing homelessness.

Some ablution facilities are available at a price, such as at the Long Street Baths. Participants reported that not only were these facilities closed during various levels of the COVID-19 lockdown, but the cost of using the facility has increased form R30 to R50 per use, further perpetuating the notion that ablution facilities are only for the 'haves'. There are NGOs that have sought to provide ablution facilities to homeless individuals, including The Hope Exchange, Straatwerk, and some Haven shelters, but these remain desperately insufficient in number, compared to the need (CCID, 2016[118]).

6.4. A PERSONAL HOUSING CRISIS

WHERE WOULD YOU SLEEP TONIGHT?

"There's people out there whose voices you're not gonna hear… there are people that live in drains, there are people that live under railway tracks, there are people that lives on mountains... I don't know if they actually term those people as street people as well… those people also have feelings, they also have dreams, they also need things that normal people need…" – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

As mentioned in the first section of this report, the definition of homelessness in many cases centres around 'where a person sleeps'. Throughout The Inkathalo Conversations, individuals currently experiencing homelessness, formerly homeless individuals, and some individuals currently residing in shelters, shared stories about their places of temporary abode and the places where they sought shelter. During street-level engagements, discussed as part of a Special Feature in this report, the Inkathalo Lead Facilitators visited a number of locations where people currently live. The selection of a resting place requires many considerations and comes with consequences, as shared by those who told their stories.

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[118] CCID, 2016: https://www.capetownccid.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/departments/CCID%20Show%20You%20Care%20Brochure.pdf

Figure 43: Types of Homelessness According to the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, as presented by MES[119]

At the age of nine, Anda Mazantsana travelled to Cape Town by hiding in a loaded truck leaving Hermanus. Upon arrival, he lived next to the Good Hope Centre for three weeks before being assisted into a children's home. He is now 29 years old, and recounted some of the many places where he has slept outside:

> "I slept in Town, I slept in Claremont… Newlands Station, there's a hole there, I think it's still there. I used to sleep there, there's something, I think that thing that I put, that bed, is still there, because I was the only person who was sleeping on that... in Town, in Jan van Riebeeck, I slept in Town outside; in Green Point I slept, Green Point outside… I slept in Napier Street…" – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

During his childhood, Anda was in and out of various children's homes and schools, and in his adult years, Anda would live between shelters and the streets. It was clear from his story and those of others, that a lack of shelter space inevitably meant that individuals would spend unpredictable lengths of time on the streets:

> "In Simon's Town I slept outside, before I went to that particular shelter, because when I went for the first time there was no space. When I went there, I just wanted to get away from town, and see how things can work out away from town, without having any connection to anybody… I found out there was no space, so I had to sleep outside until they had space…" – Anda Manzatsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

A complex upbringing, traumatic family dynamics, health issues, work pressures, and substance use were some of the multi-faceted reasons cited by Rudy Basson that led to his life on the street. His story shed light on some of the places where people sleep, and importantly, on the process of adapting and finding one's way, while seeking out a sense of belonging and safety:

> "I turned back… I went back to the dealer and bought some stuff, and never went back to work again… and that was like the start of a very long journey on the streets. [In 2013] I went to go live in… the Company Gardens, for a while, where I got to…meet a bigger family… you know, they had

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[119] Source: https://images.app.goo.gl/bmNHeznbG6oKTfPS9

their challenges and stuff like that, but like I started liking these people around me, because they all had stories and a lot of their stories…was pretty similar…to mine.

But what I've noticed was that even though these people [in the Company Gardens]… *their stories are so similar to mine… they were so scared to really trust me, and I was scared to trust them as well… I couldn't understand… why is this because we all outside… and then I actually realised that… the very people that's supposed to look after them, they can't trust… I started going to different NGOs, because we need to get soup, we need to wash… you get clothings… and I learned the route, or the whole thing of 'skarreling'… and getting what you need to get by."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Similarly to Rudy Basson, others expressed their daily nomadic efforts to find safety:

"Buitenkant, there by the Castle... I moved around because you know sometimes... where I felt like I'm going to sleep, I'm going to sleep. Where I felt safe, I was going to sleep. Gardens, if I want to, I go there... that's why I'm saying, homeless, homelessness, I mean... it was something else. It is better in the township, but here in town, it's worse." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Rudy Basson spoke about where he eventually settled more comfortably on the streets, noting the fact that he felt part of a particular community:

"I found a nice place to sleep in Observatory… I'm actually an Observatory kind of person, I feel that I belong in that community… It's close to Groote Schuur, it's close to Valkenberg [*laughter*]… *I'm part of that community. I'm part of New Hope SA now, I'm gonna live in Muizenberg. You know, miracles do happen…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Post-Strandfontein, Rudy Basson has transitioned into accommodation through his relationship with New Hope SA, where he will live in a 'microsite' in Muizenberg, described in more detail later in this chapter. Where individuals live on the street, they often develop their own communities, networks, and livelihoods, as described by a homeless community residing in Claremont:

"I stayed here in Wilderness Lane… we lived there on number 60, in the corner…by the doctor... It was safe to stay there because he had given us permission and things like that. But then he sold the property two years ago, and then this new company that's here, the orange cap… Claremont CID people moved in, and they started coming in and taking our things, and pushing us around. And that makes it quite difficult for the people on the street… The network that you build… we built up a network by the people where we collected the drums, pushed it out for them every day… we washed the cars maybe on Sundays, and that's how we get along, you know…" – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

This was echoed in a presentation by DAG (discussed in more detail in this chapter), who described a community of 19 families who had settled on a vacant piece of land in Woodstock. As part of a relocation process, DAG advised that they be moved within the same area, so as not to disrupt the economic activity that they were involved in as a means of survival.

"We have 19 families that are sitting on this site… and our involvement was that, if you're going to move those people, they're not going to Wolwerivier, they are not going to Delft, they are not going to Khayelitsha, they are not going to Mitchells Plain, because these people's livelihoods are within Woodstock. So, if these people are being moved, we advise you that you move these people… within the area… the nature of their livelihoods is that they are living from 'skarreling'… but how do you as the City frame a programme that will ensure that these people transition." – Akhona Siswana, Development Action Group (DAG)

In cases where homeless individuals have found basic means to survive in a particular area, their livelihoods become connected to their 'skarrel' routes and territories. This was demonstrated by the reluctance of persons being relocated from Culemborg Safe Space to Strandfontein during the City's COVID-19 intervention.

"Many people didn't want to go because they would be away from their 'skarrel'." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Although formal employment is often seen as a way out of homelessness, in reality, some homeless individuals fail to access secure housing even with a job or an income. Anda Mazantsana relays his story of being employed while homeless:

"I was working for City of Cape Town Social Development as a fieldwork officer, that particular time... and I was staying outside… when I got work [at] *the City of Cape Town nobody knew even there, 'til this very day, I was staying outside. I was a fieldwork officer, taking folks of of the streets to shelters, but I was on the streets myself. Some of the folks that I was with, they know, next to that new Safe Space that is there now, there was a tree there that I built a place around, I was sleeping in that tree there.*

I got a job [at] *the City of Cape Town because they could see I would go around most of the time – I had nothing, but at the end of the day I would* [meet] *kids that came to town, and some of them they don't have a place wherever to sleep… In Napier Street… I took this two guys that I meet on the street. They slept there by me for one night… I got them food, then the next day I said let's go and look for a better place to sleep… They also didn't know that I'm sleeping there outside… I said to them just because of you, I am going to make an exception, and sleep outside… because I cannot go home and leave you guys here…"* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I know I'm not gonna be on the streets for very long, because I have a plan. I'm trying slowly but surely to work towards it, but certain things also in my everyday life – the 'skarrel' that I have – my attention isn't there where it must be. Sometimes I feel that I'm too comfortable, you see, in this lifestyle of putting up a tent tonight." – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Homeless persons sleep on sidewalks, benches, and beaches. According to reports, depending on the areas and who is controlling the stations, SAPS differs in their treatment of homeless individuals, as does Law Enforcement. Private security companies and CIDs have their own means of moving those who sleep

outside. Some do so violently. The former were even reported to restrict or prevent the movement of homeless individuals through some of the areas under their watch, such as Sea Point.

> *"And the other thing, you don't go to sleep when you want to. You go to sleep when everybody that has a roof over their head* [does]*, so that you don't disturb… them. So, when it's quiet, that's when… you need to rest. Actually, you don't sleep. So, that traumatised me, I don't want to lie. Although I thought that, when I went there, that I'm going to be free, I sensed that no, this is not freedom, this is hell. Because what I'm seeing here – the fights – I fought the first day I came on the streets…"*
> – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Many choose to sleep in the mountains, such as on the slopes above Sea Point, Vredehoek and other areas. With access to natural water from the mountain streams, and out of the bustling city and antagonistic suburbs, the mountains may seem to be a respite but come with their own safety concerns:

> *"We were living high up in the mountain in Vredehoek, in the mountain… it wasn't a cave but it sort of was a cave… At one stage I lived on the mountain in Sea Point…"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"I was sleeping on the mountain on top there, again, at night, the very same guys, they came again – I still have scars, even here – this is SANParks law enforcement. So, those guys they came, I was sleeping there, they asked me 'why are you sleeping here?' So, I told them, 'I don't have a place to stay, I sleep here, and there's nothing wrong I'm doing.' And then they kicked me, they started to kick me to move, and everybody from that residence, people were standing on their balconies watching…"* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Housed city residents weighed in on this matter, mentioning where people are found to be sleeping in suburban areas, such as in parks, in doorways of churches, or covered areas next to apartment blocks. Often viewed as safe areas by homeless individuals seeking shelter, the housed may feel threatened by their presence. One stakeholder made the striking point that instead of, *"fearing each other, we should fear for each other"*:

> *"When you speak about safety and security – the fear that I have for the woman who is fast asleep on the doorstep on my block of flats, that within an hour somebody from my block of flats is going to have called Law Enforcement, she's going to have everything removed from her, and she's going to be walking away with nothing – that fear that I have for her as a human being, that same level of fear should be there as the level of fear that I might have [for myself]…"* – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

Representatives of faith-based communities expressed the tensions and disparate views that exist among those who claim to 'love thy neighbour' (discussed in more detail in Chapter 1), as many homeless individuals seek refuge and safety at churches or houses of worship, and even cemeteries. With lockdown pronouncements at the onset of COVID-19, many churches had hoped to open their doors to the homeless and establish temporary microsites, but, according to stakeholders, were discouraged from doing so with policymakers citing the case of the Central Methodist Church during the refugee crisis.

"Using the Central Methodist case study…[people] *have this fear that their properties will be overrun, their neighbourhoods will be overrun, their spaces will be taken away… why does that fear linger when there are so many good models which exist that disproves that fear?"* – Lorenzo Davids, Lead Facilitator: The Inkathalo Conversations

"It's a false narrative, and it was one that played out massively in 2020 in Cape Town. A church did say to me: 'we have attempted to create a safe space for people who were living outside in the grounds before…and they refused to leave… That was maybe back in 2012… but that was one example… on the whole, that's not the example. …If you remember 2008, the displacement of people because of community violence… something like 80 churches opened their doors, for a determined amount of time… It worked very, very effectively…across the city (during the time of violence against foreign nationals'…Tt was a story of deep…conversion for the church. And that seemed to have been forgotten, when this all happened, there was just the memory of one church, with a very different set of circumstances…that had struggled to get people to move on from their building…" – Caroline Powell, The Warehouse Trust

"…When we were talking with policymakers during lockdown, [it] *was 'no, no, we're not going to use the churches, just look what happened in the Central Methodist square with the refugees'… In 2008, 80 churches opened their doors, in 2020, three or four churches opened their doors – that's a very big difference… is it because now it's not foreign nationals but it's homeless people?"* – Jon Hopkins, U-Turn

ROUGH SLEEPING AND PRECARIOUSLY HOUSED

Monwabisi Sijaji has been housed for most of his life, sharing a home with his mother or romantic partners. Although he fell in and out of drug addiction for various reasons, he was often with a secure form of work such as a factory role, a cleaner, or a chef's assistant. A series of painful family revelations and relational breakdowns led him back to drugs. In an attempt to lessen the impact of his choices on his mother, he would leave her home and find other forms of accommodation:

"I rather do what I do best – stay here, stay there, stay there, stay there – while I was doing drugs." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In describing his nomadic way of life, Monwabisi gave an inside look at what is often defined as 'rough sleeping':

"I was not living on the streets… I didn't like the idea of coming to town and staying in the streets… you see I'm a township boy, I love the idea to be there in the township… I did not realise, now when I'm sitting, I said, no man, homelessness doesn't start in town, it's not only in town, even there by us there is homelessness. Because, what I was doing there, that was homelessness, because I will stay here with bunch of guys… some their parents are dead, he's 18 years old… so he's letting everybody that can assist… so if I go… 'ok, ya you can come stay here overnight my man' – maybe I will stay there for a week, and then I will stay there for another five days… that was what I was doing for the most of my life…" – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"…January this year [2020]*, I came here in Cape Town. Now I was telling myself: 'This is it. I'm tired, I'm staying on the streets now, I think it's best for me not to bother anybody because everybody's sick of me now, so let me stay on the streets and mind my own business,* [scratch] *the bins, 'skarrel', whatever'… I felt more comfortable to be on the streets than to be with the society … I did try to reach out, but already I had a stigma of 'no you're a drug user, Monwabisi, so we don't trust you'…"* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Echoing Monwabisi's experiences, Tina Brandt relayed her perspective on the prevalence of precarious living in communities such as Lavender Hill.

"There is a lot of homelessness in Lavender Hill… they won't build themselves a tent on the street – you will rather walk whole day up and down, and sitting on the corner until it get night, and then [end up] *sleeping on the floor by your friend, and tomorrow morning early getting up, and walking whole day up and down – but they won't like build a tent on the street."* – Tina Brandt, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

6.5. PROGRESSIVE ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

"There are houseless persons who are not homeless; they can create a home where there is love and care. All they need is economic opportunity and affordable houses… Providing houses to all – will that solve homelessness?" – Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk

In the context of a national housing crisis, the socio-economic landscape in Cape Town, and the economic and psychosocial status of many homeless individuals, participants raised the need for a range of accommodation options. Some of the stories shared above also point to the variety of needs.

Theodore Sass shared some of the insights gained from his PhD research pertaining to the accommodation needs of homeless individuals:

"In terms of the needs of the homeless population [interviewed]*… 33% would be employment, and then 31% would be shelter* [referring to accommodation]*. Those are the two bigger needs… If you look at accommodations as one need, currently as the policy stands… the social development strategy indicates that there would be an increase in access to infrastructure and social services… what does it mean in terms of infrastructure? Does it mean permanently supportive housing, transitional housing, lower rent units; will it be free housing?"* – Theodore Sass, PhD Candidate, University of the Western Cape

Existing and emerging models are discussed below. It must be noted that during Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations the points raised by participants were captured and have been incorporated in a manner that aims to reflect what was said. Where applicable, this was then verified through publicly available information. However, a complete due diligence was not conducted, which may result in some unintended inaccuracies or omissions with regard to the numbers, types, and effectiveness of the accommodation options described.

As part of a workshop on the homelessness ecosystem, stakeholders presented a proposed 'housing ladder' or 'housing pathway,' which informs their interventions as well as the facilities they seek to create

through inter-organisational collaboration. The housing pathway recognises different stages in a person's journey to exiting homelessness. The model presents a number of different accommodation options, which are described hereafter.

> *"So how are we thinking differently about accommodation solutions?* [What about] *different accommodation solutions for different levels of a person's responsibility...? You've got the ladder model versus the housing first model. It is critical for us to start working with these concepts... and to learn what is happening in other parts of the world"* – Ilse Maartens, MES

> *"An addiction specialist said to me that you don't tell people to get off drugs and then give them… a roof over their heads, it's the other way around. And we have these really… outdated shelter systems. We know they don't work… the rest of the world has shown that this doesn't work."* – Isa Jacobson, Seaboard CAN

Figure 44: Housing Pathway as presented by MES
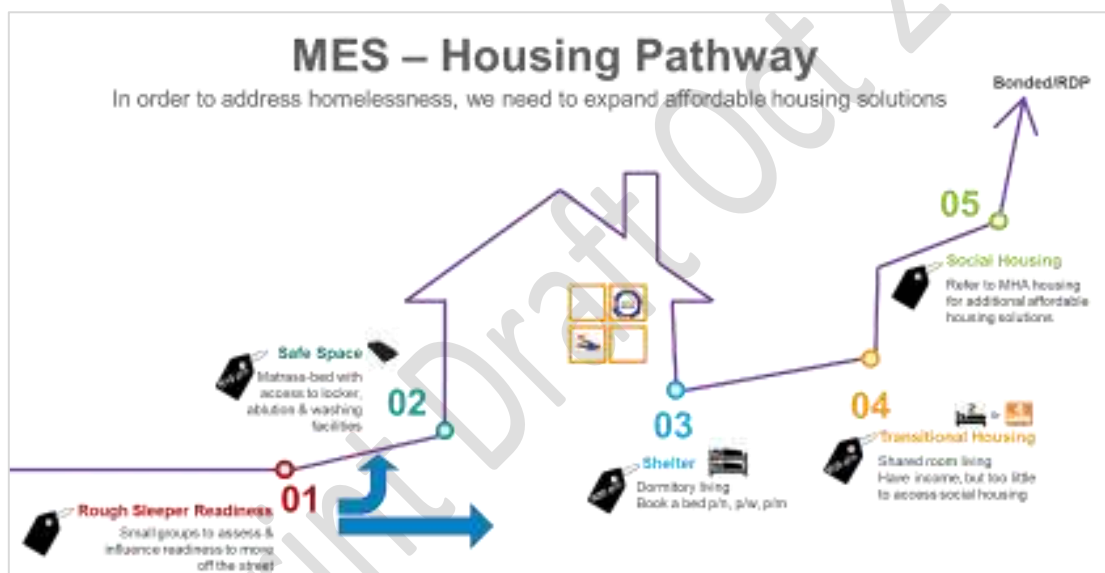
SHELTERS (TRADITIONAL SHELTER MODEL)

> *"We've got temporary solutions for a problem that is permanent"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness, during Focus Group Discussion 1.

> "*I don't want to go off from the streets into a shelter – no. I have been there at the shelter... I want to come off the street, and get my children, so that we can be in one place. That is my goal. Because they are growing up so fast and I'm missing… out on a lot of things."* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Shelters are a form of accommodation currently available to homeless individuals across the City of Cape Town. The Western Cape Department of Social Development (WCDSD) is mandated to fund and oversee the public shelter system as well as the suite of services they provide to clients, across the province.

According to the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013),* the following definition is provided for 'shelter':

> **Street People Policy (2013):**
>
> "Shelter": means a residential facility providing temporary accommodation, care, social work services and opportunities for education and training to self-referred people living on the streets. Shelters facilitate the process of social reintegration of street people.

The Western Cape Government has published *Norms and Standards for Shelters*, which further describes shelters as 'first phase' facilities:

> **Norms and Standards for Shelters for Homeless Adults, The Western Cape Government (2015):**
>
> FIRST PHASE FACILITY: First phase facility is designed for potential and current clients who come directly from the street to shelter to provide in their most basic needs.
>
> SHELTER: A shelter is a safe place where homeless adults can be stabilized in a physical structure on a temporary basis to provide in their immediate needs, and work towards rebuilding human dignity and self-reliance.

Based on these Norms and Standards, the following shelter services are to be provided to their clients:

Clients who access shelter services have the right to:

1. Be treated in a non-judgemental and respectful way.
2. Be free from discrimination and harassment.
3. Have a fair and clear complaint and appeal process without fear of punishment.
4. Receive safe, adequate, nutritious and healthy food.
5. Provide input and feedback into shelter programs and policies.
6. Be involved in decisions that affect them.
7. Identify reasonable goals and receive support from staff to achieve them.
8. Be given information about services and resources in order to make informed decisions.
9. Have forms and requests for information explained.
10. Have personal information treated confidentially. (Refer to Template 5).
11. Lodge a complaint and have their concerns addressed.

Clients are responsible to:

1. Follow the rules of the shelter.
2. Treat shelter staff and other shelter clients with respect.
3. Respect the private property and belongings of other shelter clients.
4. Respect the private property and belongings of the shelter.
5. Work with staff to improve their socio-economic situation within their capacity.

In June 2020, GroundUp investigated the scope and capacity of the shelter system in Cape Town. This is reported in an article titled, *Room for homeless in Cape Town shelters? Our probe found few empty places* (Daily Maverick, 2020[120]). The article found the following:

- The Western Cape Government website lists 13 shelters in greater Cape Town, 9 of which are Haven Night Shelters. There also exists an unlisted Haven shelter in Bellville. The shelters listed in the Western Cape's registry have a total capacity of 841 beds.

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[120] Daily Maverick, 2020: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-06-17-room-for-homeless-in-cape-town-shelters-our-probe-found-few-empty-places/

- There are at least six other major, permanent shelters in the greater Cape Town, which include Youth Solutions, Beth Rogelim (Salvation Army), Oasis, Somerset West Night Shelter, The ARK.
- At the time of the article (June 2020), there were 2 446 beds in shelters in Cape Town.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the current shelter system is rife with problems. Some of these challenges stand out as the most pertinent on the subject and suitability of physical accommodation:

- Bed capacity in relation to the number of homeless persons – from various sources it would appear that there are approximately 2 446 beds across facilities in Cape Town for an estimated 7 000 homeless individuals (as per a 2017/18 report). The Province and City claim that they expand shelter space in winter months, although this has not been investigated in depth:
  "Where shelters exist, the City is erecting prefabs adjacent to these shelters so that more beds can be introduced to that specific shelter…" – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town
- *Special Note:* In December 2020, U-Turn released a study that reported that there are on average 14 000 homeless individuals in the larger Metro.
- By design, shelters are temporary – shelters provide three months' accommodation (which can be extended under special circumstances):
  "There is also a culture of our current government to focus purely on the shelter interventions, which is useful as a temporary measure, but is inadequate as it fosters dependency and temporary status – homeless people need permanent solutions." – Saarah Salie, Wesgro/Western Cape War Room
- Many concerns and complaints were raised about the safety, security, and living conditions within shelters during the conversations.
- Shelters require payment. Although this principle may be debated, the larger issue is that responsible giving campaigns and shelters allow the public to sponsor a shelter bed. However, according to participants, shelters prioritise accommodation for those who have some form of income (such as through the EPWP or those who receive a SASSA grant) and extract payment for bedspace from client's directly from these financial sources. There are thus suspicions that despite the shortage of shelter beds, homeless clients are still being required to pay for these beds many times over. Government's norms and standards stipulates the following:
  "Unemployed clients or ones with no source of income should be supported by the organization to enable him or her pay for the service. Clients should not be denied shelter service for reason of payment unless the Organisation's Policy states so." – Norms and Standards for Shelters for Homeless Adults, The Western Cape Government (2015).
  "The DSD provides the means for the person to be subsided and avoids shelter fees if they are not working. The person may have to wait some days – (One will be informed when to return with an appointment date) and go back to the social development offices to get the letter stating DSD will subsidise the shelter fees if the social worker deems that to necessary. The social worker will meantime liase with various shelters to find an opening." – Circle of Compassion[121]

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[121] *http://homelessfriends.org.za/entry-to-shelter.html*

"No use putting us in the shelter if we don't have a job. How are we gonna pay? I'm gonna be there for three days, and then you're gonna kick me out, and I'm gonna be back on the street, you see."
– Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

- Contrary to the purpose stated in the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)*, it appears that shelters are ineffective in facilitating 'reintegration' (a concept which itself has been called into question throughout the conversations):

"I started questioning the strategy… I put a lot of pressure on the fieldworkers to try and get someone into a shelter, and from a shelter they somehow would miraculously go home to family and community. But within a very short time, we realised that that strategy really, really isn't effective." – Pat Eddy, City Town Central City Improvement District (CCID)

- Specialised shelters are limited, making shelter access particularly difficult for couples, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, parents with children, and foreign nationals.
  - o "Couples cannot get entry in same dormitories but can where men and women dormitories exist." – Circle of Compassion

    "We're partners, most of us are couples… the shelter doesn't cater for us to be together. You can't sleep out, when you're staying in the shelter. So, it's basically taking a way a lot of your rights as a human, to go and live as a human being in a shelter." – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

    "Parents with children can get entry only to The Ark and some women's shelters." – Circle of Compassion

    "Non-SA citizens can only get entry if they are legal refugees." – Circle of Compassion
  - o The Pride Shelter, catering specifically to LGBTQIA+ individuals experiencing crisis, was established in 2011 and remains the only shelter of its kind.
  - o Some of these aspects are discussed in more detail under *Specialised Accommodation Needs*.
- Shelter rules, such as opening and closing times, were contested several times during The Inkathalo Conversations, with the view that the facilities do not take into consideration some of the realities faced by those experiencing homelessness. As a result, many adults choose to remain on the street as opposed to utilising shelter facilities.

"What makes this [the street] *a better option* [than the shelter] – *when you go to the shelter, they are not going to allow you the… hours* [Lisa added, accommodate your schedule]*… there's certain things that we need to do to get to that 'skarrel'… you need to be up at 4:30 – you need to be at the bins – and you need to know what bins you're gonna scratch in… and that means getting up early… A shelter you would need to do 'a', 'b' and 'c' – you would need to follow a set of rules, now that set of rules might not apply with our way of living… The best thing for us then would be: get your own place, be your own person."* – Donovan*, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

From his experience in volunteering at shelters and his work in the homelessness sector, Richard Bolland summarised some of the problems plaguing shelters as a viable form of accommodation:

"Most shelters have between 40 and 60 people living in them, alongside that there are normally between one and three social workers or fieldworkers working in those shelters. And so, for someone who needs quite a high level of intervention, is only being able to see a social worker possibly once a month… that level of intervention often sees that person becoming quite frustrated and leaving the shelter system.

Also, when you're dealing with people who've gone through a lot of trauma, there's a lot of…violent and verbal outbreaks…that can manifest as a result of trauma. Often, those verbal and violent outbreaks have a zero tolerance in shelters and people either get warnings or get kicked out. And trauma is not necessarily dealt with in the best way when it comes to those environments…

Those who struggle with substance abuse sometimes resort to stealing and theft in order to pay for their substance, and therefore shelters can be seen as a place where theft happens and… one is not safe… There's been a lot of media reports recently about… homeless people refusing services that are offered in the City, and I for one understand why." – Richard Bolland, New Hope SA

SECOND PHASE ACCOMMODATION

According to the City of Cape Town's Street People Policy (2013), the following definition is provided for 'Second Phase Accommodation'*:*

> **Street People Policy (2013):**
> "Second Phase Accommodation": means accredited, sheltered and structured temporary accommodation for individuals who have passed through the initial rehabilitation phase and who comply with the criteria for employment but who still require a degree of care and assistance prior to reintegration.

The Western Cape Government's *Norms and Standards for Shelters* defines 'second phase' facilities as follows:

> **Norms and Standards for Shelters for Homeless Adults, The Western Cape Government (2015):**
> SECOND PHASE FACILITY: Second phase facility is designed for potential and current clients need to stabilize in a shelter after first phase period. It is especially directed towards clients who are working and in a position to function independently. The facility should be more flexible, private and prepare clients for reunification or reintegration into society.

During the conversations, Second Phase shelters were described as those, which typically allow for people who have secured sustained employment, and may take the form of co-dependent living or independent living, typically in a communal format such as a house or hostel.

It was frequently raised throughout The Inkathalo Conversations that there are insufficient second tier facilities available for those exiting homelessness. One woman, currently residing in a shelter, articulated the desire for a more independent form of housing that still offered some forms of support:

> *"What I would like from a secure point of view – you've given us these little bits of structure that takes us to the top – I've gone from being homeless to basically being jobless… I am now back in*

employment, I'm still at the [names shelter]– but there is no chance, even though employed, that I will be able to be on my own in a home environment… Isn't there a structure that can come from government basically, as another tier… where you're employed now, you can afford to rent something. Specifically the [names shelter]people, coming from the Haven, that's gone to employment, to give you another tier, there's a place that you can rent now, so that you can actually have your children come visit you, because you can't do that at the [shelter]… just another tier for us to actually find that security… which is still part of the system?" – A woman residing in a shelter during Focus Group Discussion 1

The number of second phase shelters in the City has not been ascertained, but the following are some:

- The Hope Exchange offers 30 – 40 spaces for men
- Moira Henderson House
- NOAH
- The Haven Night Shelter Retreat
- U-Turn provides about 30 spaces for members in the second phase of their Life Change programme
- 'Our House' has emerged post-Strandfontein, and catered for 30 adults who lived in a repurposed backpacker's hostel, with support from Community Chest and other volunteers:

"We all know what's happening at Our House at the moment, where you're actually letting homeless people look after homeless people… realise that housing is important, the fact that we have to have those stages, those phases… we have to get to that point where you are supporting people on a permanent [basis]… Hardly anywhere in the world do you get shelters anymore, you've got accommodation phases… get them into accommodation; you can do nothing without having accommodation." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness, during Focus Group Discussion 1.

"There's a gross lack of second and third stage shelter in the City of Cape Town… most of the facilities we have, sadly, is your dormitory style shelters, which is inadequate in its current number or existence…" – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

SAFE SPACES

"The city has, unlike any other city in the country, tried to look at a different model… in what we call a pre-shelter or a Safe Space model that was launched in 2018, with a number of them being launched this year again. And very importantly… the purpose of [these] Safe Spaces is not simply to provide shelter, but rather to provide holistic development of individuals who find themselves in these shelters… At the moment we're looking at how we transform this space of Safe Spaces in our city." – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

Figure 45: The Culemborg Safe Space (Google Maps, 2020)
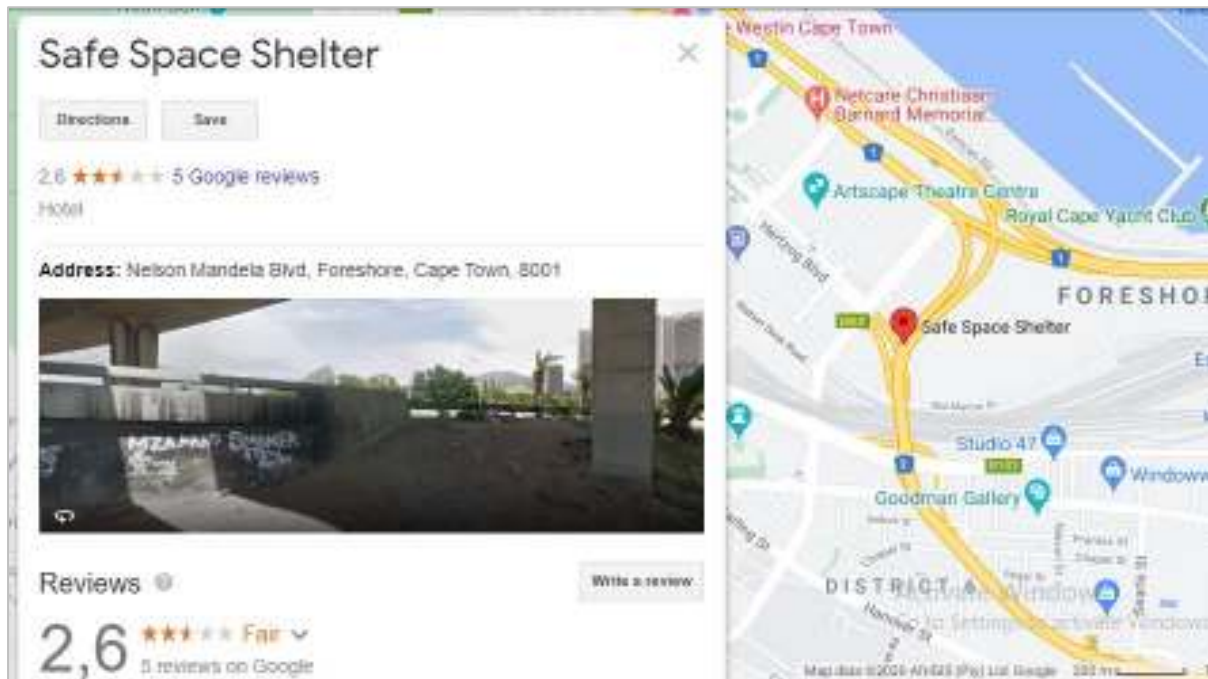
According to available information, there are currently three City-run Safe Spaces in the City of Cape Town, namely Culemborg Safe Space in the CBD, Culemborg Expansion in the CBD, and Paint City in Bellville. A non-governmental safe space has been established at MES in Bellville, which is also discussed hereafter.

According to media releases, the three sites can accommodate "*nearly 700 persons under normal conditions. However, in line with social distancing protocols instituted to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the capacity is currently at approximately 360 for all sites combined*" (DA, 2020[122]). The Councillor mentioned that multiple Safe Spaces have been requested and more are planned for the four areas of the City:

> "*Every single ward councillor will tell me, 'Zahid, we need a Safe Space in our ward'. Every single sub-council chairperson will say the same thing to me. It's simply not* [a] *cost-effective process for the City to undertake in every single ward or…sub-council. The mayor has been very clear that he wants one Safe Space in every single area of the city* [in the four areas]*, and we are very well on our way to achieving that.*" – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

Safe Spaces are not defined in the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)*, as the policy pre-dates the creation of these facilities. However, the City has described these in various media releases and reports as, "*transitional facilities for persons who have expressed a willingness to accept assistance*". A Safe Space

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[122] DA, 2020: https://www.da.org.za/government/undefined/2020/07/city-increases-safe-space-capacity-with-culemborg-expansion-site-opening

is effectively an overnight facility providing temporary relief to street people, and alleviating pressure on existing shelters, and is not intended as a permanent solution.

According to stakeholders participating in The Inkathalo Conversations, the Safe Spaces are not what homeless individuals had in mind:

> *"The question that I took from the 2015 survey – 'would you be interested in a community village?'… In their mind the participant* [is] *thinking, 'well, this is something like small homes in a area', and so, when the Safe Space is then implemented, people say 'but you said yes to a community village', but the person said yes to a house-like structure, not a carport-like facility in the form of the Safe Space."* – Theodore Sass, PhD Candidate, University of the Western Cape

Prior to COVID-19, Safe Spaces were to supply beds, lockers, toilets, showers and coffee, but not food (GroundUp, 2018[123]). Residents were to leave the space at 8:30am and return at 5pm, and access to healthcare and other services were to be rolled out. The space is described in the GroundUp article as "*protected by 24-hour law enforcement officers,*", which may allude to the safety of the facility, but in the context of Chapter 4, it is hard to imagine that homeless individuals find particular comfort in this fact.

It would appear that the advent of COVID-19 shifted the City's commitment in terms of service provision to the sites, as alluded to by Councillor Badroodien. During The Inkathalo Conversations, multiple reports emerged about the conditions within these spaces, in particular the deviation from the City's claims that an array of support services aimed at 'holistic development' are offered in addition to providing a covering under which to sleep.

Tasneem Hoosain, a fieldworker with Souper Troopers and Seaboard CAN, reports that Culemborg Safe Space residents come to the Seaboard CAN soup kitchen for food (it was unclear as to whether this is Culemborg or Culemborg Expansion). She goes on:

> *"Have any of you visited the Safe Space recently? It is a mess! An absolute, utter, outdoor mess – they rain wet, there's no food provided at the Safe Space – thank you, lockdown. Lockdown arrived, and the NGOs are now sending cooked meals to the Safe Space. In the morning, they receive, if that, a cup of coffee. There's been weeks without water, so they can't bath, and they can't even have a decent cup of coffee when they wake up in the morning. Lunchtime they will give you a packet of noodles; you can either eat it as chips, or you can find hot water somewhere."* – Tasneem Hoosain, Souper Troopers/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"…then they say, 'don't give, give responsibly' – who are you giving to? It doesn't make sense. Are they eating properly?... There's no social services… You need to be out in the morning, you come back at five… you must give responsibly but they put you out till five – how do you survive? And if*

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[123] GroundUp, 2018: https://www.groundup.org.za/article/safe-space-helping-reintegrate-cape-towns-homeless/

you need to go to a rehab? There isn't any." – Tasneem Hoosain, Souper Troopers/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The Paint City Safe Space was initially hailed for its effectiveness as a temporary shelter during the hard national lockdown due to COVID-19. Stakeholders reported that the facility evolved through the collaborative efforts of volunteers, city officials, ward councillors, medical services, and law enforcement agencies (who, in transporting people to the site, obliged with the request not to wear uniform, to facilitate the process without fear or intimidation). However, pressing human rights concerns have emerged about the Paint City Safe Space since September 2020. During The Inkathalo Conversations it was reportedthat City-run Safe Spaces are embroiled in controversy, from service delivery issues to COVID-19 regulation violations, and disheartening reports of injustices being perpetuated.

The MES safe space is similar in form and function to City-led spaces; they describe it as follows:

> *"[A] step-down facility of the shelter, just for that immediate relief part, where people can just sleep safe... just to put their stuff...* [We said] *'we need a safe space, ok let's call it a safe space'. Basically it's three containers with an awning over it... We pulled up some norms and standards... Social Development said there must be norms and standards..."* – Ilse Maartens, MES

> *"Part of the JOC is that our ward councillors are also there. When I started with the VR CID, the Bellville sub-council actually had one councillor dedicated that was supposed to deal with the homeless issues... and he actually helped us a lot, because many of the resources that we can access, that makes it affordable for us, belongs to the city. It took us three years to get the safe space..."* – Wilma Piek, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

According to VR CID and MES it was designed in a more co-creative manner, requesting inputs and needs from homeless individuals in the area:

> *"The people that going to use the safe space, we asked them, 'What do you want there? What do you need? What do you expect from each other? What is your norms and standards?'... That co-creation...the voice must always be there."* – Wilma Piek, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

MICROSITES

> *"A microsite shelter is… a small shelter that makes use of an existing space, like a church hall or an auditorium, where we take between 10 and 15 people into that space and journey with them through lockdown…"* – Richard Bolland, New Hope SA

Microsites are an emerging accommodation solution, almost in opposition to 'mega sites' such as shelters and Safe Spaces and may take on a number of different forms. New Hope SA started a microsite at the beginning of April 2020 by accommodating 10 people in a church hall. As an established NGO, with an organisational history which sought to bridge the gaps between various services as part of an individualised journey for homeless persons, New Hope SA was met with an *"amazing array of support from the entire*

sector, the public, from doctors volunteering their time, to volunteers, food donations and more", as recounted by Richard Bolland.

The microsite model was a good fit for New Hope SA, as it effectively centralised their traditional operations, focusing their offerings on a single house for a group of individuals exiting homelessness. Their version of this model allows for a single home, with multiple individual pathways for the residents, and multiple individualised interventions being connected, whether directly or in partnership with other service providers. These interventions are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

One of the core aims of this initiative is to develop a community within the house, as well as to embed the house and those who live in it within the community. In this way, the model aims to be distinct from the traditional shelter model. What may set this concept apart is the sense of belonging, ownership, and agency (discussed in Chapter 8).

> *"The people that stayed… felt honoured and privileged in order to call this community their own, and that church hall their own, as opposed to calling it New Hope's and that they were just living in a New Hope shelter."* – Richard Bolland, New Hope SA

The microsite started by New Hope SA has since relocated from the hall to renting a house in Muizenberg. According to stakeholders, there is great interest in the sector to start more microsites, and this is seen by some churches as an avenue through which they, in partnership with NGOs, may address homelessness.

> *"…when it comes to the money that they earn, we put up protection measures from relapsing and getting into any trouble, but at the same time they had agency to buy whatever they wanted to buy. And we found that giving people agency and independence within our microsite and in our shelter, alongside putting in protective boundaries, was a brilliant way of making people feel like they were part of the community…"* – Richard Bolland, New Hope SA

CONVERSION OF UNDERUTILISED BUILDINGS

> *"Government must get buildings, empty buildings, and put the homeless inside the empty buildings."* – Woman currently residing in a shelter, during Focus Group Discussion 1

Numerous participants raised the issue of repurposing vacant buildings into habitable spaces, particularly in the inner city, as a means to both redress spatial inequality and address homelessness. The City of Cape Town has recognised the need, especially for second and third phase shelters, and has committed to following through on identifying and repurposing old buildings:

> *"A process that's already underway is the fact that we've identified buildings that need to be converted… One of the projects… at the beginning of the lockdown… was to look at what we call problem buildings that are vacant, that are deteriorating because of lack of maintenance,* [that are] *available to the City, and is available to the Province, so that we can get… the* [necessary work done] *to such a facility and lease it out to a registered organisation, so that the work can then continue there with the support of the City…*

The City has made a number of commitments to provincial government… these commitments include investing capital money to upgrade, renovate these hard buildings… The fact that we're willing to invest, again, operational expenditure for one to three years, but after three years the Province will have to be able take over so that we can then extend our footprint elsewhere… as a government we must enable rather than… manage these spaces." – Councillor Zahid Badroodien, City of Cape Town

There are cases where homeless individuals have occupied abandoned buildings. One such case is the former Woodstock Hospital, a city-owned property that was illegally occupied in March 2017 by housing activists. It has since become home to hundreds of desperate families who have renamed it Cissie Gool House. An audience member during The Inkathalo Conversations referred to a similar phenomenon in the City of Johannesburg:

"People must occupy available properties… I would advocate that the people must identify buildings, especially if its government buildings, occupy them, and get civil society to support them to fight against evictions… it was one of the things that [the city of Johannesburg]… *had to learn the hard way – you don't just wake up in the morning and evict people – I see in Cape Town it's like it's going out of fashion… how are they able to organise this operation so fast to evict people?… In the City of Johannesburg, the Centre for Applied Legal Studies litigated and got the City to learn that you don't just do that."* – An audience member during The Inkathalo Conversations

TRANSITIONARY MODELS

The concept of 'transitional housing' emerged during The Inkathalo Conversations, described in the MES Housing Pathway as 'shared room living'. Transitional housing is suitable for individuals who have an income but whose income is either too low or too inconsistent for them to qualify for social housing or other affordable housing programmes.

A transitional housing model is in fact in operation in Cape Town. The Development Action Group described in detail how their transitionary model came about as well as its key features and promising results.

"…There was an informal settlement in Woodstock, Pine Road that is sitting on a site that can yield 250… social housing opportunities. We have 19 families that are sitting on this site… and our involvement was that, if you're going to move those people, they're not going to Wolwerivier, they are not going to Delft, they are not going to Khayelitsha, they are not going to Mitchells Plain, because these people's livelihoods are within Woodstock.

So, if these people are being moved, we advise you that you move these people… within the area… And then that transitional housing was born... We worked through a process of social facilitation with the communities, for them to be ready for this process. For them to be ready how? Because we want to see them transition; the nature of their livelihoods is that they are living from 'skarreling'… but how do you as the City frame a programme that will ensure that these people transition from… what they are to something else. So, there should be a social element… how do

you think about work opportunities through the EPWP... there are people who are working, who are earning at least R6500.” – Akhona Siswana, Development Action Group (DAG)

SPECIALISED ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

It became evident during the conversations that the available accommodation options do not serve those with specific needs. In some cases, this has to do with the social services and support interventions required by individuals, such as those with mental challenges, or substance users. In other cases, the physical setup of accommodation options was reported as not conducive, while in the case of the physically disabled and the elderly, the combination of physical space and dedicated support required poses a challenge.

“In my experience, I think it would be difficult to cater for someone with severe physical disabilities in the current shelters that I work with and know.” – Richard Bolland, New Hope SA

“But still there is people outsid, that is disabled, outside Safe Space...” – Oliver, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Individuals requiring access to specialised care may not be assisted appropriately or timeously, leaving them to be cared for by other residents, who expressed the exasperation of being ill-equipped for this task:

“Now in the street there at Culemborg, there's worse... there's people that's disabled, there's a guy there that's laying there that doesn't have a pants because he wetted all his things on Monday... so you reach to every fieldworker of the City, because they have to come to Culemborg...they do nothing about the situation. So, what are we supposed to do? We are also in the same category like him, but we can help ourselves. There's lot of people that can't help themselves... that guy doesn't have a blanket, doesn't even have a second pants, all the things we gave him, he makes it dirty every day...” – Alice (anonymised), an individual who has experienced homelessness.

“We've applied for a house that's still empty in Bellville now for five years, for a neighbourhood old age concept... and we still haven't gotten it... the councillors can really be instrumental to help us to [put] *pressure on the officials to get that done.”* – Wilma Piek, Voortrekker Road City Improvement District (VR CID)

In addition, the options available to various forms of family are limited. Couples are unable to stay together in shelters as divisions between men and women and availability for both partners is not guaranteed.

The Women's Shelter Movement reports 10 shelters of different models, largely for women and their children who are in crisis following relationship violence and abuse.

The Pride Shelter, opened in 2011, is a privately run institution that seeks to accommodate LGBTQIA+ individuals in crisis, and to create a welcoming environment for those who may experience disdain elsewhere:

“The LGBTI people are mainly on the streets because they won't get accommodated in the shelters – they're too difficult to deal with according to some people.” – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

INFORMAL OR TEMPORARY DWELLINGS

As discussed earlier, the notion of informal dwellings such as those found in informal settlements across the country, do not differ all that much from the temporary abodes erected by those experiencing homelessness on the city streets and in suburbs. Backyard dwellings also fall within this category as many are constructed from materials ill-suited for permanent shelter. In addition, many homeless individuals reside in tents issued through City initiatives in response to COVID-19. These forms of accommodation are by no means sufficient, satisfactory, or worthy solutions for those who reside in them. Nonetheless, some participants in The Inkathalo Conversations referred to the meaning they may derive from these as a starting point.

> *"I consider myself lucky because I have a tent, so that is my place. I have four walls, it doesn't matter if they're cloth walls, they're walls. So, I'm privileged to have that, so that is my home, where I can kind of start there and build from that point out."* – Donovan, a participant experiencing homelessness.

> *"There is a lot* [of people] *out here that have an opportunity to go home – that's not to live in the house but to put maybe up a structure for yourself in the yard… You want your own little place… get a little Wendy* [Wendy house] *and put it in my in-laws' yard and I'd be off the street, gladly, tomorrow."* – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

6.6. WHAT DOES HOPE LOOK LIKE?

"It is not true that we do not have buildings, land, resources, budgets, capacity to end homelessness – it is a fact that it is not prioritised enough by decision-makers." – Saarah Salie, Wesgro/Western Cape War Room

While this might paint a sad picture of housing in the City and of viable options for homeless individuals seeking shelter, second tier accommodation, or independent housing options, some promising models have begun to emerge.

Some civil society actors are working towards establishing 'housing pathways' which provide progressive accommodation options based on individual needs, accompanied by longer term support and firm exit strategies. In collaboration with homeless individuals, a group of Bellville NGOs co-created their own 'safe spaces' for homeless individuals who have had to exit the formal shelter system (after the permitted 3–6 months) with no clear next step. Others have established microsites or 'group homes' within communities, thereby providing integrative housing opportunities where individuals begin to live, work and feel a sense of belonging in traditionally exclusive neighbourhoods. DAG has developed its first 'transitional housing' site in response to a small informal settlement in Woodstock, advocating to ensure the families were relocated within the area so as not to disrupt their existing livelihoods. In partnership with the City's emergency housing funding framework, an unused boys' home in Salt River was revamped to provide rooms for the families. The families are being supported with social programmes to facilitate their transition to qualifying for existing government housing programmes such as social housing.

The key opportunities of hope include:

- Repurposing existing building can serve as meaningful transition space for those in transition as part of an asset-based approach;
- When transitioning individuals from informal to formal living, considerations that lead to a holistic approach, as piloted by DAG, present meaningful learning to inform future practices;
- Developing a key ecosystem of support can support meaningful social change.

International models that were brought to light during the conversations, such as the 'Tiny Houses' development in San Jose, California, and others are presented below:

Figure 46: 'Tiny Houses', San Jose, California[124]

Figure 47: Extract from Saarah Salie's Presentation

Possible International Reforms:

- **São Paulo:** A solid alliance has been built between the State and the private sector, "Trabalho Novo", or "New Job", programme ensures the right of homeless and at-risk people to job market access. In partnership with 130 companies, more than 5,000 people have been trained 1,246 are employed.

- **Costa Rica:** Best practices include the development of a smartphone app that enables members of the public to flag homeless issues to social workers.

- **Cote D'Ivoire:** The private sector can help by addressing deficits in affordable housing and building a viable housing finance market that caters to the needs of middle-income, lower-income and informal-income households. An Inclusionary Housing Policy is critical to address this.

- Measures that **Mexico** has been taking, include an increase in the minimum wage and efforts to promote social housing.

- **Netherlands:** registering with the Municipal Personal Records Database is a temporary solution that offers homeless people an address where mail and other services can be sent to, as its impossible to apply for or receive benefits without an address.

There is hope, and innovative models not only exist but are continuing to emerge. What remains critical is the co-creation of accommodation solutions, the financial viability of the models, and a developmental approach. As emphasised by the opening quotation as well as the experiences of stakeholders, social and economic support should accompany accommodation solutions to ensure that individuals are not only

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[124] Source: https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/02/27/san-jose-opens-first-tiny-home-community-for-formerly-homeless-residents/

housed but also equipped to make a sustainable home for themselves by developing emotional, relational and economic resilience.

6.7. READER'S REFLECTIONS

Reflection is an important practice in system transformation. The reader is encouraged to consider the following reflection points from a personal, organisational, community and systemic perspective:

- How have the emergent conversations above impacted my personal opinions about the right to housing?
- Who has a right to housing, under what conditions, and where should this housing reasonably be located?
- How might the nature of inequality in Cape Town be addressed through spatial interventions?
- Who or what should determine the location of affordable or accessible housing options?
- What are my assumptions or expectations of the shelter system and other accommodation options, and how are these serving those who need them most?
- How might I advocate for adequate shelter within my community/network/sphere of influence?

CHAPTER 7:   THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY, HOME AND COMMUNITY

Contents

7.1. INTRODUCTION

The Inkathalo Conversations was intentional about providing a safe space in which individuals experiencing homelessness and stakeholders working with individuals experiencing homelessness could share their accounts of family life within the homelessness sector. Through these engagements, the ways that individuals perceived, described, and experienced family, surfaced. The concept of family, in all its shapes and sizes, emerged as a salient theme throughout. This should not be surprising as *"We are born into families. They are the foundation of our first experiences of the world, our first relationships, our first sense of belonging to a group"* (McGoldrick, Garcia Preto & Carter, 2016:1).

It would be understandable then, that with the family being of such importance, there would be policies that speak to the concept. One such policy, the *White Paper on Families in South Africa* (2013), defines *family* as a *"societal group that is related by blood (kinship), adoption, foster care or the ties of marriage (civil, customary or religious), civil union or cohabitation, and go beyond a particular physical residence"*. The concepts of at-risk families, family strengthening, and family preservation are central to the policy, yet alarmingly, the policy does not address or refer to, the issue of homelessness.

The Norms and Standards for Shelters for Homeless Adults (2015) however, identifies the *White Paper on Families in South Africa (2013)* as one of the guiding policies that mandates its approach to the issue of homelessness and frequently refers to the family – specifically in relation to facilitating reunification with family members. The City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013*) also refers to reunification with the family if it is possible, yet this policy does not include the *White Paper on Families in South Africa (2013)* as part of its regulatory context.

It might therefore be of value to highlight how the concept of family was presented and discussed by the various individuals experiencing homelessness and stakeholders working in the sector during the first phase of The Inkathalo Conversations. Moreover, while The Inkathalo Conversations does not promote a particular family theory and does not wish to make this an academic discussion per se, it could prove useful to consider one or two well-recognised theoretical frameworks in the context of this chapter. In no order of importance, the *Family Life Cycle Theory* (FLCT) and the *Ecological Systems Theory* (EST) may provide a framework for the discussion and are briefly discussed below. The sub-themes that were most prevalent during the process and are highlighted in this chapter include *family functioning and family stressors*, *notions of family*, and *families experiencing homelessness*. Thereafter, the reader is directed to consider what hope may look like, and finally, to reflect on the concept of family.

A LITTLE BIT OF THEORY

The FLCT is a developmental framework which asserts that family moves through various family life cycle phases, namely:

- young adulthood,
- young married couples without children,
- families with children,
- families with adolescents,
- launching children and moving on, and

- families in later life (McGoldrick et al., 2016).

The unfolding of phases is based on the assumption that the family life cycle develops within a structured framework; however, it is often the case that families do not develop according to these phases. The expanded FLCT and the *White Paper on Families in South Africa (2013)* take into consideration the diverse types of families, and the FLCT refers to vertical and horizontal family life cycle stressors (McGoldrick et al., 2016).

Two constructs within the FLCT, namely vertical and horizontal stressors, make it possible to account for an intergenerational perspective on how stressors or trauma, developmental life transitions, and unpredictable events affect or influence the family's life cycle over time (Kieling, 2014; McGoldrick et al., 2016; Thoburn & Sexton, 2016; Walsh, 2003). The FLCT posits that all families are subject to stress throughout their life cycle and challenges arise when the family is unable to cope with these stressors or to transition into the next stage of the developmental cycle (McGoldrick et al., 2016).

Figure 48: Vertical and horizontal stressors of the FLCT (Kieling, 2014)[125]
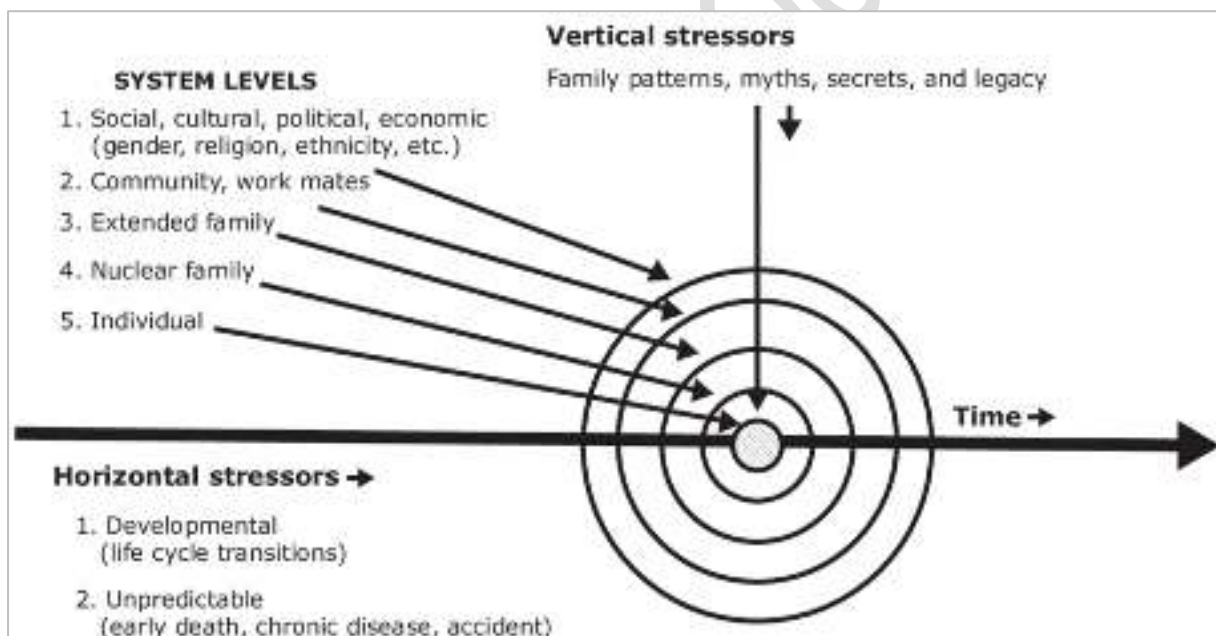
The Ecological Systems Theory (EST), offered by Bronfenbrenner (1979) asserts that individuals develop and interact within the family, and that one forms part of one of the ecosystems nested within many other nested ecosystems (White, Matin & Adamsons, 2019). These nested systems can be examined within five levels of analysis, namely, the **microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem,** and **chronosystem** (White et al., 2019). Within each ecosystem are interdependent *niches*, occupied by individuals and characterised by their *"patterned and relatively stable set of activities"* that function for the *"maintenance or adaptation of units in the environment of those occupying a specific niche"* (White et al., 2019:315).

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[125] Kieling, 2014: https://www.scielo.br/pdf/trends/v36n2/2237-6089-trends-36-02-00059.pdf

Figure 49: Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1989) Bioecological Systems Theory[126]
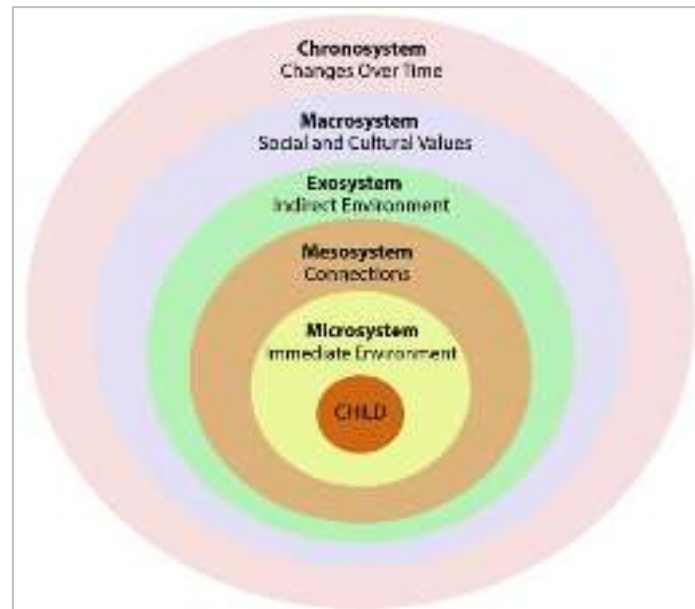
The **microsystem** is the most proximal setting in which an individual is located, for example, the home, and where direct interactions with significant others can occur (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; White et al., 2019).

The **mesosystem** can be conceptualised as a system of microsystems and is characterised by the interrelatedness of two or more of these microsystems, for example, the family, school, or work (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; White et al., 2019).

The **exosystem** *"refers to systems that are not in direct interaction with the developing person but have indirect effects on the persons' micro- or mesosystem"* (White et al., 2019:314). One example of how the exosystem could have played out recently within the family context is the impact of COVID-19 on parents' job security, which in turn, may have affected individuals within the family unit.

The **macrosystem** offers the cultural context in which the economic, social, educational, legal and political systems are located, and its influence can be reflected in how the other systems function (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; White et al., 2019). For example, some individuals and stakeholders referred to Apartheid, an oppressive legislation and political system that promoted policies of segregation against non-white South Africans (History.com, 2020).[127] Apartheid legislation informed policies in order to advance and preserve

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[126] Source: https://www.psychologynoteshq.com/bronfenbrenner-ecological-theory/

[127] History.com, 2020: https://www.history.com/topics/africa/apartheid

white supremacy, thus undermining every facet of family life for non-white South African citizens (Hall & Posel, 2019).

Finally, the **chronosystem** allows one to be aware of how the individual's developmental life course is embedded within and shaped by events and experiences taking place during the historical period in which they live (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; White et al., 2019). Therefore, considering the ecological systems surrounding the family is of value. It helps one to view the family as embedded in a changing society that develops in various ways and at varying times during an individual's life course (Dallos & Draper, 2015; Sigelman & Rider, 2018).

With these theories briefly described, the next discussion focuses on how individuals experienced family as well as the stressors that affected their family's functioning. How stakeholders perceived and experienced the notion of family in relation to individuals experiencing homelessness is also presented and discussed.

7.2. FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND FAMILY STRESSORS

The *White Paper on Families in South Africa (2013)* recognises the family as a central component of the functioning of society; yet the family has not received equal policy attention compared to other issues aimed at driving the transformation process of South Africa post-1994 (*White Paper on Families in South Africa,* 2013). The Centre for Social Justice states in the White Paper: "*stable, healthy families are at the heart of strong societies*" with a positive association between stable, supportive families and favourable outcomes (*White Paper on Families in South Africa*, 2013). Within a stable, nurturing family environment, members can function more optimally in society, but in its absence, individuals and society are at greater risk of being negatively impacted (Centre for Social Justice, in the White Paper).

The assertions driving the *White Paper on Families in South Africa (2013)* also recognise the repercussions that Apartheid had on family life in South Africa – especially in families not classified as white. Budlender and Lund (2011 [128]) assert that the Apartheid regime was responsible for the *"state-orchestrated destruction of family life."* In South Africa, the scars of the past run deep, as reflected in this participant's comment:

> *"The social and cohesive fibre of stable communities were shattered and destroyed through the forced removal known as the Group Areas Act, where people of colour were uprooted and forcibly removed to the dusty wastes of the Cape Flats… My father had to plead guilty… that he was residing in Claremont illegally; this after the family had been living there for the past 32 years. Families from Newlands, Claremont, District Six, Simon's Town, Goodwood, and other areas had their traditions and customs destroyed by an act that was abhorrent and inhuman."* – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

It is impossible to ignore the wider historical and socio-political context along with the resulting socio-economic burdens pervading the lives and communities of many South African families. In a study by Adonis (2016:6), focusing on the salience of intergenerational trauma of the children and grandchildren of individuals who experienced gross human rights violation during the Apartheid era, three emerging themes were identified, namely, secondary traumatisation, socio-economic and material impact, and sense of powerlessness and helplessness. These themes were also at times evident in the family stories shared by individuals during The Inkathalo Conversations.

In addition, the stories of family life revealed that family structures were complex, and the notion that the nuclear family is stable and healthy could in fact delegitimise various family structures (*White Paper on Families in South Africa,* 2013). The nuclear family structure is no longer the norm, nor does it appear to be the main ingredient for a healthy, happy family (McGoldrick et al., 2016; Prout, 2011; *White Paper on Families in South Africa*, 2013). Applying a lens that considers these factors allows one to view the accounts of familial experiences within an ecosystem made up of smaller interconnected ecosystems, and as the developmental context of the individual and the family. In addition, such a lens helps to dispel the myth

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[128] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/51874285_South_Africa_A_Legacy_of_Family_Disruption

that an individual experiencing homelessness can only come from an unstable family environment, as was evidenced during the first phase of The Inkathalo Conversations.

An oversimplified, causal view that 'individuals experiencing homelessness come from dysfunctional families' was debunked, as some individuals shared instead that they grew up in a loving, well-functioning family environment. The *White Paper on Families in South Africa* (2013:3) defines a healthy family as one that is characterised *"by good interpersonal relations and a good state of physical, mental, and social well-being among all members."* Some individuals shared:

> *"My grandparents reared me...I grew up in a nice home, nice environment, nice childhood..."* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"...born into a well, middle-class Christian family – my mother you know, she reared me very well – my dad was alive... I got two sisters and a brother so I was the baby in the house – you know I grew up and I will never ever forget my first present I got at the age of one years old was a bicycle... ...*

> *...I used to love to ride a bike... I loved to sing – you know, and my mom used to sing to me each and every Sunday morning. We used to listen to a programme on RSG called 'Loof die Here'* [Praise the Lord] *and so I grew up in that environment of knowing what God is, knowing what it is I want to do with my life, what I want to become, you know, I went to high school... I finished matric and family life for me growing up was a good life you know, I didn't know what it was – gangsterism and violence and things like that – I never experienced that as a child so I would say that I grew up conformed in that middle-class family, loving..."* – Brinley Hector, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"...good family, good education – I'm a chartered accountant by profession, I have degrees in pharmaceuticals as well... my parents were still alive which was everything to me – my journey actually started when my dad passed away..."* – Kevin Pillay, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

From these comments, one starts realising that there are individuals experiencing homelessness who experienced a stable family environment. However, during The Inkathalo Conversations, one could not ignore the many other individuals who described familial stressors characterised by single, multiple/complex, and/or intergenerational trauma. Experiences of grief or personal loss, long periods of estrangement or separation, various forms of abuse, and exposure to substances were some of the family stressors that individuals disclosed. These types of family life cycle stressors and disruptive life challenges can negatively impact on the resilience of a family unit as evidenced by the accounts presented next (McGoldrick et al., 2016; *White Paper on Families in South Africa*, 2013).

GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT

Grief seemed to be a central theme when individuals experiencing homelessness shared their accounts of family life. A considerable number of individuals experienced the death of a parent or loved one. In some cases, individuals lost their parents when they were in their earlier childhood years:

> *"My mother died when I was four or five years old..."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"My dad died when I was seven years old and I remember I got a very few memories of him today, but it was good memories that I had of my dad…" – Brinley Hector, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In other cases, a significant number of individuals experienced bereavement in their adult years, expressing their losses as possible pathways directly or indirectly into homelessness:

"…where everything took a strain for me… I know exactly where it was… was in 2010… my mom passed away – my rock – she was everything for me, the person I could speak to, my best friend, everything… and it just felt like my life crashed down from there… I just shut down from the world, into isolation…" – Ali Adams, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"My father passed away about five years ago and my whole life just crumbled, I felt I had no reason to live so why should I care? I partied my life away, I lost my work, I got retrenched in 2015…" – Cindy Barnard, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"…my journey actually started when my dad passed away. After him passing away, I could take over from him, join the business which I didn't want to do because I was a person to do things on my own – not handed over. After I lost him I had to become the man of the house, my sisters were married, I can't depend on them… I had two young siblings – brothers, which I had to make sure they finish school. My journey started – apart from dad – when I lost my daughter… she turned 21 and [clears his throat, struggling to continue speaking] *graduated as a nurse… unfortunately after graduation – it wasn't even two weeks – she was admitted to hospital being diabetic, sugar levels went to about 12 and she passed away. Unfortunately I was not at home, in was in Port Elizabeth on business and I received a call and basically, I didn't have a chance to* [struggling to speak] *– sorry, sorry for that – to say goodbye* [struggling to continue speaking]*..."* – Kevin Pillay, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I've got another sister, she passed away 2017, she was diabetic [becoming emotional, struggling to continue speaking]*…"* – Alice (not her real name), an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"…it did happen that my sister, as the journey goes on, my sister was being stabbed by [her] boyfriend and then that's where the whole confusion started for me to be 'n bietjie deurmekaar in die kop in' [a bit confused in the mind*] and then I started losing everything now, because she was very close to me… I ended up not focusing at work and then that's where it started… that I lost my job and end up on the street* [starts crying]*…"* – Meshack Tshantsha, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The comments above illuminate how the death of a loved one, often an unpredicted event, impacted on the participants' mental wellbeing. During the time of separation or loss, family structures undergo major strain and in the cases above, it did not seem that the families could find a sense of equilibrium (McGoldrick et al., 2016). For those who remain after the death of a parent, roles within the family are likely to change. Some assume inappropriate roles such as that of the parent, being the "*man of the house*", as one participant stated, or take on the financial responsibilities to make up for the loss of income that the deceased parent may have brought into the household (McGoldrick et al., 2016). In a study conducted by

Islington Christian Action & Response in Society (CARIS)[129], individuals experiencing homelessness and those who work in the sector identified bereavement as one of the top ten causes of homelessness. Similar to the comments that emerged during The Inkathalo Conversations, the CARIS (2010) study identified that participants cited depression and suicidal ideation.

During the conversations, it was not clear if individuals who experienced grief and loss had received adequate bereavement counselling or support at the time it was most necessary. While many individuals experiencing homelessness have received psychosocial support from NGOs or have been the recipients of shelter interventions, stakeholders recognised that there was a great need for healing from familial and related trauma. Subsequent to the death of a parent or loved one, individuals were often left with frail and inadequate networks of social support and care. During one of the Focus Group discussions, a participant shared how, after the death of his mother, his biological father told him that he no longer had his mother to protect and stand up for him. In some cases, with the death of a parent, individuals were left in the care of others. However, it was not only through death that individuals were separated from their parents or main caregivers. The next section focuses on additional factors and stressors that play a role in family disruption.

FAMILY SEPARATION, NEGLECT, AND ABANDONMENT

Out of 77 countries studied by Zulaika and Martin (2016), South Africa was found to be one of the three countries with the lowest rates of children living with their biological parents. During the conversations, forms of separation from parents included abandonment and being left in the care of extended family members. The reasons parents left their children in the care of others was not always openly disclosed during the process. In some instances, it was related to socio-economic circumstances where parents migrated for employment opportunities, while in other instances it was related to parents separating from one another, or parents abandoning their families without a known explanation. Individuals shared some of their experiences:

> *"My mother was never there – she left us when I was three years old…"* – Lucien, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"My mother was very involved in politics at that time, she was not with me most of the time, I think she left me at the age of two with my grandparents, which I found out later were not really my grandparents…"* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Monwabisi further shared how he went from living with his grandparents to living with his mother's friends, where he felt severely neglected. He described one occasion where he ended up eating fecal matter. He went back to living with his grandfather and then another family friend who cared for the children of parents who were in exile during the Apartheid years. He explained how his mother had left him to receive training in Zimbabwe for the politically related work she did. This appeared to be the main reason for him staying with various people throughout his childhood.

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[129] https://whatsyourgrief.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Bereavement-and-Homelessness-Study.pdf

The political environment in South Africa at the time exposed Monwabisi to various traumatic incidences that included witnessing people being kidnapped by the Apartheid security forces. Eventually, after Monwabisi was reunited with his mother who had remarried, then later divorced, they were both left moving from place to place. Monwabisi would later drop out of school in Grade 9 to help support the struggling household. In South Africa, it is commonplace to observe intergenerational patterns of individuals leaving school in order to mitigate socio-economic hardships within the household. When families experience economic fragility, children may find themselves having to work to contribute financially to their household (Curtis, 2015; Torres & Hill, 2010; Johnson & Mollborn, 2009). This story powerfully elucidates how stressors – some unpredicted, others inherited and made manifest through social, political, and economic structures or systems – can intersect and *"limit the options of some and support the power of others"* (Kieling, 2014; McGoldrick et al., 2016; Walsh, 2003:380).

In some instances, individuals shared how at various times in their lives they did not receive support from or were abandoned by family members at critical times in their lives:

> *"I then had what they call MDR TB [multi drug resistant tuberculosis]… because I defaulted and I used substances on top of the fact that I had TB… so what happened was I then went to hospital – I stayed in hospital for a month, almost two months – and then I was transferred to Lentegeur Hospital because I couldn't walk… but during that time, nobody really came to visit me… none of the family came to visit… so when I got better I decided I'm going to leave, I think I got my disability grant that day and I left and I decided that I didn't want to have anything to do with my family… so I went to go live next to the beach in Simon's Town… and I got in touch with a company called Living Hope…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"…like my father would always be the one being there for us, even now for my brothers and sisters. Even while I was running, I would always look out... ek het altyd gedink gaan ek my ma sien [I always thought, am I going to see my mom] – she was never there, not even to school meetings, but she always had a problem in everything we did…"* – Tina Brandt, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

As emphasised earlier, the death of a main caregiver can result in the weakening of the dependants' support network. The following story highlights this and how mental health challenges further compound the level of social support. A stakeholder relayed:

> *"…she was a girl who lived in Gugulethu, her mother died – she came to visit them regularly. She walks the streets of Sea Point, she begs and then she goes home and her half-brother would take her money every day. They helped to get her a place in the Elizabeth Roos Home for the mentally handicapped, she was unhappy; they then took her to another place on a farm which was such a good place. She was not unhappy, but she wasn't happy – her family only visited her once a year, we visited her a few times a year but not enough. I consider her homeless…"* – Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk

Parent-child separation has been argued to result in weak parent-child attachment relationships (Barker, Iles & Ramchandani, 2017; Mashegoane & Ramoloto, 2016). Re-establishing contact with family members can be challenging for individuals who had perhaps been separated for long periods or who had been in the care of others – even when the reasons were for economic provision. Some individuals met their

biological parents and/or siblings for the first time when they were adults. One individual shared how he met his mother for the first time when he was incarcerated in Pollsmoor, while another elderly participant described his confusion and difficulty forming a bond with his biological siblings after he established contact with his biological mother for the first time. A sense of belonging is core to one's wellbeing, yet many individuals shared experiences that appeared to be characterised by fragile, inconsistent familial connections (McGoldrick et al., 2016).

The sense of family and home is further injured when individuals do not experience a sense of safety within their family unit (McGoldrick et al., 2016). Various types of abuse within the home were some of the ways that a sense of safety was violated. Some individuals described parents or adults in the home using substances, domestic violence, and a considerable number of individuals disclosed personal experiences of sexual abuse or violation within the home and beyond.

When a family is organised around substances or alcohol, it struggles to adapt appropriately when undergoing normal family pressures and, instead, might re-organise itself around the addiction (McGoldrick et al., 2016).

EXPOSURE TO SUBSTANCE USE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Some individuals recounted how they were exposed to substance use and domestic violence within their family context. As an individual who struggled with substance use, Alice (not her real name) highlighted how her mother had a substance use problem that aggravated their already tense relationship. She recounted:

> *"She* [her mother] *never wants to listen to us… she never listens to anything, she never even sits with us and have a proper conversation… like most of the time… I will tell my mother a lot of times… for us, mommy cant'say like okay, 'you're spoilt', 'your father's a moffie', 'your father's a this', 'your father's a that'… most of the times we don't even want money, we just want her to sit and listen to what we wanna say or like share a conversation... or my brother's stupid… I can't blame her for turning to drugs but there's always a problem…"* – Alice (not her real name), an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Research has suggested that biology and genetics can play a role in the passing down of certain addictions, and if there pre a family history of substance use, it is twice as likely to be passed down to the following generation (McGoldrick et al., 2016). Alice indicated:

> *"I can't blame my parents or my mother for my life being like this now but…* [starts crying]*… I have got a really lovely family but most of the times, everything I went through was because of my mother…"* – Alice (not her real name), an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Alice highlights an intergenerational perspective regarding her mother's abusive behaviour:

> *"…you see most of the times I tell her, so now, she won't uhm, like, give her opinions straight to your face… maybe she scolds my father, now she knows all of us is listening to her… the house is quiet… now tonight when we sleep then she will walk up and down in the house, then she speak to herself. She's like that because of the way she was raised – her mother and sisters used to abuse her, she used to walk barefoot to school, they used to call her names, or treat her bad, or she was*

always abused; so now I'm telling her; 'seeing that mummy was abused why don't you give us better?'" – Alice (not her real name), an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In Monwabisi Sijaji's account, he remembered how his mother *"met another guy"* and he started observing how his mother's intimate partner would get drunk and go on to abuse her in their home. Substance use or patterns of addiction and domestic violence often intersect (McGoldrick et al., 2016). Anda Mazantsana defended his mother from her abusive partner as a child and in one of these violent interactions, ended up fatally wounding him. Despite the incident being considered self-defense, he continued to blame himself and further stated:

> *"…and I think my mother – wherever she is right now – she still has it within her cause all around her you're feeling that actually coming from her for what I did…"* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Some of these cases explicitly mentioned the use of substances. However, it should be noted that not all forms of family violence were aggravated by substance use. In one instance, an individual experiencing homelessness shared that as a child, he would be physically disciplined by his father when his sisters did something wrong. While he did not appear to associate the beatings as a form of abuse, it must be emphasised that the South African Constitutional Court[130] banned the physical disciplining of one's children in 2019, because of the high levels of family violence. Discipline, providing structure, and boundary-setting are essential components of good parenting and necessary for a child's positive developmental outcomes, the parental style of discipline is just as critical (Roman, 2014). Parenting styles can be greatly influenced by family patterns and gender, as well as cultural, religious, and social norms. Some parents may not perceive their style of discipline to be abusive, as one individual indicated:

> *"…I told my mother's it's abuse – she asked – how do I mean it's abuse?"* – Alice (not her real name), an individual who has experienced homelessness.

However, the intersection between substance use and domestic/family violence did not only take shape in the form of verbal, emotional, and physical abuse, but also in the form of sexual abuse and violation within the family and beyond the family environment. It is argued that substance use within the home places children at increased risk of being sexually abused (McGoldrick et al., 2016). A participant, who struggled with addiction herself, explained that after her parents got divorced, she stayed with her biological father. She disclosed:

> *"… my dad was an addict… so he always had friends over and… two of his friends who I was also sexually molested by… My mom and dad got divorced when I was very young – like I said, I was nine – so it was a rough start… when I was a child…"* – An individual who has experienced homelessness.

In the following section, individuals experiencing and who have experienced homelessness further illuminated how sexual abuse and violation formed part of their life trajectory into homelessness.

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[130] http://www.saflii.org/za/cases/ZACC/2019/34.pdf

SEXUAL ABUSE AND VIOLATION

Individuals disclosed a range of deeply traumatic incidents, which included sexual abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, and violent assaults. Individuals experiencing or who had experienced homelessness described not only the nature of the sexual abuse and assault, but also provided the context within which the abuse took place, and the surrounding factors that made it possible for the abuse to take place. Often, family members or family friends perpetrated the abuse. McGoldrick et al. (2016) assert that usually family members and friends are found to be the abusers of children. In South Africa, this is not uncommon (Mathews, Hendricks & Abrahams, 2016). It is globally acknowledged that child sexual abuse, sexual perpetration, and gender-based violence are at unprecedented levels in South Africa (Fleming & Kruger, 2013; Mathews et al., 2016). It also seems that many of these crimes are not reported, are underreported, or go unpunished within the legal system (Fleming & Kruger, 2013; McGoldrick et al., 2016). These experiences are major family life cycle stressors that, left unresolved, can strain the functioning of a family unit (McGoldrick et al., 2016).

Without minimising these horrific accounts, it is critical for those who will draft and redraft policy to not focus solely on the sordidness of the abuse detailed in this report, but to pay attention to and track where the system and society potentially failed individuals experiencing homelessness. The following individual recounted:

> "My mother died when I was four or five years old and on the day of her funeral, I was kidnapped by members of the family – I still don't understand why or what… from what I've heard… the rest of the family explained that my mother wasn't married to my father so she… what they did was they sent her to live with another aunt of mine… in Gugulethu… Langa or something like that… and the day of the funeral I was kidnapped and taken to live there with my aunt… I believe from what I hear the rest of the family says that they were very disappointed… she brought shame to the family… so they didn't really want her around… but after my mother's death I was brought back somehow. I came back to Bishop Lavis to stay with my mother's other sister… where I was sodomised by my cousins repeatedly…" – An individual who has experienced homelessness.

The account above elucidates how the death of the main caregiver and the family's subsequent responses can make for an environment that is damaging for the dependants left behind. In addition, during the conversations, Rudy mentioned how his mother's family believed that she had brought shame upon the family. Rudy later mentioned that it was unclear who his biological father was and that they suspected his mother – who was at that time classified as coloured – of having relations with a man classified as black. During the Apartheid regime, the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act (No 55 of 1949) prohibited individuals from marrying outside of their racial classification. It may have been possible that his mother's family and community of origin held negative beliefs and attitudes about intimate relationships outside of their racial group. He shared how the children in his community would call him *"Mabuti"* when he would return from visits from his aunt who lived in the township. He stated:

> "I knew they kind of made fun of me because my father was black and I was supposed to be black…"
> – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Family secrets can also be the cause of strain to the family unit and disrupt both a family's functioning and the individual functioning of the members of that family (McGoldrick et al., 2016). Rudy confirmed that as

a teenager he was *"unhappy"* and *"confused"* because he was told varying stories about who his biological father was. These contextual factors surrounded Rudy's experiences of being sodomised.

In another life story, an individual who lived with her biological father after her parents separated, shared accounts of repeated sexual molestation and abuse:

> *"…okay, let's start when I was nine… my mom left home, I decided to stay with my dad – I was dad's girl… I was molested by my uncle from the age of nine till about 16 into my school years, he was my godfather as well. I was practically raised in that home so really my whole perception of love with a man was totally messed up. I didn't want to be me you know, I was very, very young when I wished that I wasn't me because all kinds of interaction with men always led me… I had Bio sir* [teacher] *and he… he tried to molest me as well in high school… My dad was an addict… so he always had friends over and… two of his friends who I was also sexually molested by… My mom and dad got divorced when I was very young – like I said, I was nine…"* – An individual who has experienced homelessness.

Of interest in this participant's life story is that she had more of a strained relationship with her mother even though all her experiences of sexual molestation and violation took place while in the care of her father, whom she described as an addict. Similarly, Alice's story also highlighted a strained relationship with her mother, who was the parent who used substances. She reported to have a better relationship with her father as her mother often treated her in a way that was psychologically and emotionally abusive.

While many children are said to be abused by known family members or family friends, it was evident that not all individuals who had experienced this type of violation were abused by family or family friends. South Africa is notorious for its high levels of child sexual abuse, which is "*driven by high levels of gender-based violence and underscored by structural and social factors*" (Mathews et al., 2016:636). Two individuals who had experienced homelessness shared their horrific experiences of sexual violation. The first was a formerly homeless woman who shared how she was raped when she moved to the township to live with her biological mother:

> *"… we had to clean the house so I didn't get the option of going to school. In cleaning the house during the day I joined the rest of the young girls with my bucket by the tap, and I remember, you know, the guys of community saying they have to introduce me to the community. And at the age of eight – that was the first time I got gang raped… I was raped the whole day in a shack… and later they just pushed me out of the shack and I walked through my community and I remember one lady standing at her gate and you know typically answering in the rape culture of ignorance saying 'oh yeah' in Xhosa, 'you don't teach yourself how to greet'.*
>
> *So basically, it was a sign of oh okay, it's my fault, my stigma, carry it. Nobody cares of what happened. Got in, got beaten by my mum of course because I wasn't here the whole day nobody cooked, nobody cleaned…"* – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

The second individual shared how his father remarried and that because his stepmother did not accept him, he started sleeping outside as a child. He shared how one night at the age of 8 years old, he was sexually violated while sleeping outside:

> *"I was cornered by four guys at that particular space and these guys for the fun of it, took out knives and took broomsticks and said I must take off my clothes and these broomsticks were used... ya, but I'm going to use another language – so they used the broomsticks and the put the broomsticks in my arse, I was bleeding at that particular time... kicking me up and down... and I went home, I started to tell this lady – I knocked so my stepmother opened the door, she looked, she just chased me away and said I must go back to wherever I came from."* – An individual who has experienced homelessness.

Grizelda Grootboom published a book about her experiences. It seems that her pathway to healing was through the written word and forms of activism based on her experiences of being trafficked. However, the man who experienced vioaltion by broomsticks disclosed that he still struggled with feelings of anger. In his account, he described how he went home and disclosed it to his stepmother but she responded by chasing him away. Moreover, after sharing about his life hardships with school peers, they later stigmatised and shamed him because of what he had disclosed. It is likely that his continued process of disclosure and opportunity to heal was negatively impacted by these various responses and reactions by family members and society (Mathews et al., 2016).

Factors that make it difficult for individuals to fully disclose their experiences of sexual violation include the fear of shame or of being blamed, mistreated or socially ostracised; a lack of adequate support systems; and a fear of the perpetrators (Fleming & Kruger, 2013; Mathews et al., 2016). South Africa is considered an extremely patriarchal society, which may further impede a male's ability to disclose his experience of sexual violation (Mathews et al., 2016). The factors making it difficult to disclose abuse were also evident in another participant's experience of being sexually molested by his cousins while in the care of his aunt after his mother's passing. He remembered how he had complained about the incident, but that he was consistently accused of being a *"troublemaker just like his mother"* instead of being supported by his family members.

It is important to note that child sexual abuse has a range of possible long-term effects on the individual, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, suicide, substance use, aggressive behaviour, juvenile behavioural problems, and problems with sexual relations (McGoldrick et al., 2016). Many of the accounts of individuals who were sexually abused or violated supported this. In one female participant's account, she shared that because of being sexually molested numerous times, her *"perception of love with a man was totally messed up",* she often found herself in unhealthy intimate relationships where substances were used, and she had attempted suicide a number of times. Another participant shared how he does not know *"if I am really a normal person compared to other people – because at times, I do get overwhelmed about certain things… the next time you tell me something that's very small, it will trigger me to be very angry…"*

Loss and injury are bound to occur – even in the best of families. However, in the accounts shared in this sector, they were prevalent. It seemed that the very place where the individual was meant to receive love, support, and nurturance was where the family stressor took place. It was striking how many individuals shared stories of grief during their life course. In addition, and often within the context of socio-political and socio-economic factors, individuals experienced separation, abandonment, and neglect during

childhood. Divorce, family breakdown, substance use, family violence, sexual abuse, sexual violation, psychological and emotional abuse were additional forms of family stressors.

Within the South African context, one has to consider these families' access to support services pre- and post-1994 along with familial, cultural, and social norms and beliefs regarding eldership, gender roles within the family and society, and parental styles (Roman, 2014). Various individuals alluded to beliefs about gender and the roles they needed to assume. The feelings of being "*of age*" after matriculating, of being "*a man now*" and needing to work, or becoming "*the man of the house*" after the death of a parent, are indicative of the ways that individuals often felt the pressure to step into another role at certain points in their life. Moreover, the intergenerational nature of these stressors over time has left many previously disadvantaged families within a myriad of ecosystems that are, for the most part, hostile and under-resourced.

While some individuals experiencing homelessness recounted their family story with a sense of wholeness; many shared experiences characterised by trauma. During The Inkathalo Conversations, it became clear that one could not generalise a 'type' of family that leads to the experience of homelessness. Numerous intersecting factors contribute to an individual becoming homeless: coming from an unstable or dysfunctional family environment is not the sole reason.

Earlier in this chapter, family theories were presented to help frame the discussion on homeless individuals' experiences of their family. However, individuals experiencing homelessness also provided their framework relating to the concept of family. To enrich the discussion on the family, some insights from a focus group discussion with approximately 30 individuals experiencing homelessness regarding their perceptions, experiences, and challenges of different types of families will be shared.

7.3. NOTIONS OF FAMILY

As The Inkathalo Conversations unfolded, it became evident that the concept of family, home, and community extended well beyond the popular notion of typical family structures. Family connections were characterised by more than just blood, historical, legal, and/or emotional ties.

In the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy* (2013:3), family is defined as "*individuals who, either by contract or agreement chooses to live together and function as a unit in a social and economic system… envisaged as the primary social unit, which ideally provides care, nurturing and socialisation for its members. It seeks to provide them with physical, economic, emotional, social and cultural and spiritual support.*" Individuals who shared during presentations that they had found a sense of belonging and acceptance, a family, amongst their fellows on the streets, or had forged family-like relationships with residents and/or staff members at shelters and NGOs, affirmed this. 'Family diversity', one of the six guiding principles of the *White Paper on Families in South Africa* (2013), recognises that family types are varied due to the diverse cultural and social contexts.

During a Focus Group discussion with 30 individuals who have experienced homelessness, when asked about the different types of existing families, the responses were captured as:

- Immediate/biological/nuclear family;

- Step/blended family;
- Foster family or cared for by grandparents/other family members;
- Drug cartel/gang family/prison family;
- Misguided/in crisis family;
- Religious family;
- Shelter family; and
- Street family

Following the participants' identification of family types, the following types were selected by the group for further exploration:

- Step/blended/foster families;
- Religious/spiritual families; and
- Shelter/street families.

The participants were invited to explore who the members of the family types were, what they believed were the family type's advantages and strengths, and also the family type's disadvantages or challenges. The feedback from the groups is presented and discussed next.

STEP/BLENDED/FOSTER FAMILIES

As opposed to a nuclear family, defined as a family group that consists of *"parents with their biological or adoptive children only"*; the stepfamily is defined as the family where there has been a recoupling by either of the biological parents and the introduction of new members into the family unit (McGoldrick et al., 2016; *White Paper on Families in South Africa*, 2013:3). Other non-stigmatising terms for this family type include 'bi-nuclear' or 'multi-nuclear' families (McGoldrick et al., 2016).

Participants identified the members of this family type as stepmother/stepparents, stepsisters/siblings, half-brothers and sisters, and interestingly, the social worker.

The advantages associated with stepfamilies or foster families were expressed as:

The **challenges** associated with the stepfamily and/or foster family included:

Reproduction of actual notes written by participants

The multi-nuclear family appeared to be associated with a lot of hurt and pain. McGoldrick et al., (2016: 410) argued that establishing a *"remarried family is one of the most difficult developmental transitions for a family to negotiate."* As part of the family's developmental task, members have to realign boundaries (McGoldrick et al., 2016). The Focus Group discussion participants confirmed how families broke down due to separation, divorce, recoupling or remarriage after a breakdown in the relationship, or due to the death of a spouse. When new members joined the family, it appeared to shift the way that parents engaged with their biological children, which often gave rise to tension and conflict (McGoldrick et al., 2016). Individuals affirmed this by describing experiences of family conflict, trust being broken, manipulation, and favouritism – especially when stepsiblings were introduced into the family unit. Guarin and Meyer (2018) and McGoldrick et al., (2016) assert that often, in the case of a father remarrying, the contact between the father and his biological children is compromised or conflict emerges between the child and stepparent:

> *"I was always neglected as a rightful* [sibling]*… being the black sheep that they always hated – my step-mother, she even closed my heart when I was very young."* – Individual who has experienced homelessness during Focus Group

> *"…my father at the time got recently married to my stepmother – who he's still got even today – and that lady was not very fond of me and she never wanted me in her space, and she wanted her sister's kids to come and live with her because she couldn't carry children… So to her I was like a threat, from time to time she would want to beat me for doing certain stuff…"* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

During the Focus Group discussion, a participant argued that there was a lack of fathers taking up their role and further stated that often individuals in search of a father would find father figures on the streets. The family life accounts of many participants during the first phase of The Inkathalo Conversations raised the lack of father figures. With regard to being in the care of a foster family, individuals explained how their experiences of not feeling completely accepted contributed to becoming homeless:

> *"…I matriculated in 1993 and I wanted to leave my foster parents' house because I felt that okay, I am now of age to basically go on my own. I kind of felt like… because he had his own children as well and he had his own stuff he was dealing with, and he was a very busy man* [chuckles]*… and before I left the house he asked me uhm, if I was gay and I shouldn't bring the family… ek moenie die familie in verder skande steek nie soos my ma gemaak het nie* [I shouldn't place the family in shame like my mom did]*…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

This account indicates that not all foster families are in the position to provide the care that the individual requires. Rudy's collection of experiences seemed to lead into a downward spiral with regard to substance use later in his life:

> *"…I started drinking, partying, and meeting other people because I'm free now you know, I'm out of that very conservative… religious dogmatic environment so I can now do whatever I want to do. So, I left Cape Town, I met some friends… I worked as a salesman for a… certain second-hand company and then after that I worked at… a movie house and Metro Theatres as an assistant manager and there I started meeting a totally different crowd of people – people that felt… you know, life is about enjoying it and I enjoyed my life you know… and I started taking, started taking drugs – ecstasy – and that was the start of a very vicious cycle of… unmanageability. I couldn't manage things so nicely anymore… there were things that came up from my past that I just couldn't properly deal with… that I didn't do… so now with this new found solution… things just kinda got easier you know, I can face the fact that, you know, I did – that I'm slightly different – that certain things happened to me… it made it easier to just deal with that stuff…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

It was evident to these participants that there were more challenges than benefits associated with stepfamilies. To a lesser degree, the same could be said about foster families.

SHELTER FAMILIES

During the Focus Group discussion, shelter families were also explored. Similar to those engaging in the conversations, Focus Group discussion participants highlighted how, at times, they found a deeper sense of family with others.

Many individuals and stakeholders believed and confirmed that, often, their family of origin contributed to them becoming homeless. Some stakeholders affirmed that often, individuals experiencing homelessness find a sense of family among others who are homeless, who work at shelters, and community members.

This was confirmed by individuals experiencing homelessness who stated during the Focus Group discussion that often, organisations become the parental role model in the lives of those without parental figures. Individuals shared:

"…the homeless people take each other as family…" – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"But our community, our family, that circle, if I have nothing today, I know I can go to Labika or Aunty Merle for a blanket… but that is not the comfort zone I'm speaking of. Everyone on the streets knows us already… they know that this is our home [others are commenting in agreement while he is talking] *– if you don't have and I have, I will give you…"* – Donovan, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

This was further supported by participants during the Focus Group discussion. Members of this type of family included the shelter manager, new community at the shelter, and the 'brothers and sisters' you meet at the shelter.

The advantages associated with the shelter family were expressed as:

The challenges associated with the shelter family included:

The challenges pertaining to the shelter family highlighted above were corroborated by the feedback of many individuals and stakeholders arguing that the time frame for the standard shelter intervention was too short. It was in this comment that another Focus Group discussion participant stated that the family you forge on the streets is a more long-term family as you share more with them. During some of the presentations, individuals experiencing homelessness shared:

> *"…went to live in Company Gardens for a while where I got to meet a bigger family… they had their challenges but I started liking these people around me… they all had their stories – many, similar to mine..."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"But today, we are all friends, family, we all live together – Aunty Merle over there, my brother over there, we take care of one another…"* – Lisa, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Individuals experiencing homelessness recounted how they created family relationships with those whom they met while being homeless. Often it seemed that these family networks and structures operated better than those of the biological families.

RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL FAMILIES

The final family type that the Focus Group discussion participants explored was the religious/spiritual family. During the discussions, participants often referred to their faith and how it helped to ground them in their recovery. On numerous occasions, participants even requested to start and close sessions in prayer. When checking with the rest of the participants, no one protested. Overall, faith was often referred to during the first phase of The Inkathalo Conversations and is discussed in the chapter on interventions.

The members of this family type included a concept of a Creator or God, and deities like Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and mankind.

The advantages associated with the religious/spiritual family type were expressed as:

The challenges associated with the religious/spiritual family included:

Human nature

Material things

Freedom

Disobedience

Where you come from – your past is against your religion

Flesh against the spirit
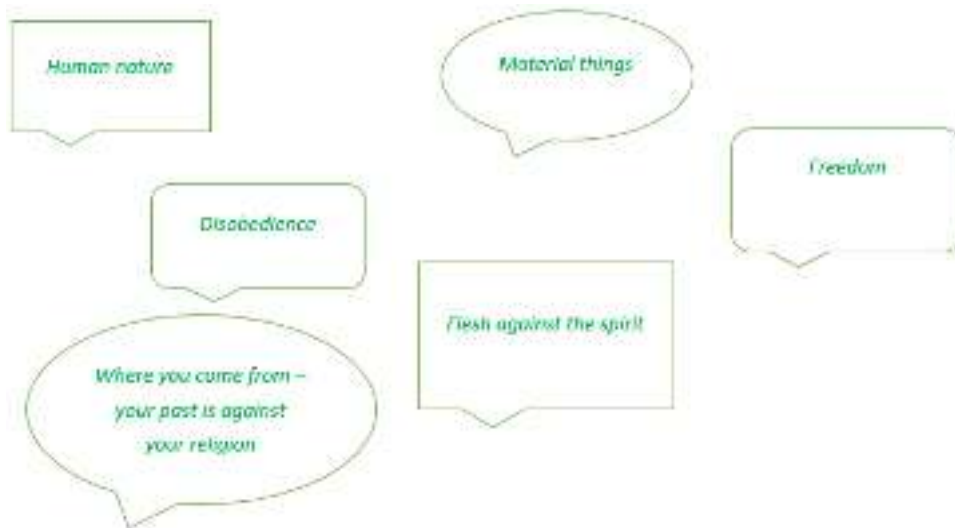
The sense of family seemed to be a protective factor in being able to survive the harshness that was often expressed as accompanying life on the streets. Being part of a family and having a sense of belonging and acceptance is core to the needs of humans – why would it be any different for an individual experiencing homelessness? With these conceptualisations of the various family types, the next part of this chapter presents the issues surrounding families experiencing homelessness.

7.4. FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

As previously highlighted, the *White Paper on Families in South Africa (2013)* does not make reference to individuals or families experiencing homelessness. However, in The Children's Act *(2005)*, homelessness is mentioned, albeit once, with regard to evaluating the environmental safety of the child.

Family was a significant theme during this process; however, there were no accounts presented of an entire family experiencing homelessness, which may be a limitation of Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations. Families becoming homeless did not appear to be something often discussed. Homelessness was associated more with individuals who had left or lost their family. It seemed that, in most cases, parents who became homeless were separated from their children by the State. Some children would be placed in institutional care, while others were in the care of family or foster parents.

Thereafter, social welfare services would make efforts to reunify parents with their children if they judged it to be in the best interest of the child (The Children's Act, 2005). These actions would be in accordance with the law, however, the preceding discussions in this chapter evidenced that in many instances, reunification was not always in the best interest of its members, nor was it contributing to resilient families. It emerged that there are no shelters that accept families as a unit (aside from a handful of gender-based violence shelters for women and their children) – this is surprising, as it was very clear from the Focus Group discussion participants how integral the concept of family was and how individuals found ways to form family bonds within challenging circumstances.

In some instances, individuals established family relationships while experiencing homelessness. Supporting the notion that the concept of family is integral to one's optimal functioning were accounts of

individuals experiencing homelessness who formed unions and lifetime partnerships as evidenced by one of the stakeholders:

> *"Carol and Bolla… they've been together for 22 years on the street. Carol was… married to a gentleman, they were on the street together… he contracted MDR TB and he eventually died from it but in the process, prior to him passing away, they met Bolla, who was like the third wheel who was always hanging around with them… Carol told us that her husband turned to Bolla his friend, on his deathbed on the streets and said to him: 'would you do me a favour – would you look after my wife?'* [starts crying] *And Bolla has been with her for 22 years…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

From the various accounts of individuals experiencing homelessness, it is likely that for a woman, being in a relationship with a man while experiencing homelessness might provide some measure of safety. Upon a participant's reflection about the challenges of being a woman on the streets, a mother experiencing homelessness commented:

> *"Vir my, wat 'n vrou is, om te 'skarrel', jy moet n bietjie, as jy a vroumens is, jou stem 'n bietjie harder maak. As jy gaan sag is, dan gaan jy nie survive op straat nie… as jy gat 'n vroumens is en jy's sag, en jy't niemand om jou nie, wat by jou bystaan nie, daar gaan jy nie survive nie…"*

> [Translation: "For me, who's a woman, to 'skarrel,' if you're a woman, you must make your voice a little louder. If you're going to be soft, then you won't survive on the street… If you're a woman and you're soft, and you have no one around you, standing by you, you won't survive"] – Nosipho Magade, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Apart from the family life cycle stressors discussed earlier, accounts from individuals experiencing homelessness strongly supported the role that socio-economic conditions also played in contributing to becoming homeless. A stakeholder shared:

> *"The continued exploitation of the working class through low wages, exorbitant transportation costs to and from their places of work, and the rising cost of basic services such as electricity and water have left the greater percentage of our populace severely cash strapped and, in many instances, eking out existences on virtually nothing. The numbers of backyard dwellers are swelling daily and very often failure to pay those rentals leading to another family seeking living space under a bridge or other such place on the street."* – Derek Ronnie, Mediator/More Than Peace

This stakeholder emphasised the exosystem and microsystem as playing a major role towards a family becoming homeless. Of interest, the individuals experiencing homelessness highlighted mainly the microsystem of the family, but their accounts referenced the exosystem and microsystem to which the participant above referred.

> *"…they heard that my mother divorced my step-father – they separated – my father took the house and my mother had to move to another house. While they were fighting, my mom and I had to move from place to place and renting…"* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"So I got married on the 8 January 2012… and life became a little bit right, came a little bit out of my bubble… by the 31 January 2012, found out my wife was pregnant… so it's a honeymoon baby. I was like 'okay, wife's not working, I'm working alone but I can do this'. With me being my isolated self, there was some stuff I couldn't speak to my wife about, so my life just went on, like you're my wife, yes… we share this, we share that, but there's certain parts I keep to myself and that basically became my downfall. Time went on – I got my second child in December, two years after that… so both daughters… and basically from that time, my life just went downhill.

I basically started making loans. Yes, I had a good job, I was doing IT… and the life just got expensive, having two kids, my wife's not working, it was a lot of strain on me. And the thing is, I didn't speak about it – I just made loans on top of loans, the stress just got to me. At the time everyone had this conclusion that Ali was on drugs – even my wife at the time was like 'no, he's on drugs, he's on drugs'… and the more I say I'm not on drugs… obviously, the secret that I had was that I built up so much debt and my wages couldn't cover it any longer. I ended up losing my home – it's me, my wife and my two daughters – and we ended up living with my in-laws… and yet, I wasn't working, I lost my job also that time… and then life just got more strained for me, and yet, I still couldn't open up to her. I then built up so much anger towards myself – I was angry at no one else than the world…" – Ali Adams, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I was reunited by my sister, I started going to school, so I lived with my mother's other sister and her family at the age of seven. One day I came back from school and all our belongings was outside – so we were evicted. My aunt was evicted so we didn't have a place anymore… I remember running to the house and there was someone who said 'julle kan nie in kom nie' [you can't come in], *'julle bly nie meer hier nie'* [you don't stay here anymore]… *so all our belongings was outside – the beds, the cupboards – everything. I remember playing on the mattresses while the other children looked and… I don't know what they shouted… but anyways, for me it was weird, I thought this was quite fun playing on mattresses outside, but I didn't understand that we actually just lost our house. From there onwards, my sister and I was taken away – I think it was part of the welfare – we moved from place to place, to foster parents…"* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Often, parents who are living on the streets, with or without their children, face judgement from society; however, society is not always aware of the contextual factors that surround the parent becoming homeless in the first place. In the accounts above, it is clear that at times, circumstances are genuinely beyond one's control. The next two sections discuss parents experiencing homelessness and children experiencing homelessness.

PARENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Although Phase One did not explore this topic extensively, there were some participants who referred to their experiences of being a homeless parent. Their reasons for becoming homeless were varied. Despite challenging circumstances, many individuals shared how they longed to be reunited with their children. *The Norms and Standards for Shelters for Homeless Adults (2015)* emphasises reunification as an important part of exiting homelessness and family strengthening. In this document, the process of reunification is described as:

> *"The reunification of family members with their families after being detached from the family and the process of empowering and supporting the client and family, the extended family to be reunited with their family over time. Reunification in this context refers to persons over the age of 18 years."*
> (The Norms and Standards for Shelters for Homeless Adults, 2015)

From the comments of mothers experiencing homelessness, it seemed that they felt the pressure to be economically active and described how they still managed to or made attempts to provide for their children:

> *"…I come to Cape Town to look after my child, my child was under the social worker there… I come and look after my child…"* – Nosipho Magade, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"I've got three children, my eldest is fifteen, second eldest is twelve, and my youngest is nine years old and, for me it's just I'm working and I'm striving towards getting my children back so that they can be with me..."* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The mother above, who stayed on the streets of Claremont working as a car guard in a parking lot, longed to be reunited with her children who were in the care of her grandmother and mother in her community of origin. This community held very painful, traumatic memories for her as she had been *"raped…assaulted, basically…bruised and battered already,"* and the perpetrators and witnesses to the assault were still at large in her community. She shared how when she went to visit her child, the perpetrators would remark as though nothing had happened:

> *"…ooh, you looking lekker* [good/nice] *and you looking well after yourself and all this, but this is people that was sitting there when I was assaulted... all these were people that were there and laughing when these things happened to me but today they act all prim and proper because they still do it…"* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

This violent sexual assault perpetrated by members of her community of origin compromised her sense of safety. She felt that the community environment was not a place in which she wanted to raise her children:

> *"…and today, they're still laughing and chatting to me like nothing happened – that is why I don't want to go to* [Name of Community] *really – that is why I don't want to go back and make a life for me and my children there. I would rather go somewhere else…"* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The trauma of the sexual assault and the state's failure to act against the community members who perpetrated the act against her, in turn, negatively influenced her mental wellbeing and ability to be physically present as a mother. She continued:

> *"I'm not the same person I was. No, I didn't go for counselling because I didn't think it was necessary because me, I'm not a person to talk to a stranger about deep stuff so I didn't go for counselling, I handled it in my own way… maybe that is also part of the reason why I'm different characters sometimes, sometimes the way I act out, but, it's maybe because I didn't get closure… the perpetrators didn't get what they deserved and ja, I can mos say, it's gone and forgotten. I still carry it because … there was no punishment really for what they did to me…"* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

As she disclosed the painful accounts of being violently raped and assaulted by a group of individuals that still walk freely in her community of origin, she also shared with regard to her children that, *"their father also don't play a role and he's not interested."* It is therefore likely that in the absence of the father, Beulah felt more of a responsibility to provide financially for her children. Moreover, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated her inability to generate an income and in turn, visit her children:

> *"...but I haven't been there for a long time since the lockdown started. Normally I go there if I have enough money so that I can give them something..."* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Citing further socio-economic and behavioural factors that complicated family visits, she explained:

> *"I usually go if I have enough money to give them money – sometimes I walk out with nothing then I walk to my ma, she will give me something to eat, taxi fare back home, she sold our family house, the people she sold it to don't want me there – they got an interdict against me so when I do go visit I must get someone to call her and must sit on the corner... I ran away from* [home] *the last time because I assaulted somebody. In the past I was very aggressive, short-tempered, I would lose my cool for any reason, for no reason, just because I'm bad luck today and you're not my favourite person..."* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In a striking comment, Beulah revealed:

> *"And since I've been here in Claremont, I feel that, ja, I'm on the streets, it's unfortunate but I feel that this place kinda changed me. It brought me to a place where I'm calmer and peaceful and I'm not in that state anymore of just attacking and... because of what happened to me, you see, I'm guarded – I put myself in defence... around myself so that nobody can come through and try this and that because, previous times it showed me that letting your guard down, jy kan amper doodgaan* [you can almost die] – *you stupid, daai's die domste ding wat jy kan doen* [that's the dumbest thing you can do]..."* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The other mother experiencing homelessness that moved to Cape Town to be near her child who was in the care of social workers, confirmed the danger associated with visiting children in high-risk communities:

> *"...if your child is under the social worker* [in a] *gangster area, is not easy to go through by that gangster's area to go to visit your child. More specially, like me, I've got three boys, they was in social worker care by there in Mitchells Plain. I can't enter Mitchells Plain because about the gangsterism, about the gun..."* – Nosipho Magade, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The reported responses of the social workers further contributed to her not being able to visit her children:

> *"...but if I go to my social worker in Cape Town and talk about that, they are telling me they send the child to another place and I don't know – Maitland or Athlone or something like that – but they refuse to take me to go there..."* – Nosipho Magade, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

It was evident that being a woman on streets was challenging enough, but being a mother as well, proved to add to the burden for these individuals. Beulah expressed her desire to reunite with her children:

> *"I don't want to go from the streets to a shelter. No, I have been at a shelter already… I want to come off the streets and get my children so that we can be in one place – that is my goal because they are growing up so fast and I'm missing out on a lot of things…"* – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

This sentiment was shared by mothers staying in a shelter, with one mother emphasising during a Focus Group discussion that she wanted the security of being with her family. She explained:

> *"We have a time limit in the* [names shelter] *so can't the government… they need to think of another tier where people can rent a place and where the family can visit, another tier for us to find that security."* – Individual who has experienced homelessness during Focus Group

There were, however, major barriers to mothers being able to be reunified with their children. Being without a home in which to provide the child with the basic human needs and rights according to the Constitution and the Children's Act, 2005 is given as one of the core reasons why it would not be in the best interest of the child to live with a parent who is homeless.

In some cases, however, parents took their children with them when they entered living on the streets. One mother, Cindy Barnard, shared how through her use of substances, she ended up living in a public toilet with her children. It has been confirmed that parents are often unable to effectively care for their children when they use substances (Mitchell & De Witte, 2012). She explained:

> *"I just left my kids one day, I went to go and use* [drugs] *and I never came back… my mom came to fetch them so they went to stay with my mom. I left my kids to stay in a toilet…"* – Cindy Barnard, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Cindy also disclosed that her children's biological father was not involved in their lives. There were, however, fathers that, despite being homeless, were present in their children's lives. One father explained how he provided money for his children's studies while experiencing homelessness.

> *"With the in-laws I couldn't get along so, I decided to get out. I was out on the streets for about two years and I went back home… and presently my house caught on fire and I'm still putting it together but yes, okay, my family is still together, I have other kids here as well. As a father I want the best for the kids, so no matter I was on the streets, I made sure I provided for them. I mean all my kids here has got degrees – my youngest is still in CPUT which I am still paying for…"* – Kevin Pillay, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Donovan, another parent experiencing homelessness in Claremont, shared how he would 'skarrel' to be able to send money to his child, who lived with his ex-wife, who was also the biological mother of his son. He emphasised how his son's encouragement for him to recover was often what motivated him not to give up on his vision. Donovan's dream to start his own company while living on the streets might not be easy, but it was fascinating to listen to his accounts of how, while living on the streets, he was still committed to financially supporting his child. Donovan described how there was a period however, when he did not see his son because he did not have any money to give him. Supporting literature by Guarin and Meyer (2018) argues that economic difficulties may exacerbate a father's lack of involvement. Donovan explained:

> *"I have a son, he's 14, I had the privilege yesterday I could send him money, thank you... for the first eight years of his life, I was a constant figure in his life... I went through a very bad divorce, I gave everything to her..."* – Donovan, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Parents experiencing homelessness seemed to be adamant about finding ways to provide for their children. Contrasting the narrative of the absent father, these fathers experiencing homelessness revealed deeply moving accounts of how they were attempting to still be actively involved in their children's lives. Without taking into consideration the various family life cycle stressors and systemic shocks and failures, it could be easy to assume that parents experiencing homelessness are 'bad parents'. However, failing to take into consideration the contextual circumstances would be an oversight on society's part. During The Inkathalo Conversations, it was apparent that parents experiencing homelessness were emotionally strained by not being able to be with their children and were trying to find ways to be a supportive and responsible parent.

CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Some individuals shared their experiences of becoming homeless during their childhood years. The reasons varied but all could somehow be traced back to family life cycle stressors. Framing these family life cycle stressors were systemic factors linked to socio-political and resulting socio-economic conditions. This chapter has already discussed the unfortunate string of events of Grizelda Grootboom, a survivor of human sex trafficking, who shared how she landed up on the streets of Cape Town as a child with her father, after experiencing forced removals under the Apartheid government. After her father abandoned her on the streets one day, she started getting involved in gangsterism to survive and later started selling her body to survive.

Another individual shared how, after his parents separated and after his father remarried a woman who never accepted him, he found himself sleeping outside where he was brutally sexually violated by a group of men. It was after his stepmother's response to him telling her about the traumatic incident that made him decide to jump onto a truck and leave his community of origin. Not knowing where the truck was headed, he arrived in Cape Town where he lived on the streets for some time. His life was characterised by moving from shelter to shelter and never truly receiving the social support he required to heal from his trauma.

Sadly, there are many cases of children becoming homeless and it does not always appear in the form we might imagine. In a presentation by the Western Cape Street Children's Forum (WCSCF), it was reported that children roaming the streets in their community of origin numbered 1328 during December 2019, while 227 children experiencing homelessness were identified on the streets (of Cape Town?). However, these numbers only reflect the communities in which the WCSCF's network is active, not the entire province.

In a stakeholder presentation, children experiencing homelessness were conceptualised not only as those living on the streets in the CBD, but also as those who were experiencing homelessness within their community of origin due to dire socio-economic conditions and/or familial abuse and neglect. She argued:

> *"...the children that are on the streets in the CBDs are clever in some way, in that they are getting away from the gangs in the communities – or they're leaving abusive homes... or leaving a*

neglectful situation so often that kids that are going to the CBDs are brave in a way and sort of more … active… getting away…" – Janice King, Western Cape Street Children's Forum (WCSCF)

One would imagine that children's homes would be the place where children would be safe and find a sense of family. However, Grizelda Grootboom and Anda Mazantsana's experiences of being cared for within children's institutions exposed some of the gaps within the system of State childcare. One of these gaps was highlighted by Grizelda Grootboom, who shared that when children in institutional facilities turn 18, they are required to leave the facility. It seemed as though there was no after-care or exit plan in place. According to the official government site, there appear to be 68 registered children's homes in the Western Cape[131]. Not all of them cater for children up until the age of 18 years old, while none cater for any individual beyond the age of 18 years old. Grizelda Grootboom described her anxiety about having to leave the children's home after she turned 18:

"The year of me turning 18, the shelter made it very clear to me, probably every week with a social worker with a house mother that: 'listen this is the year to go.' So you can imagine, you're 18, stressing, you've got nothing but every week you sitting in front of these people that issupposed to help you [but they keep saying]*: 'You're going this is your last year for a shelter.' So you go crazy, 'Okay I get it you guys are kicking me out'…"* – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

After she turned 18, Grizelda Grootboom shared:

"After that year, I took the train to Joburg where I thought I would be staying in a home with a friend but ended up in a room, drugged up and being used for sex… after two weeks, I was kicked out of the house in the middle of the night and a younger girl replaced me… I ended up walking in the road with an old homeless man with a trolley, went to a truck stop where I gave sex services to truck drivers…" – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

This was supported by Anda Mazantsana, who shared how at the age of 18 years old he entered a different facility:

"…At the age of 18 I went to [Name of Facility] *here in* [Name of Area]*. A lady was the manager of the place – I must say the place was nice. We had our own issues. It's the same as where you have third phases of shelters and second phases. You need to be able to stand* [on your own]*. They help you with education and they help you try and find ways. Sometimes they do try and get tutors if they can. But you have to stand on your own and try to figure* [things] *out. It's a nice place to transition but it's not like they give you much of a social support …"* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Prior to Anda turning 18, he also shared experiences that inferred a lack of thorough assessments of the home environment during the holiday periods. He recounted:

"…so from [Name of facility] [where] *I studied until the time I had to go out of the Home, there were various programmes whereby we could reconnect with our families and build our*

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[131] Source: https://www.westerncape.gov.za/directories/facilities/917

relationships with our family but every time I was meant to go to the family, it was hard because it was Christmas time and the other kids are there… so I couldn't spend as much time with them and I was always reminded about what I did in the past.

It so happened in 2008, when I went back home it was in December, I was sent to the Eastern Cape, they never wanted me to come back to Cape Town, then I was left there at my step-mother's home, in King Williams Town, with another granny. I needed money to go back to school but these people didn't want me to go back to Cape Town, so her kids were with her for Christmas and I stayed with her family…" – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Apart from a lack of a solid after-care plan for children turning 18 years old within the social welfare system, and an incomplete investigation of home conditions during the holiday period, there were also accounts of feeling exploited by these systems. Anda highlighted how he believed the institutions used his life story:

"I think the system is a failure itself, because even throughout the shelters I saw myself as an object, as a product that was being sold. Most of the time, there was a particular time I was asked to make a video and speak about my story… I thought it was just people trying to assist me. Someone I knew elsewhere, we had people come from England wherever, told me that she saw my video on Facebook…" – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The trajectory of both these individuals in this section, seen together with all the individuals who so openly disclosed their accounts of family life, make clear how critical a role the family plays in one's overall development and sense of wellbeing in life. While the State has policies and legislation dedicated to the family and child's wellbeing, there appear to be many deep cracks within the system into which many children fall. Had there been a more cohesive chain of services and familial and social support networks in place, the children – now adults – may have had a different life experience altogether. At the same time, one cannot oversimplify the myriad of ecosystems at play at any given time in the life of a child. There are so many factors beyond the control of a parent, or social worker, or organisation. At best, the system is kept busy with picking up the pieces of shattered lives.

7.5. WHAT DOES HOPE LOOK LIKE?

In crafting the future we hope to see, the stories above demonstrate that it is absolutely critical that there are social support networks available to respond adequately and timeously to the issues of grief and bereavement.

By identifying family challenges and the cracks within the ecosystem, stakeholders and members of society will be better able to prevent these violations from re-occurring in the upcoming generations. This will potentially strengthen intergenerational solidarity, "*reciprocal care, support and exchange of material and non-material resources between family members, typically younger and older generation*" (White Paper on Families in South Africa, 2013:3).

The adults who experienced homelessness as children gave insight into particular gaps that may be critical to explore within the policies and legislation pertaining to the safeguarding of children. Firstly, the way homeless children are perceived within the South African context may need to be reconsidered as it was noted that children are often homeless within their family or community of origin. This could be due to a family environment that is not conducive to the well-being of the child, in which case reunification may need to be avoided. In addition, concerning children being homeless within a community, the socio-economic fragility and risk factors of the community, such as being recruited into gangs, must be considered as contributing factors to children becoming homeless.

Secondly, when children do become homeless and are placed into state-run institutions, a clear exit or after-care plan should be developed in partnership with the child. Expecting the child to return home once they turn 18 years old may not be appropriate. Thirdly, homeless children in the care of social welfare need thorough home environment assessments for holiday periods. In some instances, children could be at more physical and psychosocial risk in their family of origin household during holidays, as was evidenced in Anda Mazantsana's story.

Fourthly, children experiencing homelessness in childcare homes must receive holistic care. Fifthly, the institutionalisation of homeless children seems to go against the very grain of what is in the best interest of the child. For an individual to express feeling like a product during his period in the care of a children's home is unfathomable; while this may not have been the intention of the organisation, it was how it was experienced by Anda Mazantsana. Although many of South Africa's NPOs are facing major financial shortages, it is still critical that the children receiving care do not feel objectified for the sake of sustainability. Organisations in the sector need to develop these kinds of sensitivities.

7.6. READER'S REFLECTIONS

Reflection is an important practice in system transformation. The reader is encouraged to consider the following reflection points from a personal, organisational, community, and systemic perspective:

Systemic Reflections:

The following reflective questions can be posed at the level of the 'human family', which may be interpreted at a national, local, community, or organisational level, or even with regards to our own family units:

- What is our vision/dream for our family?
- How do we intentionally strengthen our relationships?
- What do we notice as potential risks or threats to the wellbeing of this family?
- What are our family's strengths?
- What are our family's challenges currently?
- What gifts, talents, and abilities do the members of our family bring?
- Do we recognise when or how we at times hurt members in this family?
- How can we celebrate this family in a healthy way?
- How can we strengthen intergenerational solidarity?

Sector Reflections:

- How can individuals working with families become more conscious of the gaps within policy and legislation pertaining to the family and its connection to homelessness?
- How do the interventions provided by stakeholders for individuals experiencing homelessness factor in processing and opportunities for healing in the area of deep wounding during the formative years within the family?
- While we need funders to continue supporting institutions that assist those experiencing homelessness, how do we promote the cause without running the risk of exploiting the individual's story and potentially causing further harm?
- Who are the service providers that support family wellbeing and how might meaningful collaboration or referral pathways be strengthened?
- If reunification is not an option for a homeless individual or child, what is the alternative?
- What conditions should prevent the State from pushing for reunification between family members?
- What are our responses – formal and informal – to those experiencing grief and loss of a parent/primary caregiver or relative?
- How are social services and stakeholders taking into consideration the needs of parents experiencing homelessness with regards to appropriate, meaningful, and legal contact with their children?
- How do we, as a society, conceptualise homelessness for children?

CHAPTER 8:   RESILIENCE AND AGENCY

Contents

8.1. INTRODUCTION

DeNicola (2012) offers a working definition of agency:

"This is liberation from helpless by-standing, a freedom of agency, the ability to shape one's will to one's judgment, to fulfil one's best judgment, and to act on behalf of one's values. And finally, acquiring the skills of learning empower the student with the freedom to grow, to discover, to know, and to understand. In concert, these ideals would free us (and obligate us) to be morally mature persons together; collectively, these forms of liberation permit us to flourish, to have the greatest prospects for a good life."

In addition to individual agency, a group may express collective or social agency. For those experiencing homelessness, collective agency is formed through the coalescing of individual agency and identity. According to research by Daya and Wilkins (2012), homeless individuals harness agency as a result of social rejection, in response to navigating a 'spoilt identity' (described in Chapter 1). For example, rejection from society strengthens social bonds between those experiencing homelessness and fosters trust, coordination and support, which are key ingredients for social or collective agency. Agency is enacted against social, political, and economic structures, often represented by institutions. This chapter hopes to highlight expressions of agency among those experiencing homelessness and the context or institutions this is enacted upon.

Throughout the conversations, examples arose where homeless individuals demonstrated agency. These incredible stories summarise just a few:

- Homeless individuals used their agency to support themselves and others by commercialising 'recycled' goods taken from refuse bins and forming meaningful pathways of economies.
- A homeless individual used his agency to support others who were frail and aged at Strandfontein. John Hufkie, a man navigating his own mental challenges, took the initiative to care for those who could not help themselves, sought medical assistance from health professionals, washed their soiled clothes daily, and ensured they were comfortable.
- In Strandfontein, an environment where challenges of agency were experienced, homeless individuals themselves established the Strandfontein Homeless Action Committee (SHAC). A group of self-organising homeless activists used their agency (and social agency) to advocate for systemic, structural, and practice change in response to the injustices suffered at Strandfontein.
- Those experiencing homelessness have been found to set up various enterprises across the City, from car guarding to cleaning businesses and retail endeavours. Despite the challenges they face when establishing these enterprises, they remain resilient.
- In a temporary accommodation solution organised by Community Chest during lockdown, individuals within the group residing at the Community Chest offices organised an operational plan that included a cleaning roster, organising committee, and ongoing management. This demonstrated their own commitment toward creating an organised and caring community.

These initiatives and enterprises, arising because of homeless individuals' agency, have generated various social benefits for both homeless individuals and society at large, demonstrating active citizenship. But despite these efforts, as Daya and Wilkins (2012) point out, *"they are viewed as problem-solving and*

transgressive entities emphasizing their agency, yet denying them vital sensory, feeling capacities that both precede and exceed such strategizing and resistance."

> *"How deep inside of you, how much do you want to survive? How badly do you want to survive? How badly do you want to become something in life?... Like the first time* [that] *I put on a bib, I was standing there like: 'what do I do, I don't know how to do this, what do I do?' It was a mess, but as you get used to it, as the desperation kicks in, it's like: 'hey - but this guy is making money, I am not making money, I'm standing here.', You start doing things, you start adapting your own ways to park cars, to do anything. You know what, I am on the street, but I am not always going to be on the street, I have dreams and I have goals"* – Donovan, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"We've all been disappointed by the government… we voted… but at the end of the day, did I had a say in what happens?. So, can we cut to the chase now, I want to bring this home… How do we secure our human rights as people? As homeless people? How do we do that?… My problem is, I don't know what avenues are open before me to do this thing…"* – A Focus Group participant who has experienced homelessness.

However, in the same way that agency can be an internal force for social good, we must also acknowledge where agency lies dormant, or where agency is used for self-destructive purposes. Effectively, everyone has agency, but what do people use their agency for?

This chapter also explores where systems have failed homeless individuals. These systems are not only institutional or external, but in many cases, an initial 'internal systems failure' may have developed over time. This draws into focus the concept of individual resilience – how, in the face of both personal distress and external obstacles, homeless individuals continue to remain resilient.

8.2. AGENCY IN ACTION

"As a result of labelling and defining people as 'vulnerable', the power and agency of individuals may be degraded – they are regarded as passive bystanders of their environment and not necessarily active agents who can understand and make sense of their own environments and respond to those environments and situations." – Dr Heidi Sauls, Researcher - *Western Cape DSD*

AGENCY AND SOCIAL ORGANISING

Social organising demonstrates agency. It connects individual intention to social value propositions and benefits for the collective good. However, collective organising cannot exist without individual agency. Roberto Unger (2016) positions agency as practices within distinct domains of society namely, business or the private sector, politics or government, and civil service, and what he calls "*the third sector.*" This sector may include civil society organisations or institutions that seek to develop alternatives outside of business and state. The practice of agency begins to express itself more radically in this third sector, according to Unger. Further to this, social organising and social agency are geared to addressing an extant problem with implications for the broader society.

As an example, explained in the **Special Feature on Strandfontein** in this report, the Strandfontein Homeless Action Committee (SHAC) was an organised response to residents' concerns that their human rights were being violated by the City of Cape Town administration and their service providers.

> *"You know I was so amazed, in the sense that, there are NGOs assisting homeless people, but in Strandfontein there was none. We were all alone."* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Participants reported that, apart from the appointed service providers, most NGOs were prevented from entering the Strandfontein site. As such, a group of residents organised a committee to communicate with officials and to address the growing concerns of the occupants. This committee engaged with human rights agents, coordinated demands, and even took the City to court.

McCarthy and Zald (1977) agree that social organisation is a construction of agency and personal or vested interests. These interests are shared by a set or group of individuals who coalesce in the interest of resolving the collective challenges they experience. Individuals respond to the challenge not as a function of collective interest, however, but as a function of personal interest or agency connected to this shared interest.

Given this conception by McCarthy and Zald (1977), and putting it into conversation with Unger's (2016) views, it is important to note that as a result of the shared experiences of those living in Strandfontein, individuals used their agency to collectively address the social challenge (the perceived injustices) presented within Strandfontein against the political institution's practices.

AGENCY AND INSTITUTION

Fleetwood (2008) defines the following relationship between human agency and institution: "*For their socialization, survival and interaction, human agents depend upon social structures and institutions, that influence their behaviour.*"

This piece examines this relationship through the experiences described by homeless individuals during The Inkathalo Conversations. In particular, it considers the institutions that comprise the 'homelessness sector' – those civil society and public institutions which seek to serve or engage with those experiencing homelessness through various interventions, looking at how homeless individuals enact their agency on the structures they encounter.

Interventions and Agency

During The Inkathalo Conversations, participants raised numerous experiences of the civil society organisations that exist to serve those experiencing homelessness, such as those providing temporary shelter, sustenance, skills development programmes, etc. (covered in depth in Chapter 3). Reflecting on the sector and their practices as institutions allows us to consider how homeless individuals experience the tension of dependence and behavioural influence as they interact with the sector.

In starting to interrogate Fleetwood's (2008) observation, it is important to reflect on the nature of homelessness and the complexities that underlie homelessness. It is quite evident that the overwhelming number of programmes are still just static interventions that meet a complex, dynamic individual within a given context. In her presentation at The Inkathalo Conversations, Dr Heidi Sauls explained that perceptive realities inform policies. Likewise, perceptive framing of homeless individuals and the experience of homelessness informs programmatic and social interventions, ultimately shaping interventions, practices, and environments of support. As a result, these programmatic interventions drive prescriptive ways of engagement that sometimes ignore the dynamism of humans, constraining individual autonomy and restricting individual agency.

> "*Some people had bad experiences with certain NGOs in the past, hence they tend not to make use of shelters, NGOs, etc.*" – Theodore Sass, PhD Candidate, University of the Western Cape

> "*My experience with the particular NGO…* [is that it] *wasn't serving me the way I felt it should... I felt that I didn't have much input… from my side. This how they did things, this is what I need to go through, this is what I'm going to learn, this is how the classes will be run…*" – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Numerous participants told of their decision to leave programmes and shelters to return to the streets. This demonstrates how institutional support challenges personal agency, where homeless individuals confront the chasm to either conform or develop a dependence on an institutionalised support mechanism or to continue to enact their own agency and liberties in an 'unregulated' space – perhaps out on the street. This raises the questions: Are there alternatives? Can we shape a context that both supports and facilitates agency?

A potential case study emerged at Community Chest as somewhat of a 'non-intervention', in that it was not a planned strategy or designed programme. Through the simple provision of temporary accommodation in the form of an unused office building, with no supervision or imposed hierarchy, a self-organising group took initiative and ownership of a space and of themselves. This demonstrated what may be possible when individuals are given the liberty to choose and the resources to self-initiate.

> *"NGOs are not really developing leaders* [who are socio-politically aware] *among people who are homeless... There should be more focus on... leadership academies to come out of the homeless people that are being served..."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

At the Oasis Shelter, Clifford Martinus acknowledged the various motivations for agency. However, he challenged the 'moral maturity' of individuals, which DeNicola (2012) suggests is produced when we have freedom of agency as well as skills: *"In concert, these ideals would free us (and obligate us) to be morally mature persons together; collectively, these forms of liberation permit us to flourish, to have the greatest prospects for a good life."*

Public Institutions and Agency

During The Inkathalo Conversations, a Focus Group discussion held with 30 individuals who have experienced homelessness explored power and institutions to understand how homeless individuals understand their power and agency with institutions like government. Reflecting on the Constitution, the question was posed: Who is the government? The following responses emerged:

> *"The people shall govern; the people shall rule so we think that we as the people should govern."*

> *"It's us who vote for our President so it's us who is the government."*

> *"The government is the people who are living – we are the government because we also have rights."*

> *"For the people, by the people, so we are the government."*

> *"…we are the government – there is a group of people ruling over South Africa but they are not governing."*

> *"We've all been disappointed by the government… we voted… but at the end of the day I had a say in what happens."*

However, ideological confrontations with power do not shift power – Anda Mazantsana explained how he understood the real threats of confronting public institutions and their power.

> *"Ever since we formed a committee in Strandfontein, we feel threatened – the way Law Enforcement is looking at us, following us… they don't understand how we feel as they are inhumane toward the people on the street…"* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The challenges of institutional agency and power, and how it curtails individual agency, is explored more comprehensively in Chapters 4 and 5, where these challenges are expressed as lived realities.

Agency and the Self

What is notable in the dance between individual and institution is the observation that when external oppressive systems limit the freedom of agency, the self becomes the new geography for enacting agency.

As an example, Daya and Wilkins (2012) indicate that because of the absence of adequate healthcare for physical, emotional and psychological support, or the inability of homeless individuals to access this support for whatever reason, substance use becomes a medium for addressing these inadequacies. Their study found that the need to belong drives homeless individuals' sense of agency and motivation. The fact that shelters effectively police their bodies (through curfews, processes, and rules around substance use), some found agency outside of these restrictions, for example in places like shebeens, where their freedoms could be expressed.

As demonstrated above, agency is fluid; therefore, an individual who is exercising their agency determines the most meaningful space or geography in which to exercise this agency, whether adversely or productively. Where the ability to choose is curtailed, agency is exercised on the only other accessible space – the body.

Agency and Substance Use

During the dialogues, substance use emerged as a prominent feature of homelessness, with many indiviudals relaying experiences that are captured throughout this report. Of relevance here is a brief reflection on substance use and agency in relation to homelessness, drawing largely from previous studies done in Cape Town.

If we accept the definition by Daya and Wilkins (2012), then we need to acknowledge that individuals have the freedom to choose how they hope to find expression for the values they hold and how they embody and enact those values. That means the freedom to choose both "*adverse and productive*" pathways when exercising one's agency. However, as Fleetwood (2008) alluded to above, this individual agency intersects with social structures and institutions. Daya and Wilkins (2012) refer to this as "*relational geographies of homelessness.*" They identify these geographies as – 1) their bodies, 2) the shelter where they live, and 3) the shebeen (tavern) where they gather.

They identify the substance, particularly alcohol, as the medium that facilitates belonging to the self and connections with others. However, Daya and Wilkins (2012) point out the juxtaposition, that the need for connection and belonging is only theorised as "*objects within structures of exclusion".* In order to achieve control over space and agency, given that their bodies and freedoms are policed in shelters by staff, by Law Enforcement officials and the like, the one thing that is not outside of their control is their own bodies, an entity over which individuals can exercise their agency.

Most interestingly, Daya and Wilkins (2012) point out that the body is the space/geography for physical vulnerability: "*to violence, weather, hard surfaces… since they had no access to the most basic services in a healthcare landscape.*" Drinking 'salvaged' their imprisoned sense of self in a context of homelessness that

allowed them little autonomy or control. Their bodies were ambiguous spaces that, much of the time, compromised their sense of belonging, and it was often only, and paradoxically, through the damaging consumption of alcohol that they were able to regain some control and "*feel like themselves again.*"

READY TO CHANGE

> "*My dream is to start a company, where homeless people can park cars, we get a location, we can park cars there, from there we get our rehab.*" – Claremont based individual who has experienced homelessness

Chapter 1 focused on understanding homelessness. Some participants had been exposed to a variety of programmatic interventions and were in different stages in their journeys out of homelessness. This session investigated the perceptions and experiences of homelessness from the perspectives of observers and those experiencing homelessness.

The session probed issues which homeless or formerly homeless individuals felt society (or observers) needed to understand. The responses were eye-opening as individuals spoke about personal accountability, which points to the need to act.

> "*What are you doing to get out of that situation?... It's not just a one-way street, it's got to come from both sides… we have to take responsibility for our own lives…*"

> "*Anybody can tell a story and anybody can offer help, but you that's telling the story, you must have the will to want to change. You can get that help… but if you're not willing to change then that help is not gonna do any good.*"

> "*… In my own experience someone has tried to help me before, many years back, and then I kinda like threw it in their face, you know, because I wasn't serious. So they helped me, they took me to a place, and then I ended up back on the street…*"

> "*Change starts by you… it's how you use your mindset… if you put your mindset on 'I'm sick and tired of this life man, don't want to live like this anymore'…change starts by you…*"

> "*If he wants to get out of his situation, he could be brutally honest and tell his story… or he could lie, if he was on a substance, and get his temporary fix. So, his response, Trevor-Merle's response could either get him a temporary solution or maybe even a possible permanent solution… In my experience, if people asked my story I would always tell them the honest truth… I'm not homeless anymore…brutal honesty will get you places.*"

> "*I decided... I needed to change man, because I was in drug addiction for 10 years and I needed to change... really change. I couldn't save myself, you know. And I didn't have guidance, I was from a young age on the street and I asked God to lead me man.*"

> "*It's that will to want – no one can give it to you. No one can take you by the hand and guide you to a shelter, nobody can take you by the hand and take you to a rehab or whatever, it's all up to*

you… My time that I've spent with my brothers and sisters… somewhere along the line we faltered and we fell… some of us stayed there, most of us made that change to like pick ourselves up, get us to a [shelter], get us to a Safe Space… that is the change that I made… this is all just a process… but it all starts with me."

These statements boldly echo what DeNicola (2012) define as: "*the ability to shape one's will to one's judgment, to fulfil one's best judgment, and to act on behalf of one's values.*"

However, despite these attempts, individuals do find themselves up against challenges like rejection, stigmatisation, distrust, and a lack of support systems.

"I have dreams, I have goals, the sad thing about it [is] *that any NGO I go to and I say this is my business plan, can you help me? 'No – we can't help you because you on the street'… it's kinda bitter-sweet because here I am, trying to get off the street, coming to you for help to get off the street, but the only thing you see is this street, it's sad."* – Claremont based individual who has experienced homelessness

Daya and Wilkins (2013) describe the resilience needed to traverse these social rejections as "*salvaging*" – this can be equated to the development of strategies. Where support is absent, ways of engaging these challenges are re-engineered, drawing on the only viable resources – yourself and your ability to make sound judgments and to fulfil these judgments by action (De Nicola and Daniel, 2012).

"…I had to muster up that willpower… it's hard to get out of heroin… or any drug for that matter, because it re-programmes your mind, man. Even your situation being homeless, it re-programmes your mind, because you need to think of steps… your mind has to change." – A Focus Group participant who has experienced homelessness.

"…But as the desperation kicks in, it's like hey but this guy is making money, I am not making money, I'm standing here, start doing things, you start adapting your own ways to park cars, to do anything… I am on the street, but I am not always going to be on the street, I have dreams and I have goals." – Donovan, a participant who is experiencing homelessness.

"We can be motivational speakers… going to schools and places in our areas, and we speak to the people about life stories, so they can also hear what kind of life we went through, so we can stop the negative destruction…" – A Focus Group participant who has experienced homelessness.

The life experiences shared by participants showed that as homeless individuals continued to re-engineer their strategies, they constructed new ways of achieving their goals within their current context – that of homelessness and poor support. For some, this gradually grew a sense of confidence in their own abilities that allowed them to succeed despite resource constraints, and to identify alternative sources of power, resources, and opportunities to exploit.

"I know I'm not gonna be on the streets for very long, because I have a plan. I'm trying slowly but surely to work towards it…" – Beulah, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

8.3. AN INNER AND OUTER BATTLE

Concepts around systems thinking and ecosystem theory are presented in Chapters 2 and 7, which, respectively, introduce the broader societal system within which people find themselves, and the more personal systems of community, family and the individual. Every kind of system, at every level, has multiple interconnected parts and levers, which can trigger drastic changes within the system. Sometimes, these changes can be destructive or harmful to the system, to the extent that a system may be perceived to have failed.

This section considers the ways in which the individual as a system may experience devastating impacts, which may challenge their ability to enact their agency, in some cases leading to the dormancy or transference of their agency, while in other cases strengthening resilience, leading to new opportunities.

> *"It's that will to want – no one can give it to you."* – A Focus Group participant who has experienced homelessness.

INTERNAL SYSTEM FAILURES

> *"Now, homelessness – I do believe that you're not homeless by choice, there's something that's terribly gone wrong in your life somewhere, and where really has it gone wrong?"* – John Hufkie, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

At both personal and social levels, systems fail in the absence of well-functioning support systems, personal development growth pathways, and nurturing and supportive environments, which result in individuals 'drifting' while navigating vulnerability and insurmountable personal challenges. Without the skills and abilities to cope, and without a functional social support system, some individuals have no option but to 'drift' to the streets. The City acknowledges this in its Street People FAQs (2020), referring to factors that contribute to homelessness: *"Displacement, migration to cities, the COVID-19 pandemic, releasing of parolees by the Department of Correctional Services without subsequent support systems, and economic causes such as unemployment and weak economic growth."*

At The Inkathalo Conversations, some homeless individuals described how their internal systems failed:

Rudy Basson

Having finished school in 1993, Rudy felt he had come of age and left his foster parents' house. He recalled that upon his departure, his foster father asked him if he was gay and told him not to bring shame upon his foster family, implying that he had brought shame upon his biological family. With his own job and his own choices, Rudy felt he was gaining the freedom of being able to do what he wanted to. However, Rudy expressed that with these choices came a host of different issues. During the dialogues, Rudy described these memories painfully, and explained how he turned to alcohol and later to other substances.

> *"I worked at… a movie house and Metro Theatres as an assistant manager and there I started meeting a totally different crowd of people – people that felt…you know, life is about enjoying it and I enjoyed my life you know…and I started taking – started taking drugs – ecstasy – and that was the start of a very vicious cycle of…unmanageability – I couldn't manage things so nicely*

anymore…, there were things that came up from my past that I just couldn't properly deal with… that I didn't do…so now with this new found solution…things just kinda got easier you know, I can face the fact that, you know, I did – that I'm slightly different – that certain things happened to me – it made it easier to just deal with that stuff..." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Ali Adams

Ali shared the experiences that led him to living on the streets, emphasising the fact that although he did not turn to substances, he still felt his internal systems crumble.

"I met someone in those two years, we got married in 2012, life came a little bit right, I came little bit out of my bubble. On 31 Jan 2012, found out my wife was pregnant… I had to work… me being isolated, there were some things I couldn't talk to her about, that I kept to myself – and that became my downfall… At the time, everyone came to the conclusion that Ali was on drugs, even my wife thought this.

I told them I wasn't on drugs, but the debt I made ended up with me losing my house, I ended up living with my in-laws, I wasn't working – I lost my job – life became more strained and still I couldn't talk to my wife… I became angry, like a bear with a sore paw, and then it came to where my wife – now my ex-wife at this time – she couldn't take it anymore – how I was treating her, my anger, and not wanting to see my kids like that anymore – there was the door. I ended up on the streets, my brothers were against me, sleeping in front of the day hospital, any place I could find to sleep, I would sleep there, all this anger that had built inside of me, [I] *just thought I should end it all."* – Ali Adams, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Ali relayed his experience of receiving support at a shelter in Bellville and the journey he has been on since. He proudly stated that he had been Sultan Bahu's first programme attendee who was not a substance user but found it immensely valuable in dealing with his anger and its deeper roots.

"I have my work, I have my responsibilities, and I can say successfully, yes, I'm now 5 months… I'm paying my rent… my salary is there, my savings are there; and this is all the things that the [names shelter] *has taught me – make sure that your anchor is there… anchor yourself, make sure that your past mistakes is not gonna catch up with you now…"* – Ali Adams, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Alice (not her real name)

Alice described a series of personal and familial setbacks that impacted her use of substances. Though these setbacks affected her deeply, she portrayed a sense of resilience in navigating cycles of 'failure' and 'success':

"I strived to make myself successful – my own house, my own car, give my mom money, take my sisters and brothers out… Most of the time, being vulnerable, I used to meet wrong friends… I never allowed them to get to me but my kids' father, he was on drugs, he was deep into drugs. I was the

> *one lifting him up and at the end of the day, him falling and having to be a monitor* [to] *him, gangsters, me having to give up my life…"*

Alice relayed that a difficult relationship with her mother affected her decision to leave home and contributed to her substance use. She described her mother as a powerful but emotionally unstable figure in their family:

> *"If my mother tells you now red is white, then you can't tell her red is red… I told myself I am going to show her* [her mother] *that I don't actually need her, because most of the time when I am with her, she makes me sad and wanting to do bad things."*

On a personal level, she framed the role that substances played in her internal system, emphasising her ability to pick herself up again:

> *"…Not everyone is ex-drug abusers or alcohols, but no one can tell me there is nothing that they have been going through or turning to when they go through so many things… But for me… being an… ex drug addict for some many years, or a drug addict for so many years, I am not going to allow circumstances to make me relapse. Maybe I'm going to lapse once, maybe this week now because of me going through something I can't handle… It's all in the mind man, to say to yourself okay, die persoon het my seer gemaak* [this person hurt me]*, now I need a fix, so now you're going to lapse…*
>
> *People are going to judge you, but they don't know actually how you feel. But in your mind, you* [are] *so strong. You also feel guilty at the end of the day, you condemn yourself. But you're not going to allow your circumstances to make you relapse, like fall flat without being able to lift yourself up again without anyone's help.* [Because] *for me, I also don't need people's help to uplift myself, or rehabilitation, or rehab, 'cause I never went to rehab sort of things, or running to my family all of the time."* – Alice (not her real name), an individual who has experienced homelessness.

INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM FAILURE

Where these personal, internal systems fail, the social systems of the state seek to support vulnerable individuals. However, there are specific challenges, and while these have been explained comprehensively in Chapter 2, some key points include:

1. The challenge of how institutional support is defined;
2. The implication of language in policy construction and resource allocation to address internal system failures;
3. State regulatory systems and overlap on Provincial and Local Government department level.

In contrast to the empowered statements around self-governance and collective governance made by persons experiencing homelessness above, a number of stakeholders involved in both civil society and public institutions expressed concern at how well-meaning interventions and efforts can actually be disempowering.

"When we define people or groups as 'vulnerable', it means there's a requirement for protection and care of these individuals and groups… We identify these groups and individuals and then we offer protection – or, so we think... The intention was to provide opportunity for people, but some unintended consequences may include the perception that individuals or groups are powerless and unable to think for themselves and to make sense of things, thereby requiring that another actor [the State] *steps in."* – Dr Heidi Sauls, Researcher – *Western Cape Department of Social Development*

Inasmuch as there exists an expectation that State institutions provide support, the nature of that support requires refined consideration. Dr Heidi Sauls elaborated on the use of the term 'vulnerability' in policy formation, cautioning against its simplification.

"The term 'vulnerability' comes about in government in an attempt to distribute resources more equally and create access. It is there with the intention to generate something positive, but the concept of 'vulnerability' is static, and this notion has unintended consequences… Concepts are complex and fluid – there are degrees of vulnerability and some are more vulnerable in certain spaces than others… When we engage in developing policy, strategy and interventions, we must get into the nuances of concepts, to deconstruct and challenge what we think we know. In addition, this development requires a gendered lens, in order to craft 'specialised responses', and considering individual needs." – Dr Heidi Sauls, Researcher – Western Cape DSD

Referring to the 'politics of vulnerability', she exemplified how systemic failures may come about unintentionally:

"…only some people are defined and labelled as vulnerable – for example, despite young men being at highest risk of being murdered, they are not defined as vulnerable, thereby excluding them from a particular kind of support." – Dr Heidi Sauls, Researcher

Policy development and policy language need political officials, political advocates and other system actors to challenge institutional structures and their failures.

In spite of institutional failures, many homeless individuals succeed in surviving and pursuing their own goals. As this internal drive becomes the only valuable resource in the wake of adversity, resilience is developed. Thus, despite complex internal and external factors that may lead individuals to the streets, cultivating and embodying agency is a promising catalyst for transformation.

8.4. RESILIENCE

Resilience is posited as the *"multilevel processes that systems engage in to obtain better-than-expected outcomes in the face or wake of adversity"* and emerged as a concept during the 1980s (van Breda, 2018:4). For resilience to be formed, "*apprehending the future as a cycle of disaster and recovery,*" is required, but this in turn, hampers the ability to imagine something different (Bracke, 2016). The concept of resilience has come under scrutiny by some as being part of a neoliberal agenda which asserts that individuals are responsible for their wellbeing, thus providing the state and civil society with a "*get out of jail card*" and expecting citizens to meet structural pressure with "*individual elasticity, rebounding, and adaptation*"

(Bracke, 2016:851; van Breda, 2018). The state can thus abdicate their responsibility toward resolving systemic issues and its related dynamics (van Breda, 2018). An *"increasingly hegemonic ethos of resilience"* by the state tends to assert that:

> *"Accidents do happen, so get over it. Be prepared. Acquire the skills to deal with the situation. Don't mourn too hard, too long, too loud; or too dangerously. Don't be undone, and don't undo. Bounce back. Take the impact – the fire, the heat, the suffocation – and bounce back. To your original shape, if you can. But this time better prepared for the next accident, always waiting to happen..."* (Bracke, 2016:849).

This view does not consider the multiple levels of support potentially required by those who have experienced inter-generational or multiple or complex trauma events, or a combination thereof.

During a presentation at The Inkathalo Conversations, Grizelda Grootboom introduced herself as a *"Survivor of human trafficking and prostitution and drug trafficking, also survivor of gender-based violence and abortion. You name it",* immediately referring to multiple traumatic experiences throughout her life.

During her presentation and the retelling of her life story, she recalled her childhood on the streets of Cape Town and her development of survival mechanisms. In deciding to live with her estranged mother in Khayelitsha at the age of eight, she was exposed to life in an Apartheid township, which she called a *"disturbing change of culture,"* as she was both unfamiliar with the way of life and unable to speak Xhosa. During this time, she was forbidden from attending school and did chores with other girls in the community, such as *"getting the tap water from three blocks away from my house."*

> *"I didn't get the option of going to school… cleaning the house during the day, I joined the rest of the young girls with my bucket by the tap… And I remember, you know, the guys of community saying they have to introduce me to the community. And at the age of 8, that was the first time I got gang raped… I was raped the whole day in a shack and later they just pushed me out of the shack, and I walked through my community… When dignity is stripped from a child, when you know – everything, culture, home, is stripped from you – it takes a while to come back…"* – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

As an adolescent, Grizelda Grootboom was a victim of human trafficking, drugged and bound in an apartment in Johannesburg for several weeks.

> *"Men started coming in and clients were doing whatever they wanted to do every day it was day in and day out… This probably happened and went on for weeks, two weeks and I got kicked out of the house in the middle of the night."* – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

Her response to this experience demonstrated her attempt to *"(a)cquire the skills to deal with the situation… Bounce back. Take the impact – the fire, the heat, the suffocation – and bounce back."* (Bracke, 2016:849):

> *"I ended up walking with a homeless old man with a trolley, to get back to the location that I arrived on, going through Berea, Yeoville and get back to Park Station. Got to Park Station* [in the] *early hours… All the truck drivers would stop there take a break, and there was quite a lot of truck drivers that wanted the pleasure of sex, and I needed to fill my body with drugs, so I won't be able to feel whatever… pain I was going through. So of course, got into a truck* [to] *service a guy, got my money, went to buy drugs from the pimp…"* – Grizelda Grootboom, EXIT!/An individual who has experienced homelessness.

Grizelda Grootboom's ability to navigate these experiences led to the writing of her autobiography and her role as an anti-human trafficking activist and advocate, founding the organisation EXIT!.

The *City of Cape Town's Resilience Strategy* (2019) goes against the resigned definitions presented by Bracke and Van Breda (2018). Instead, it defines resilience as "*the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shock they experience.*"

It prioritises the following stresses:

- Lack of social cohesion and community;
- High crime and violence;
- Lack of empowered stakeholders; and
- High unemployment

In response, it presents a plan set against five goals:

- Compassionate, holistically healthy city;
- Connected climate-adaptive city;
- Collaborative-looking city;
- Collectively shock-ready city; and
- Capable, job-creating city

This line of thinking may be an important lever for change, as it seeks to strengthen the 'social safety net' that holds up those who are most vulnerable to the kind of internal and external system failures described by those participating in The Inkathalo Conversations.

8.5. WHAT DOES HOPE LOOK LIKE?

Throughout The Inkathalo Conversations, stakeholders who work in the homelessness ecosystem expressed the tensions and difficulties they navigate in providing services to individuals and developing an environment where agency can be meaningfully expressed. Some emerging models that seek to provide support while respecting agency are described below.

In contrast to intervention-based models, this chapter also demonstrated the power of self-organised initiatives, which provide a window into the kind of agency and resilience that exists among those who experience homelessness.

Co-creative Communities

The home-based or microsite model started by New Hope SA is described in Chapters 3 and 6. The residents of the Muizenberg house used a co-creative approach to develop a 'community contract', establishing the rules of the house together and facilitating buy-in.

> *"…People felt honoured to call the community their own as opposed to calling it New Hope or… a New Hope Shelter."* – Richard Bolland, New Hope SA

While this aspect contributed to the sense of community within the house, another key part of New Hope SA's initiative involves the broader community of Muizenberg. In Muizenberg individuals participate in clean ups as well as assisting in the community kitchen and garden. They also manufacture and sell plant boxes at the local market. According to New Hope SA, community engagement by the residents demonstrates their desire to be a part of and contribute to their new community.

Richard Bolland of New Hope SA emphasised the need for community communication and engagement, aimed at changing the narrative and telling the human story.

Hannes van der Merwe of Straatwerk echoed the importance of community-embedded and community-strengthening strategies. He noted that although individuals may find work, pay their own rent, and live independently, it is critical that individuals are located within some form of community.

> *"Community intervention is key to see people exit the streets long-term."* – Hannes van der Merwe, Straatwerk

A Co-dependent Model

Some stakeholders shared that a co-dependent housing model may be better suited to individuals who will never quite reach independence, including the elderly, those with special needs, and the critically ill. Supporting an individual's independence and agency, such a model is envisaged to be similar to an old-age home, where nurses and faciliators support individuals.

In addition, some who are exiting homelessness expressed a need for a co-dependent model. One woman emphasised her desire to remain "*part of the system*" until she found her footing, but in an environment where she could live with her children and with a greater deal of freedom than in a traditional shelter.

Independence

As part of their initiative, New Hope SA started a work programme, which would afford all 10 individuals in the house the opportunity to gain employment within the local community and earn an income for themselves. Richard Bolland of New Hope SA stressed the importance that this is "*their money.*" While the supported structure does put protection measures in place against relapsing, this initiative aimed to instil as much agency and independence as possible.

Self-Organising and Collective Action

The Strandfontein Homeless Action Committee was born out of a recognition that occupants of the City's tents at Strandfontein were left to their own devices and needed to unite. Anda Mazantzana recognised an opportunity at Strandfontein to speak to every homeless person about the concept of building something where homeless individuals could stand together. Feeling as though homeless people were kept captive, Anda hoped to start conversations around conditions in the site as well as the broader context homeless individuals find themselves in. He expressed that their aim was to address the bigger picture and demonstrate where a unified approach could take them. A committee would bring those efforts together in such a way that was dignified and treated everyone with respect.

8.6. READER'S REFLECTIONS

Reflection is an important practice in system transformation. The reader is encouraged to consider the following reflection points from a personal, organisational, community, and systemic perspective:

- If agency is the ability to practice personal freedoms, how can we support this?
- Given the self-directive nature of agency, how might we construct an environment where we facilitate agency?

These reflective questions draw into focus our nature as organisms and our intrinsic inclination to organise ourselves. However, we must analyse how we are organising ourselves and its collective value for ourselves, for others, and for our environment.

SPECIAL FEATURE: STRANDFONTEIN, 'A WINDOW INTO AN EVERYDAY CRISIS'

Special Features highlight specific issues, events, or occurrences, which reveal the many faces of homelessness.

"Strandfontein is not a moment when the City went rogue, it was not a blip or an isolated incident, it actually was the embodiment of the City's policy. Actually, it incarnated... the experience of homeless people on the streets every day." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

Figure 50: Image of the Strandfontein site (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

Outline of the Special Feature: Strandfontein

1.1. Introduction and Notes to the Reader

1.2. Strandfontein as a Response to COVID-19

1.3. From the Streets to Strandfontein

1.4. Arrival at Strandfontein

1.5. Conditions and Experiences at Strandfontein

- *COVID-19 Compliance*
- *Accommodation*
- *Food*
- *Medical Support*
- *Death*
- *Clothing, Hygiene and Ablution*
- *Social and Psychosocial Support*
- *A Sense of Imprisonment*
- *Access to Justice*
- *Illicit Economy*
- *Contrasting Culemborg and Strandfontein*

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES TO THE READER

This piece aims to present the experiences, views, and observations shared by participants of The Inkathalo Conversations regarding the Strandfontein site which was set up for individuals experiencing homelessness in Cape Town in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent national lockdown in South Africa in March 2020.

This piece is presented almost entirely as a collection of quotations from those who participated in Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations and structured in a manner that groups the various accounts logically. Much of the content is drawn from comprehensive presentations by Reverend Annie Kirke (a human rights monitor who visited and documented findings at the site) and Carlos Mesquita (a homeless individual who experienced Strandfontein), with added comments from numerous other individuals who chose to relay their observations and experiences during Phase One of this engagement process. Some additional context is drawn from the City of Cape Town's media releases pertaining to its COVID-19 response.

As such, this special feature is limited in its account of the events as well as in the diversity of its contributors and should be seen as *a piece of the story* and not the whole story. It became clear from the stories told by both homeless individuals and sector-based organisations that a deeper investigation is required and that an intentional process for individual and collective healing is needed. This account does not present such an investigation and cannot do justice to the events surrounding Strandfontein.

A note to the reader:

> "This section on the Strandfontein site is a developing piece of research. The anecdotal evidence submitted here is for the purpose of recording its history and impact on the people who were held at the Strandfontein Shelter. Their experience is fundamental to how future policies on homelessness should be developed. It will be the duty of future policy developers to incorporate their learnings of living on the streets and in incarcerated conditions and their impact on humans who have committed no crimes.

> The Inkathalo Conversations was not specifically about reviewing and evaluating the Strandfontein site. However, it was a core component of the lived experiences of many homeless people who provided inputs to The Inkathalo Conversations. The Inkathalo Conversations also occurred within four months of the closure of the Strandfontein site. Many of the people held at Strandfontein and that had worked at Strandfontein – as either monitors or service providers – wanted to tell their stories as part of the pre-public participation process in order to add it as inputs into the new policy on homelessness that is being considered.

A more comprehensive and detailed report on the Strandfontein site is being considered at present, in order to record its history and to do justice to the experiences of all involved." – Lorenzo Davids, Lead Facilitator: The Inkathalo Conversations

STRANDFONTEIN AS A RESPONSE TO COVID-19

At the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments across the world had to move quickly to establish and activate lockdown measures. The need for urgency, and the extraordinary nature of the global pandemic, has been used as an explanation for the City of Cape Town's response. On 11 April 2020, a newspaper article presented the City of Cape Town Executive Mayor, Alderman Dan Plato's statement[132]:

COVID-19 National Lockdown: A Message from Mayor Dan Plato

As we have made it through the first three weeks of the COVID-19 lockdown, and enter the first week of the two week extension, I want to share with our residents some highlights regarding what we have been doing to address the pandemic and ensure that services continue during this period. This is an unprecedented time and as the City of Cape Town, we have had to work quickly to adapt to the lockdown, its extension, and the associated regulations set by the National Government to ensure that essential services are still delivered.

 I have almost daily meetings with the City's executive management and Mayoral Committee to discuss the roll-out of the City's emergency services. We discuss those matters where extra attention is needed, and acknowledge those services that are working well. Some of the management join the meeting in person, but for those who are able, we have many joining the meeting via Skype.

I have had several meetings with civil society organisations, including NGOs, ratepayer groups, CPFs and NHWs, and the religious community to try and address any concerns. I continue to meet with these organisations on a daily basis taking into account the importance of social distancing and only accommodating meetings of a critical nature as per the guidelines set by National Government.

I am regularly updated by the Mayoral Committee Member for Health, Dr Zahid Badroodien on the Coronavirus pandemic, and Alderman JP Smith, Mayoral Committee Member for Safety and Security keeps me updated on our law enforcement efforts and the outcomes of the Disaster Operations Committee.

I have visited the temporary emergency accommodation sites we have set up for the refugees in Wingfield, and for the homeless in Strandfontein. These sites have all the necessary ablution facilities, water, electricity, and the appropriate health and safety measures, while ensuring that social distancing takes place. Procurement never happens as fast as we would like it to happen, but I think it is commendable that we have managed to get these sites up and running with such short notice. I have found the politicisation of the services being provided to the homeless to be most shameful. The public has been given half-truths and misinformation by people with political agendas. I want to assure the public that everyone on site is treated well, and with respect and dignity...

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[132] https://www.timeslive.co.za/ideas/2020-04-11-opinion-using-covid-19-to-score-political-points-is-shameful/

Prior to the national lockdown, in June 2019, both houses of Parliament ratified the *United Nations'* *Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture* (OPCAT), which established "*an international and domestic mechanism for torture prevention… in order to prevent torture, and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*" South Africa deposited the instrument of ratification on 20 June 2019 and designated the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) to perform a coordinating and functioning role as the National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) required by OPCAT.

In response to COVID-19, OPCAT produced recommendations to States on the 7 April 2020, stating that its principles should be upheld even in the face of exceptional circumstances or emergencies that threaten the life of the nation. This was echoed in a presentation given by Reverend Annie Kirke:

> "*No matter what is happening… we do not undermine human rights, we do not treat people in an… inhumane way, we do not oppress and subjugate people. These things do not fall away no matter what crisis we are in.*" – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

Formal places of quarantine fall within the mandate of OPCAT and the sphere of oversight of the National Preventative Mechanism. OPCAT thus provided a framework for Strandfontein and the government's response to the pandemic in relation to those experiencing homelessness, as well as vulnerable groups.

Following the declaration of a National State of Disaster on 15 March 2020, the National Disaster Management Act was gazetted on 18 March 2020[133], with multiple commencements. The Act refers to the following resources to be provided by the State in respect of those experiencing homelessness:

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[133] Source: https://www.gov.za/documents/disaster-management-act-regulations-address-prevent-and-combat-spread-coronavirus-covid-19#

Figure 51: Extract from the National Disaster Management Act[134]

11CA. Prohibition on evictions

No person may be evicted from their place of residence, regardless of whether it is a formal or informal residence or a farm dwelling, for the duration of the lockdown.

[regulation 11CA inserted by section 9 of Government Notice R465 of 2020]

11D. Resources by the State during lockdown

(1)   For the period of the declaration of a lockdown, a person refusing to be evacuated from any place subject to lockdown, may be evacuated by an enforcement officer to a temporary shelter, if such action is necessary for the preservation of life.

(2)   The State shall identify -

    (a)   temporary shelters that meet the necessary hygiene standards for homeless people; and

    (b)   temporary sites for quarantine and self-isolation that meet the necessary hygiene standards for people who cannot isolate or quarantine in their homes.

(3)   The provision of the State's resources listed herein shall be for the duration of the lockdown, and the use thereof will be subject to conditions determined by the Cabinet member responsible for such resources.

Further to this, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) confirmed that local governments' responsibility in response to the Act was to avail sites, but not to provide welfare services.

Figure 52: Communication between SALGA and the Department of Social Development, as presented by Councillor Zahid Badroodien during The Inkathalo Conversations

Enquiries: Mthobeli Kolisa
Tel: 012 – 369 8000
Fax: 012 – 369 8001
E-mail: mkolisa@salga.org.za

Mr. Mzolisi Toni
Acting Director-General: Department of Social Development
Private Bag X901,
PRETORIA,
0001

16 April 2020

Dear Mr Toni

IDENTIFICATION OF SHELTERS FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

Municipalities were directed to identify and make available sites to be used as shelters for homeless people. Municipalities complied with this direction fully aware that welfare services is one of the functional areas of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence in terms of Part A of Schedule 4 of the Constitution.

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[134] https://openbylaws.org.za/za/act/gn/2020/318/eng/

Figure 53: Legal opinion obtained by the City of Cape Town, as presented by
Councillor Zahid Badroodien during The Inkathalo Conversations

Legal Opinion

- A legal opinion on the nature of the City of Cape Town's (the City) general mandate in terms of the Constitution, as well as a view on its responsibilities toward homeless people in light of the COVID-19 crisis as well as an opinion on which items are within the City's mandate in terms of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) (DMA), its regulations and directions published thereunder in relation to the COVID-19.

- The legal opinion indicated that in the Legal Department's view:
  - The City is not responsible for the provision of housing/shelters to homeless people during the lockdown and such responsibility is vested in the responsible cabinet minister. However, the regulations do call for collaboration and the making available of resources only if it is within the financial means of the City and if it will not detract from its obligations to deliver basic municipal services.

  - Under the COVID-19 Regulations, the City exceeded its required level of response by providing shelters to homeless people and the ancillary functions associated therewith.

Given that the practicalities of homelessness vary in each city , local municipalities and city-specific interventions inevitably impact the welfare of homeless individuals. The City of Cape Town was not the only city where the local municipality took action. The City of Tshwane, for example, faced with a similar crisis, was frequently cited in comparison to Strandfontein. Tshwane's COVID-19 response did not develop into a human rights tragedy. In Tshwane, a collaborative effort between civil society, local neighbourhoods, and the municipality resulted in the formation of a 'central operational centre' that connected homeless individuals with accommodation and a range of services (described in Chapter 2). This too calls the City of Cape Town's actions into question. In spite of the legal opinion presented by the Councillor, which outlines the scope of the City's responsibilities towards homeless people, the City of Cape Town invested financial and human resources in the establishment of the Strandfontein Homeless Shelter as a disaster management response to the pandemic.

> *"Just prior, prior to lockdown… the City embarked on a tent project, at the Culemborg site. There were approximately… 200 tents, the sort of camping one man tent, set up under the bridge at Culemborg as the initial reaction to shelter the homeless during the pandemic. And then that soon overflowed. And the second plan was then hatched to create this R53 million project called Strandfontein… people literally had to go to Strandfontein with their tents, from Culemborg… with busses."* – Lorenzo Davids, Lead Facilitator: The Inkathalo Conversations

The OPCAT protocols and their subsequent delegation to the SAHRC, the National Disaster Management Act, and interpretations of local government's responsibilities in this regard, sketch an institutional landscape for how COVID-19 interventions should be managed. However, Reverend Annie Kirke relayed her contradictory experience during the same period:

> *"When Strandfontein opened on the 5th of April, the SAHRC went to visit. Upon entering the site, it was clear that protocols regarding COVID-19 regulation, and human rights protections were not in place. The Commissioner was advised that an independent and multi-disciplinary group of experts, with experience in responding to health emergencies,* [will be allowed to] *enter Strandfontein to assess conditions. This team of Human Rights Monitors,* [operating under the SAHRC]*, included*

> *Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF), a gender-based rights activist, social worker, addiction specialist, and a number of others* [other professionals]*.*

> *The MSF wrote in their assessment that 'residents of Strandfontein shelter are at increased risk of negative health outcomes, including acquisition and transmission of COVID-19, TB, and other communicable diseases. Large numbers of individuals are grouped together – up to 600 in Tent 2 – with insufficient infection and prevention control measures, and insufficient health promotion, thereby increasing their risk to airborne diseases such as TB and COVID-19, diseases transmitted orofecally such as viral and bacterial diarrhoea, and sexually transmitted infections such as HIV, thereby exposing them to harm'."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

To those who visited and assessed the camp, it was clear from the outset that Strandfontein defied international protocols, as well as COVID-19 regulations. To those who entered the camp as its residents, the contradictions between national COVID-19 regulations and their experience as Strandfontein residents was baffling, *"and highlighted the political character of the tragedy"* (Bracke, 2016:843).

Efforts were made by civil society organisations to support and advise government officials prior to South Africa's hard lockdown and its implementation of interventions. Numerous participants told The Inkathalo Conversations of their attempts to engage the City of Cape Town and other bodies in order to support and assist the homeless when lockdown was announced. Some churches and NGOs indicated that they offered to open their doors to the homeless, to host small numbers of people for the duration of lockdown in a 'microsite' format. Their attempts to execute this were denied, with mention of the refugee crisis at the Central Methodist Mission cited as a precedent for a potential disaster. One presenter mentioned that this one case was emphasised repeatedly despite the numerous success stories of refugee and immigrant shelter initiatives during periods of xenophobic attacks in the past.

> *"On Saturday, the 4th of April* [2020]*, the City invited NGOs* [to a meeting]*. At that meeting they* [City of Cape Town representatives] *were to describe and put before the NGO sector the plans for Strandfontein. This was not a dialogue... this was a one-way presentation. There were only a few NGOs* [present]*... this was the first they heard the plans for Strandfontein and what it would look like. The only three NGOs who were privy to that information was the service providers who would then be on site running the tents where people would stay. That would be the Haven, Ubuntu and Oasis... For all other NGOs...this was the first time they heard* [of] *the plans for Strandfontein."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

> *"...when we were talking with policymakers during lockdown,* [it] *was 'no, no, we're not going to use the churches, just look what happened in the Central Methodist church with the refugees'. In 2008, 80 churches opened their doors. In 2020, 3 or 4 churches opened their doors – that's a very big difference... is it because now it's not foreign nationals but it's homeless people?"* – Jon Hopkins, U-Turn

> *"On Sunday the 5th, removals to Strandfontein began. Myself and others started monitoring... we were accredited by the Human Rights Commission to monitor Human Rights issues, potential*

violations and abuses during the lockdown. To be eyes where eyes would not be [allowed] *any longer. Services to homeless individuals were not accredited as essential service...* [thus] *could not protect... the homeless would be vulnerable."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace *[*

Having provided this brief overview of the purpose of the Strandfontein site – within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic – and how it aimed to assist individuals experiencing homelessness during the national lockdown, the lived experiences of the individuals who were based at the Strandfontein site are presented next.

The sections to follow are intentionally presented almost entirely as a collection of quotations, relaying the accounts of Strandfontein as told by those who experienced it.

Figure 54: A View of the Strandfontein Site (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

"In a press report on the 14th of April 2020, following the health report in the independent assessment done by MSF, Councillor Badroodien stated: 'Even though the camp at the Strandfontein sportsground along Spine Road has been slammed as a concentration camp and human rights disaster since it opened last week, the City won't shut it down'. Councillor Badroodien responded to the media release to say: 'It will be used as a halfway house to keep the homeless off the street until the City can find suitable accommodation for them... The long-term plan would be that all these people would be connected to beds outside the shelter, after COVID-19 – the beds don't exist yet, but we are working on it.' " – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace, referring to a media release.[135]

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[135] *Article: "City in talks with church to solve Strandfontein homeless crisis" 14 April 2020*

FROM THE STREETS TO STRANDFONTEIN

During The Inkathalo Conversations, individuals experiencing homelessness shared their accounts of how they were told about and transported to the Strandfontein site. These include individuals who presented at The Inkathalo Conversations as well as some who were interviewed by Reverend Annie Kirke while at Strandfontein. The following emerged as common themes in accounts of the 'invitation' to Strandfontein:

- A lack of information about Strandfontein site as well as the implications of refusing to go. This ambiguity seemed common among law enforcement agencies, CIDs, ratepayers' associations, as well as among those experiencing homelessness;
- Coercion by promises of accommodation, services, medical support, and food;
- The legal implications of not complying (e.g. threats of arrest);
- No alternatives provided;
- A sense of fear and a great deal of uncertainty;
- No COVID-19 protocols concerning social distancing, provision of masks, etc.

The comments and images to follow have bearing on the transportation of homeless individuals from the streets to Strandfontein.

> *"Ek is van Kuilsrivier… Law Enforcement het by ons Dinsdag aangekom. Hulle't vir ons belowe dit gaan lekker is, ons moet kom, ons moet die goede los. Hulle't vir ons geforce, hulle't vir ons gese as ons nie wil klim in die bus nie dan gaan ons tronk toe, vir 6 maande word ons toegesluit… hulle't nie n hart vir ons gehad om vir ons so te belieg om hierna toe te bring nie; ons word hier gehok…"*

> [Translation: "I am from Kuilsrivier… Law Enforcement came to us on Tuesday. They promised us it's going to be nice, we must come, we must leave our things. They forced us, they told us if we don't want to get into the bus then we're going to prison, for 6 months we'll be locked up… They didn't have a heart for us [didn't care about us], to lie to us in order to bring us here; we are being held captive here."] – A woman video-interviewed at Strandfontein, recorded in the presentation by Reverend Annie Kirke.

As a Human Rights Monitor, Reverend Annie Kirke reported witnessing individuals being coerced and forced off the streets and transported to Strandfontein:

> *"…the reports from people that they were coerced – whether they were told that there was going to be various different services, medical provision, that sort of thing – especially for people who are substance users, there would be drug withdrawal support."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

During her presentation, Reverend Annie Kirke shared video clips of the removals. She observed that none of the COVID-19 protocols were adhered to during these removals. Others recalled that no masks were provided to individuals as they were being loaded onto buses and social distancing was not practiced.

> *"…myself and two other monitors were monitoring the removals… here you can see a number of people that have been picked up in different parts of Mowbray now, getting out of the SAPS van, with no masks, no social distancing. And from here they were picked up in one of those buses…"* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

Figure 55: A still from a video of homeless individuals being transported to Mowbray Bus Terminal in the back of a police van, with no social distancing or masks. Five individuals exited this van. (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

Introducing a piece of video footage, Reverend Annie Kirke described a transgendered individual who refused to go to Strandfontein and was subsequently arrested:

> *"She refused to go, as we continued to monitor, she was pressured to leave and she refused to leave and she then made her way across the bridge… Later that night, we don't know when, she was arrested... she was put into a holding cell at Mowbray SAPS. The following day she was found dead in her cell and there are still ongoing investigations as to what happened to her."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

Figure 56: An individual (identified in yellow) who refused to be transported to Strandfontein and was later arrested and detained at Mowbray Police Station (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

> *"I mean you had no choice, because they told you about the SANDF – South African National Defence Force is going to kick you if you are not going there…. It's* [a] *pandemic, I mean, there's a virus that is killing people. And then instead of assisting people in a good manner so that they understand you are forcing people. I mean, you are taking their rights away, like you did not have a choice. I mean, I do have a choice, I mean I need to know…"* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Other participants of The Inkathalo Conversations shared their accounts of the confusion, fear and uncertainty that surrounded the 'invitation' to Strandfontein, particularly for those with nowhere else to go.

> *"So ja, lockdown started, Corona came around, and Corona was more vicious than crystal… Everything started shutting down and that kind of thing, and there was this uncertainty, and the army's gonna come in, and they gonna do this to us, and they gonna do that to us, and we must go here, and you know, we must stay – we must make sure that we get either to our houses, homes… I remember the Law Enforcement telling me…, 'when are you gonna go home?! Why don't you go home?!'… So now, I can't understand – I've been on the street and I've been in Observatory for how many years and he knows that, would I now suddenly find a home just because, you know, they decided it's lockdown… would I suddenly find a home?… they kept on telling us, 'Why don't you go home?!' This is gonna happen, that is gonna happen, so there was this fear among people that… if we don't follow these instructions and go according to these regulations then… we're probably gonna get shot or something like that you know… there was this big uncertainty, this fear, this confusion… being on the street..."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

When asked to clarify whether officials actually said that they would be shot, Rudy Basson responded:

> *"...no, we assumed 'cause that was basically the… that is the impression we got – if we don't listen to what is being* [said]*, if we don't go according to what is gonna be done then… we either gonna go to jail or that kind of stuff... There was Law Enforcement that actually made sure that you understand that the army is gonna be brought in and that they are going to patrol the streets..."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Individuals reported being rounded up by Law Enforcement and picked up in trucks around the city, often with little explanation. In addition, many had to leave their belongings, with no sense of when they would be able to return or if their belongings would remain safe throughout lockdown.

> *"Our Law Enforcement in the CBD only allowed us to take what we were wearing and one change of clothes if we had it with us, and we were told that we cannot go and get personal items like IDs that were being held at places…"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Others indicated that they did have an address where they could reside during lockdown but were nonetheless transported to Strandfontein. Reverend Annie Kirke reported on this and presented video accounts of individuals in Strandfontein relaying involuntary containment:

> *"People often came and said: 'I have an address, I have family... will you help me get out of here?' We would approach NGO tent providers and say...'here are people here, who could leave.' And some of those people were successful and…*[it] *could take a week, a week and a half, filling out forms, and SAPS or Law Enforcement would go to the address and check if someone was there... Quite often people would say, 'my aunty don't have a cell phone number so they can't be contacted'. So Social Development or someone would say, 'we're just not going to drive there to check if that address is valid or not'. So, there are people who were detained there* [at

Strandfontein] *who could have stayed somewhere else and could provide an address but continued to be held."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"Ek is van Strand, ek is nou hierso in 'n kamp in waar ek nie myself wil bevind nie… according die virus… ek was geforseer binne in 'n bus in – waarvan buurtwag en 'n Law Enforcement vir my geforseer het binne in 'n bus... Ek het vir hulle vra, vir hulle gese, hallo ek het n adres, ek bly in [quotes address]*… Hulle't vir my gese omdat hulle my ken en sien vir my elke dag daarso rondloop, kan ek nie nog se ek het n adres en almal die goede nie, so hulle het vir my geforseer. Dit was 'n kaptein van Law Enforcement, en 'n buurtwag, en 'n security* [mentions name]*… daai is die main verdagtes wat ons wat adresde het, wat ons nou hier is, mense almal van die Strand."*

[Translation: "I am from Strand, I am now here in a camp where I didn't want to be… according to [because of] the virus… I was forced into a bus – neighbourhood watch, and a Law Enforcement [officer] forced me into a bus… I asked them, told them, hello, I have an address, I live at [quotes address]… They said to me that because they know me and they see me walking around there everyday, that I can't say I have an address and all these things, so they forced me. It was a captain from Law Enforcement, and a neighbourhood watch, and a security [mentions his name]… those are the main suspects, for those of us who have addresses, [why] we're here now, all people from Strand."] – A man video-interviewed at Strandfontein, recorded in the presentation by Reverend Annie Kirke.

"Law Enforcement het vir ons gese as ons kom hier, dan gan ons als kry… ek het ook 'n adres… nou ons het ons adresde gegee…"

[Translation: "Law Enforcement told us that if we come here, then we'll get everything… I also have an address… we did give our addresses…"] – A man video-interviewed at Strandfontein, recorded in the presentation by Reverend Annie Kirke.

Reverend Annie Kirke told of an individual who approached her while she was monitoring the relocations to Strandfontein, asking her to bless her on her journey to what the woman called the 'holiday camp'. She recalled their interaction:

Reverend Annie Kirke's response to this woman was: *"I will never refuse to bless anybody, but today I am not coming here to bless what you're asking me to bless."*

The woman being transported said*, "Why not?"*

To which Reverend Annie Kirke replied, *"I am not sure that Strandfontein is going to be a good place for everybody… my understanding is that people are going to be put into very, very big tents, there is no social distancing… I don't know what the context will be for your health needs… and my understanding is that you won't have the choice to leave that place once you get there.'"*

The individual responded, *"That is not what I've been told, we going to get our own place, or tent or own room, we will have everything we need..."*

The individual then asked whether Reverend Annie Kirke would take her to her family instead, which she did.

Various stakeholders described Strandfontein to individuals experiencing homelessness. One man interviewed at Strandfontein reported that a member of a CID convinced him to go to Strandfontein, citing the services that would be provided:

> *"[She said] the cops said you must get in the bus… she say we gonna get everything, like treatment… and not even one of that things she said is true… it's all a bunch of lies she tell us… and they did show us a photo and they said you're not forced to go there if you don't want to… this place is not alright man, because once you're in you can't get out, there's no shop for you, nothing…"* – A man video-interviewed at Strandfontein, recorded in the presentation by Reverend Annie Kirke.

Another man was encouraged by a member of the ratepayers association in Observatory, who had been providing services to homeless individuals in the area:

> *"I actually went to Strandfontein on the recommendation of… the Ratepayers' Association… because they explained to us that we might not get food again… because they were feeding us… When Law Enforcement came, they made it clear to us that we don't have to go but… at one point we might… they might be able to… they might force us to go… but they're not sure… I was thinking if I don't go now… then I might not get a, you know, a decent place in… in these tents because it was explained to us that we're going to get… gonna get these tents and we're gonna get three meals a day – they really focused on the three meals, you know… it's almost as if we can't find food or nobody else is gonna feed us."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Some individuals were initially accommodated in tents at the Culemborg Safe Space. It was reported that this area became full, and that people were relocated from Culemborg to Strandfontein.

> *"[Law Enforcement] said get whatever you need for the next day and climb into the van… obviously there were people protesting as far as that was concerned… some knew about it, some didn't… when I asked for further information he said to me, 'listen, this is where we're in, this is a pandemic, you guys have to either come, or we'll be back by 9'oclock this evening together with SAPS, and then you wont have any choice, you are going to be imprisoned', as they have the power to arrest… we had little information to base… any objection on, and they were being quite polite in terms of their usual communication… we were only allowed to take basically one bag with us… As we got nearer town we realised… well this is the way to Culemborg. Got to Culemborg and I saw a tent city… We'd been told that there were only 9 spaces left… so by the time we arrived, there were already over 300 people at Culemborg… at that stage it was just tents, and then they had water barrels and toilet facilities. And we went through a screening, and we were shown our tents, we had to share two per tent… now we had pamphlets and we were reading about COVID… we spent the week at Culemborg. We had good food, mostly, supplied by Ladles of Love."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"Even Culemborg, I could see, although I was sitting there by the gate, there were lots of fights inside, there were lots of arguments between the guys and the Law Enforcement, so I think the tension started from Culemborg. Actually, it started on the trucks, because they put people on trucks to go there."* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 57: Culemborg Safe Space 2 prior to many individuals being transported to Strandfontein (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

Individuals recounted the way in which they were then transported from Culemborg to the Strandfontein site:

> "We were forced… [A member of Metro Police said]: 'if you don't want to go, you'll see what's going to happen, we're not asking you, we're telling you.' " – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> "All the people from Sea Point, CBD and…Table View… were put into Culemborg, the Safe Space 2, which is now built there… but there was no buildings [at that time]… we only had those tents which were provided by the City and Law Enforcement… Eventually here were 250 of us at that site… We actually thought that we were going to be there for the entire time of the COVID… Then on Saturday [28 March 2020]… [Names a Senior Representative of the Service Provider] arrived and let us know that a new site had been put together by the City. And it was said to be a much bigger site, with a lot more facilities, hot water, and wooden floors, and all sorts of things – and most importantly, the medical facility – which this Culemborg site didn't have.
>
> Although he made it sound as if it was a voluntary move to Strandfontein and we could choose whether we wanted to go or not, we were told that the meal would be served by [the service provider] early the next day, and that would be at 12 o'clock. We woke up at 7 o'clock on Sunday to… see Law Enforcement moving out of Culemborg, and an array of luxury busses had actually formed a semi-circle around Culemborg, that you could actually not go anywhere but into a bus. So, you had absolutely no choice as to where you were going – you were going to Strandfontein… Everybody was so shocked by this whole 'cattling' in… We assumed that it was going to be okay…" – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

When asked what the mood was like on the busses transporting people from Culemborg to Strandfontein, Monwabisi Sijaji recalled:

"It was tense… you could feel the tension, nobody was talking to nobody. Everybody was just wondering, where are we going? You know, we knew nothing…" – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 58: Transportation by bus, Mowbray Bus Terminus, 7 April 2020 (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

ARRIVAL AT STRANDFONTEIN

Those who had been transported to Strandfontein recalled their experiences upon arrival. It became clear during the dialogues that this in itself was traumatic, as individuals were shocked by what they observed and affected by their treatment during their orientation.

The following emerged as common themes in accounts of the arrival at Strandfontein:

- A very brief, high-level health screening (for COVID-19 and TB) which felt insufficient to the entrants – bearing in mind that individuals reportedly had little to no information about COVID-19 at the time;
- The COVID-19 screening process included a criminal check;
- Reportedly, screening was undertaken largely by Law Enforcement officials;
- First impressions of the site shocked and scared many individuals, as they saw hundreds of people behind fences;
- Large numbers of Law Enforcement officials around the site was reportedly unsettling;
- The restriction of movement once they entered.

The comments and images to follow capture these events.

"...When I arrived at Strandfontein… there was like hundreds of people – hundreds of people! Like in a row… going through a tent… almost like sheep going like, there was this thing… I don't know if you actually notice when sheep goes to the thing where they get slaughtered, they go through these gates… they had the same thing there, we had to walk through these things… and [they] *ask us questions you know... that was their way of doing a Corona screening – take off your… you do this, whatever, and that was the Corona screening that you had. And then you got to a point, I think it was Law Enforcement that searched us, you know… they take our bag and they throw it out and*

all our stuff's lying there and they look through it, and they tell you pick it up, and there you go..." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"As we arrived in Strandfontein, I'm gonna talk about first reaction… When you got out of the bus, the nurse there ran away, thinking that we had Corona… We went through screening – before you go to screening, they would search you, everything… they would say, take your plastic bag and you throw things out… So that's the treatment we got… that impression [that] *we've got Corona, before they locked us in those tents."* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 59: Searching of possessions at entrance to Strandfontein (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

Figure 60: Searching of possessions at entrance to Strandfontein (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

"As we arrived [in Strandfontein]*, every single person that was standing outside of that Shoprite, they actually came out of the shop to watch these buses, because we were about the 18th bus that arrived there… and they were shouting all sorts of obscenities, and I soon realised that we were not welcome in Strandfontein. I didn't know at that stage about the problems with the ratepayers…*

We arrived at the site, and [mentions a Councillor] *and all the dignitaries were there… as we were loaded off. And from there we then went… up to the area where we were going to be screened. At that area, the very first question asked was, 'Have you ever been arrested?... And at which police station?' That was even before any questions pertaining to TB or COVID… There was a screening process for COVID, five questions were asked, as well as TB – those individuals eventually went back into the same tents as well… even if you were TB positive and you didn't have medication, you were still sent to the tents… After your screening you were then told to which tent to go …"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 61: Arrival at Strandfontein (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

Figure 62: Arrival and searching at Strandfontein (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

"…when I got to tent number 2… we were like the new arrivals – inside was the ones that already, those guys, they were inside already, they arrived there before me. So, you had hundreds of people running to this fence screaming, 'Aweh, Aaaaah!' And I have to go through there now…" – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"The people that had lots of bags… they had to basically throw everything out of those bags… the

security refused to… touch it… so we felt as if we were the people with the disease already." –
Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

CONDITIONS AND EXPERIENCES AT STRANDFONTEIN

Individuals staying at the Strandfontein site explained what services were rendered as well as the quality
of these services. Many remarked how this contrasted with how Strandfontein was described to them.

COVID-19 COMPLIANCE

In early April 2020, much of South Africa was still grappling to comprehend the nature of the disease and
information was being issued from national government. There was widespread fear and uncertainty as
South Africans sought to educate themselves around prevention and health measures. For those who do
not typically access mass media, nor have the means to do so, information can filter through slowly and
incoherently. What became evident through the conversations was the lack of knowledge about the
COVID-19 pandemic among those who were transported to Culemborg and Strandfontein, and the lack of
clarity about the disease and its implications. Numerous individuals relayed the panic and stress associated
with the unfolding threat of COVID-19 and varying degrees of information about the virus, in the context
of the disturbing health conditions at the site.

> *"On the street we really were oblivious to what… COVID was about… don't really get much time to
> read newspapers. You here and there hear something."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who
> has experienced homelessness.

> *"Just imagine there's Corona, and then a person died in your tent – what do you expect… in a tent
> full of hundreds, hundreds of people? When one person died, and then there's a virus that is killing
> people outside?"* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness,
> referring to the death of Boet Archie, discussed later.

The Strandfontein site was erected to provide temporary accommodation to homeless individuals **for the
purpose of preventing the spread of COVID-19**, but on site, COVID-19 regulations and guidelines were
contravened in multiple ways. As those at Strandfontein learned more about the virus and considered this
against the site and services available to them, they became increasingly concerned for their health and
safety.

The number of people in each tent, let alone on the site, contravened the allowable size of public gatherings
at the time.

> *"We were going to tent number 2, which… turned out to be the biggest tent on the camp, which
> was The Haven Tent. We were told that the tents house 500. The tent is approximately the size of
> this hall* [referring to the Claremont Civic Centre hall]*, obviously lower, no ventilation whatsoever.
> And on the first night we were 609* [people].*"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has
> experienced homelessness.

> *"There were about 600 people in this tent at this point… in no way prepared to receive anybody,
> let alone for the COVID-19 regulations that it was established for."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human

Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

No social distancing was maintained among residents of Strandfontein, and in some cases among service providers.

"Die tyd toe ons hier aankom, toe moet ons sien ons is in n perdestal – ek noem die hok n perdestal – dit is nie mooi nie. Hulle't vir ons gese op die straat ons mag nie hopies, hopies maak nie [klein hopies mense maak nie], maar nou moet ons so lewe, moet ons so slaap… Ons word hier gehok…. Ons mag nie uitgaan nie, ons moet nou net hier gehok is… Waar is die geld wat die staat gegee het?... Dis vir ons eie veiligheid dat ons moet van die straat af weggekom om hierna te kom. Ons word dan nou slegter behandel as wat ons op die straat gewees het…"

[Translation: "The time we got here, we saw that we are in a horse stable – I call this pen a horse stable – it's not nice. They told us on the street that we're not allowed be in little bunches and bunches [small groups of people], but now we must live like this, sleep like this… We're being held captive here… We're not allowed to go out, we're now being held here… Where is the money that the State gave?... It's for our own safety that we had to get off the street to come here, yet now we're being treated worse than if we were on the street…"] – A woman video-interviewed at Strandfontein, recorded in the presentation by Reverend Annie Kirke.

"When we asked them about the social distancing… we asked her [a City official]*, but you know, hasn't there been a proclamation that you're not supposed to congregate more than 50 in an area? She said no the president was referring to…conferences and funerals, not this."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 63: Lunch queue at The Haven Tent 2 with no social distancing or masks, 17 April 2020 (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

Figure 64: Private security guards being transported to the site with no COVID-19 compliance (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

> *"Helios was the private security company that was… contracted for the site. We often saw these vehicles coming in with people all squashed in the back, and then people would get out of the back without wearing masks. So again, no COVID-19 compliance. And that was just such a startling aspect to this… camp. That on entry, so many people going in and out, never* [got] *screened, right up until the camp, almost until the last day when the camp closed, we were never screened. No temperature taken, no sanitiser on our hands… we did it ourselves. Often people going in not wearing masks. The site manager never wore a mask. The entire time that he was there."* –
> Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

Particularly jarring, was an image of a lunch queue on 11 April 2020, where service providers implemented COVID-19 measures for their staff while the health and safety of homeless individuals at Strandfontein were blatantly disregarded. During her presentation, Reverend Annie Kirke described this event (shown in

Figure 65):

> *"...Jabulani arrives to bring the food and they're all dressed up in COVID-19 protection gear and then all the occupants in the tents... as you can see, no mask, no social distancing, no sanitiser. All just queuing together like that. Consider that this was all set up to provide shelter for people who were street-based during the COVID-19 lockdowns – it does not in any way comply with the regulations."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"As a City, we should be ashamed of ourselves. That we took people who were sleeping on their own, to protect themselves, practicing their own social distancing on the streets, and shoved them into tents of five hundreds, and queues of a hundred; it just boggles my mind... When NGOs can dress… themselves up in the best PPE… to protect them and their staff, but will let homeless people stand body to body, not caring if any of them may die – that's not the democracy we fought for…" – Lorenzo Davids, Lead Facilitator: The Inkathalo Conversations, referring to figure 65.

Individuals who stayed in Strandfontein expressed their concern over exposure to COVID-19 within the camp. Some individuals were reportedly tested for COVID-19 but were not quarantined while they awaited results. As is well known, COVID-19 testing was rolled out with strict national and provincial control measures. However, individuals in Strandfontein received testing feedback as shown in Figure 67. There remain suspicions that the testing and the results provided were not legitimate.

> *"I don't think any of us… if we go to get tests, we get given this* [refers to Figure 68] *as proof of testing negative for COVID-19. It was a makeshift piece of paper… isn't stamped by a medical professional or organisation… The doctor's name is Clarens Clarens. I don't think that that's their proper name."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace, referring to Figure 67

Figure 67: COVID-19 'test result' given to a resident, 4 May 2020, with comments as per the presentation by Reverend Annie Kirke (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

A COVID-19 test result given to an occupant at Strandfontein on 4th May 2020.

There is no medical certificate, no stamp, no doctor's name or signature, address, record number, etc.

Another occupant received his same day. He was not quarantined whilst awaiting his results and is staying in a tent of around 150 people.

"The site manager… when he was asked… for any data – how many people, for example, have been tested for COVID-19? How many people have tested positive? How many people have been tested for TB? and so on – he said he was not privvy to any of that data, and that the City's health team would need to provide that. And when asked… by the South African Human Rights Commissioner, they still have not provided it." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

As presented earlier, an independent assessment conducted by a multi-disciplinary team of professionals raised the numerous health risks associated with Strandfontein, which are particularly concerning in light of the alleged protective purpose of the site:

"Residents of Strandfontein shelter are at increased risk of negative health outcomes, including acquisition and transmission of COVID-19... Large numbers of individuals are grouped together – up to 600 in Tent 2 – with insufficient infection prevention and control measures, and insufficient health promotion, therefore increasing their risk to airborne diseases such as TB and COVID-19…" – Assessment by Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF), as quoted by Reverend Annie Kirke during her presentation.

"Right from the get-go, it was very, very clear, not just to human rights activists… but to health practitioners and people involved in social work and social care, that Strandfontein defied – not just neglected, but defied – international protocols and regulations that pre-existed, and also measures that were brought out to deal with COVID-19." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

On 19 April 2020, the Strandfontein Ratepayers' Association and Strandfontein Social and Economic Forum filed criminal charges against Mayor Dan Plato at Strandfontein police station for violating lockdown regulations by overcrowding the temporary shelter. An application was filed at the Western Cape High Court on 22 April 2020, compelling the City to decentralise the homeless shelter.

The fear of COVID-19 within the site became a reality on 12 May 2020, when an occupant who had left the site on 11 May tested positive for COVID-19. As a member of the Strandfontein Homeless Action Committee, she had had contact with numerous people on the site and had lived in Tent 2, potentially putting hundreds of people at risk of infection. The manner in which the site management responded was once again non-compliant:

"Those who had been in contact with Chantel [who tested positive for COVID-19 on 12 May]*, who were in touch with her, understood that they too needed to be tested and quarantined. And so they were demanding not to leave the camp, until they had been tested and quarantined. And that very same afternoon, after there was this big announcement from the City's Social Development Manager and also from the Site Manager, that 'no one would leave now without being screened… tested and quarantined',* [they began screening (not testing)] *a whole big group. –* [Screening implied being] *asked four or five questions with regard to their health…* [they] *left Strandfontein that* [same] *day… within hours of the announcement that somebody had tested positive and that they had been in touch* [with her]*."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"For those who knew that they had come into contact with COVID-19, they were very scared… they really wanted the responsible thing to be done and so didn't want to leave [Strandfontein] *without that* [the promised screening, testing and quarantine]*, and it was being denied."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation at the site was in the form of large marquee style tents, housing hundreds of individuals each. A major concern to those who assessed and lived in the tents was the poor ventilation within the tents, which resulted in high temperatures during the day and very cold temperatures at night. This temperature differential resulted in the condensation of air on the inside ceilings of the tents, which dripped down onto occupants during the night. Tents were described as incubators for disease. The tents had wooden panels for flooring and occupants were forced to sleep in close proximity to one another. Reports indicated that initially only blankets were provided to sleep on and that mattresses only arrived several days after the camp was already occupied by more than a thousand homeless people. Participants at The Inkathalo Conversations recalled that resources such as blankets and mattresses were stockpiled by service providers, used to separate spaces for employees, and withheld from the occupants. The photos and quotations to follow summarise these conditions.

Figure 68: Ubuntu Tent 3, reportedly housing about 350 people, 11 April 2020 (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

"…The Ubuntu tent which had about 350 people in it, on the 11ᵗʰ of April. As you can see [referring to Figure 68]*, there are no mattresses. People were given two blankets, one to lie on, one to cover them, on a hard floor. And the ventilation was so poor in these tents, that in the day it was hot, but by night it got really cold. And so… there was condensation literally cascading on the inside of the roof of the tent and it would be dropping down on everybody as they were sleeping. Sometimes people woke up thinking it was raining, but it was actually the water inside the tent running down*

on top of them." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace, referring to Figure 68 and Figure 69.

Figure 69: Poor ventilation resulting in condensation and drooping ceilings at The Haven Tent 2, 26 April 2020 (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

"The place was cold as hell, with two blankets." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"The vents in the tent only came in a week before we left the site." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"They actually used to do it… where they say, well, just put them all together so that everyone catches it and dies, and we've got a reason to eliminate or reduce the numbers in our city… so it's the whole ideology of the workings of concentration camps, that is basically what we were exposed to." – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"*Mattresses arrived and were distributed between the 12th and 14th of April* [2020]*, so this is 8–11 days after opening."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

Figure 70: Mattresses distributed between 12 - 14 April 2020, 8–11 days after opening (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

"The little that I knew about COVID at that stage, [that] *there was no way that you could actually practice any safe distancing, there was no sanitiser, there was nothing… there were no mattresses. At tent number 2 we were given one blanket – you had a choice: do you lie on it or do you cover yourself with it – that was it. Yet, the Haven staff in the corner had built an office area… with bales of blankets. So, although we could only get one, they used* [hundreds of blankets] *as a wall for their office"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness, referring to Figure 70.

"One of the things that struck me the first time I visited Strandfontein, walking into these pens, these fenced areas, were… pretty much [that] *there were no chairs. So, people lay on the floor to sleep, and there was just no other space where people could sit. They couldn't even sit at a table. Just, having to sit on the grass, leaning up against a fence. Everything about it spoke of imprisonment and just the denial of even your most basic needs."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

FOOD

Participants at The Inkathalo Conversations shared their disgust at the sustenance provided at Strandfontein. They reported disparities in the quality of food given by different service providers at the site. One service provider was replaced after constant complaints about the quality of food.

"…When I arrived at Strandfontein, the first meal that I got was sour food... I had the two slices of bread, but I also had some cheese sandwiches… cheese and tomato sandwiches that I got in Observatory… So, there I had to already realise, ooooooh, a mistake maybe to come here but anyway… and then the nightmare started..." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"…the way they were treating people at Strandfontein… feeding people sour food." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Initially the feeding was done by The Haven… there was a bit of a revolt on that one, because of the food that we were being given, which was sour, and the weirdest concoctions you've ever eaten in your life. It actually boiled… the pot was actually boiling from [the food] *being off… Eventually The Haven got Jabulani to take over the contract from them… the food was not bad that Jabulani supplied."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 71: Lice in the food, 18 April 2020 (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

"Jabulani eventually changed their way of doing things. It seems they realised it's too time consuming to make us sandwiches… so they gave us packets of sugar, and packets of peanut butter…and a whole bread, so that you could feed yourself basically, for the week." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

According to participants, the medical needs of individuals in Strandfontein abounded, yet the medical support required was grossly inadequate. The City provided a team of health workers at the site, who were accessed only by request and appointment. Many stakeholders reported that NGOs seeking to provide medical support and other services were denied access to the site. There was no access to medical services between 4pm and 8am, even for those in quarantine tents with suspected COVID-19 or TB symptoms. There were reportedly no staff from the NGO service providers present overnight in the tents to supervise or assist with health emergencies or humanitarian needs. This left those residing in the camp to deal with any medical emergencies on their own, or to seek the attention of security and Law Enforcement personnel beyond the fences to arrange for ambulances. These experiences were overwhelming and traumatic for many, as is captured within the remarks to follow.

"They had two service providers – initially it was SHAWCO, and then it was replaced about two weeks later by the City of Cape Town health officials. One doctor and 14 nursing staff, for… close to 1800 people. And unfortunately, there was absolutely nothing after 4pm. It was like, only the emergency services [after hours]*, and we had to get through… one of the private security company*

guards, to go to Law Enforcement, that would then go and log a call [to the emergency services]. *So, we had a number of issues at the tents… We've got people with TB; we've got people with HIV, people that haven't had… HIV medication that were getting ill; we had people coughing up blood; we had people with high blood pressure… Every single evening there was somebody that needed to go to hospital, and we struggled to get anybody to hospital."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Between Tuesday 7th April and 18th April, SHAWCO provided a basic assessment service with teams of medical students under the supervision of a City Doctor. The City of Cape Town's agreement with SHAWCO was revoked by City of Health Area South Manager [mentions name] *on 17th April as there was no MOU agreement between the two parties…"* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"[After that] *there was a… City's team of health doctors… The City's health team refused to go into the tents where people were staying to assess them, even though people requested assistance. When asked, they said that they were afraid of the people in the tents. They were afraid of contracting COVID-19… And also, they were unwilling based on the type of people that they would be engaging with. That was a direct quote from the site manager. At night, there were no health services on site – none. For, up to I think 1 600 people. And this is a COVID-19 facility. With people with other illnesses… chronic illnesses…"* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"Health services were available, basic ones, between 8am and 4pm every day and there was a health tent set up for that. To access that health tent, you had to get through two layers of security, and you had to have the support or the help of the NGO provider of whose tent you were in. So, you had to request with them to get you an appointment at the health tent... people could wait anything from up to 8 hours or even days to get to the health tent, and that happened on a number of occasions." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

As mentioned previously, an independent report by MSF concluded the following about the medical risks associated with the Strandfontein site:

"Residents of Strandfontein shelter are at increased risk of negative health outcomes, including acquisition and transmission of COVID-19, TB, and other communicable diseases. Large numbers of individuals are grouped together – up to 600 in Tent 2 – with insufficient infection, prevention and control measures, and insufficient health promotion, therefore increasing their risk to airborne diseases such as TB and COVID-19, diseases transmitted orofecally such as viral and bacterial Diarrhoea, and sexually transmitted infections such as HIV, thereby exposing them to harm." – Assessment by Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF), as quoted by Reverend Annie Kirke during her presentation.

Support for Existing Medical Conditions and Emergencies

Human rights monitors observed and were told by occupants of the following incidents and issues:

- Epileptic fits;
- Seizures;
- Acute respiratory issues;

- Weakness due to lack of chronic medication – HIV, Diabetes;
- Chest pain and high-blood pressure;
- Fevers;
- Diarrhoea and vomiting;
- Mental health deterioration and difficult to manage behavioural issues;
- Incontinence; and
- Disability – people falling, unable to go to the toilet or shower without assistance.

"This was set up to be a place of safety, particularly with regards to COVID-19 and health, and it was anything but. I think it's a miracle, to be honest, that more people didn't contract COVID-19, but we don't know how many did. But also… a number of people whose health deteriorated. People didn't have access to chronic medication. Some people who had HIV reported that they'd been three weeks off their ARVs – and as we know, that they knew – that meant that… the strain that they had could've mutated and would now be resistant to that line. And there's only about three lines, and some people were on line two already. Other people didn't have access to their TB medication, heart disease medication… One gentleman came to me one day very, very scared because he was… already starting to have hallucinations, who hadn't got access to his mental health medication…. From just a health perspective, Strandfontein just violated probably every human right imaginable…" – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"There was a lady, for example, with HIV and Tuberculosis… she was so weak and frail that two men used to carry her and actually sit her on the toilet, just to use the toilet… The last afternoon that I remember the Red Cross being there… the doctor from the Red Cross actually trained me in putting drips and taking out drips for people, and then asked me to please hand it over to the officials to get rid of as it was medical waste. And the response from The Haven every day when I had to hand back the drips was 'just throw it into the dustbin'. So that was a concern…" – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"At night time when people had epileptic fits or heart attacks, they had to deal with it on their own. They had to raise the alarm with private security who managed the fence around their tent, who many times refused to help them. So, they had to jump up and down to wave to Law Enforcement... to get them to come, and then Law Enforcement had to go to the site manager to get an ambulance to come, and that could take hours." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"There was a lady that had an asthma attack – the ambulance took 7 hours to get here. I had an epileptic attack, the ambulance came, took me to the hospital… and it took me 7 to 8 hours to get back here… I tried phoning Law Enforcement… any type of officials to get me back here, because all my belongings was here. If not for that then I wouldn't have actually tried to get back." – A man audio-interviewed at Strandfontein, presented by Reverend Annie Kirke.

In addition to numerous accounts of dire health needs and the lack of services available, participants shared disturbing accounts of individuals being mistreated, denied treatment, and threatened. One such example is shared in relation to Figure 72.

Figure 72: An elderly man in need of emergency care, April 2020 (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

"We had been begging for him to go to hospital, he was very weak. And by the time that one of the Doctors Without Borders arrived at the tent, and he took his phone app to check his vitals… the doctor looked up at us and he said this man won't make it through the night if we don't get him to hospital now… It took I don't know how many hours, by midnight we were still waiting… The man was freezing; we took him to The Haven tent and we asked the two staff members that were there for blankets – the blankets were lying heaped up – and we were told they're not authorised to give us blankets, because…at night they are just there for security purposes." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness, referring to the man in Figure 72.

"He was threatened not to speak to Human Rights Monitors when he felt ill. He was told that we [Human Rights Monitors] *were interfering… I was told to contact the sister in the health tent, and I was… given all of these reference numbers for all the different times ambulances had been called for* [the man]. *And I was told that he was rude to them, he refused to go… Essentially, I was told he was lying, he lying about his health needs, he was lying about needing to go to hospital.* [He] *was told to stop contacting me or any of the Human Rights Monitors for assistance even though we were the only way he could get assistance… And as a result of that, Lance and Carlos were actually called to the site manager's office and they were also told they were not allowed to speak to Human Rights Monitors or escalate health needs to us…"* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace, referring to the man in Figure 72.

The fact that the City of Cape Town did not adequately consider the various requirements for the management of chronic diseases such as hypertension, TB, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, schizophrenia, and other related chronic conditions and the medication requirement to treat, stabilise, and support the health and well-being of homeless people, is a further violation to their access to their health rights and an injustice in terms of international health and well-being protocols. When the Strandfontein camp was designed, the designers did not consider the treatment of these conditions among homeless people as a fundamental human right and entirely ignored it. Thus, patients with TB, and HIV/AIDS, and chronic mental conditions, ran out of their regular medications. On admission, none of their chronic conditions were profiled, none of

their daily medications were listed and none of their day hospital visitations were recorded. This is a violation in terms of the Health Professions Act. Access to health care is guaranteed as a human right in the Constitution and the City of Cape Town as an organ of State, showed in its treatment of the healthcare of homeless people, that it did not consider the health of homeless people as equal to the healthcare of others. While a medical facility was established on site, it was primarily focused on COVID-19 and not on managing the pre-exsiting conditions of the occupant population.

Support for Substance Users

Substance users and those who were experiencing withdrawals were denied the necessary treatment, placing their lives at risk.

> *"...but I was also coming off... off heroin... I didn't spike the day before so I was like very, very weak. They – before I got there they promised us... a substitute to methadone – that they would give us methadone and they would look after us and that kind of thing, so I basically went because I felt that maybe this thing is a good thing to do, because you know, it's time to get clean..."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Reverend Annie Kirke ended her presentation by explaining a fatal incident with one of the residents who suffered from drug dependency and, as a result of being under lockdown in Strandfontein, succumbed to drug withdrawal symptoms.

> *"This is a guy called Ben* [Figure 73], *who collapsed one day. They said it was 'Unga'* [a heroin-based drug]*, so it was a substance use withdrawal issue. Ben went to the health tent, then went off in an ambulance, and since everyone's left Strandfontein they discovered that Ben's passed away. Ben's family still don't know that he's passed away... But I would say that Ben is one of potentially quite a few people who fell very ill at Strandfontein, because they didn't have the support that they needed as a substance user. As we've heard already, NGOs that provide that kind of support for drug withdrawal, they were not allowed access to the site to visit... and support their clients."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace, referring to Figure 73.

Figure 73: Occupants carrying a friend to the Health Tent after he collapsed due to substance withdrawal, 18 April 2020; the man did not survive (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke).

While their stay at Strandfontein resulted in some individuals weaning off their drug dependency, participants made it clear that this was with no support from the City:

> *"The City kept on saying that the one good thing about Strandfontein is that so many people came off their drug additions. What they don't tell you is,* [that] *no help* [was forthcoming from] *them, because those people were puking, vomiting… they were having seizures during the first two weeks, before we complained about* [it] *to the Human Rights Commission. And their solution was the 4-pack that they give to everybody – Panado, very addictive Amitriptyline – Schedule 5 if I'm not mistaken, or 6, Tramadols, and Allergex. That was their answer for people that were coming off drugs."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Support and Care for those with Special Needs

Strandfontein provided no specialised support for those with special needs. It was reported that there were four individuals in wheelchairs who moved around the site with great difficulty.

Figure 74: Strandfontein's inappropriateness for disability (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

An occupant with his own mental health challenges volunteered to look after the needs of 12 frail and mentally challenged individuals, washing them and their soiled clothes daily. He made frequent requests to the operators of the various tents for assistance to address their basic and medical needs, which were largely ignored.

> *"What can I now do in here to make a difference?… I got myself involved with the frail care. And with the age care… Knowing that people are going to do absolutely nothing... You can see this person is dirty, you can see this person is smelling, you can see this person is shitting in his pants, and you just walking here past… I got each one of these 12* [people] *to be assessed by the medical doctor."* – John Hufkie, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"John took it upon himself to take care of about 14 people who were in Tent , with frail care needs and mental health needs. And every day John would, with a small team, they would wash the people who couldn't wash themselves. They would wash their clothes, often soiled during the night. John did this for weeks – he often used the soap that he had himself to shower with to wash others and himself… He had a list of everybody he was looking after, and he requested some items of*

clothing, because they only had one set of clothes; he requested a bucket – and that was finally granted on the 7th of May… they arrived on the 5th of April…" – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

Figure 75: John washing the clothes of elderly and disabled occupants, along with notes as per the presentation by Reverend Annie Kirke (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)
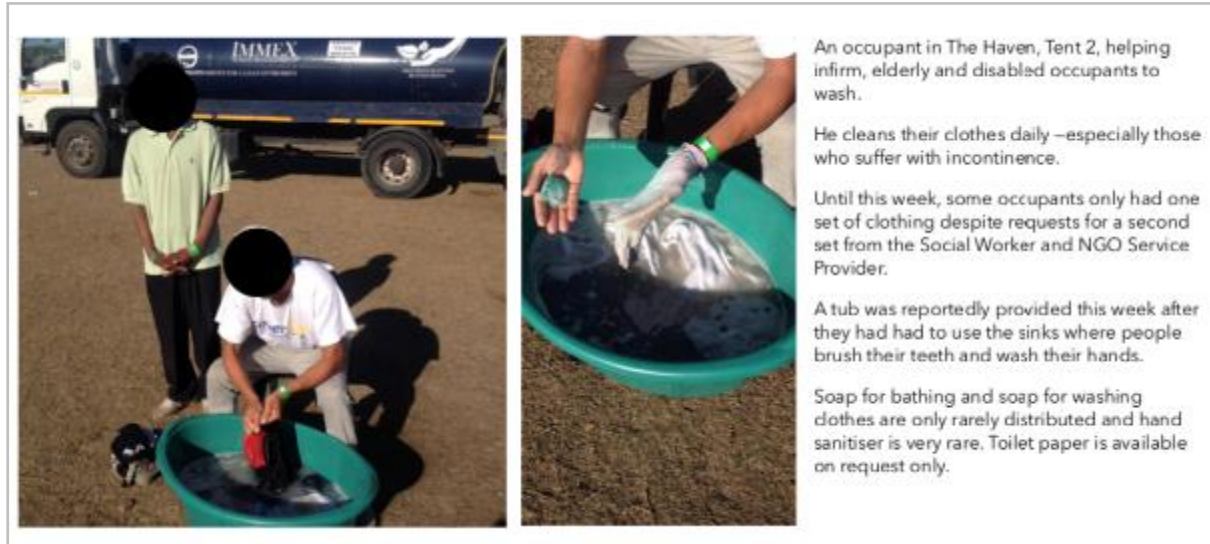
The individuals cared for by John were relocated from the site with no explanation given to him for where they had gone, despite multiple requests made by John.

DEATH

Participants who spoke of Strandfontein shared the traumatic experiences of the death of a fellow occupant. The treatment of this incident has left many angry, offended and traumatised.

"Just imagine there's Corona, and then a person dies in your tent – what do you expect… in a tent full of hundreds, hundreds of people? When one person died, and then there's a virus that is killing people outside?" – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"The first night that we were here… we woke up to a dead body. It took 11 to 12 hours for them actually take that body away… [during that time] *they left the body there in between everyone. We tried… to take it outside, and just give some respect to it, but we weren't allowed to."* – Audio recording of a man interviewed at Strandfontein, as presented by Reverend Annie Kirke.

"We woke up the next morning to a dead person in the tent… and that gentleman lay there throughout our breakfast, our lunch, and only before supper was he removed… He hadn't looked well, even at Culemborg. Understand that we don't know what we're dealing with with COVID, we had just arrived at this place, people were treating us as if we had COVID. And so, to wake up the next morning… he's not even waking up, and then we saw there was blood, and we didn't know what had happened…

People were scared, some of them, you know, realised there was no pulse and the person was not alive anymore… and the other thing that bugged us was, we asked every single person… please let us know… as soon as you know anything… It was so cold, everything to do with the medical

situation… they handled it in such a cold manner. That's why we got involved, because it was just, we could not handle the way these people were handling us… We were promised that we'd be notified as to what he had passed away from – to this day we have not heard a… word over the cause of his death…" – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I was with Boet Archie [at Culemborg]*… Boet Archie's legs were swollen before he died…"* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Do you know how many people left our tent [seeking medical attention]*, and we never heard where they'd gone?"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"There's been no… reports or no feedback with regards to people who left any of those tents where they stayed to go the health tent and didn't return. And a number of people didn't return. Or they went off in an ambulance and never came back." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

CLOTHING, HYGIENE AND ABLUTION

The basic needs of Strandfontein occupants were severely neglected with regard to their clothing and basic hygiene. In addition, the added hygiene requirements in response to COVID-19 were not being attended to adequately. From being denied donations and only given dirty clothing and used prison uniforms, to insufficient sanitation and hazardous hygiene conditions, occupants and SAHRC monitors were disgusted by the inadequacy of services provided by the City and the horrendous treatment meted out to the homeless population by certain service providers.

Hygiene

"Ons is almal geforseer in die tent in… ons het gevra vir toiletries, ons het gevra vir… spuitgoede… vir ons hande [hand sanitiser]*, hulle't niks soos daai vir ons gebring nie…"*

[Translation: "We have all been forced into this tent… we asked for toiletries, we asked for… spray… for our hands [hand sanitiser], they haven't brought us anything like that."] – A man interviewed at Strandfontein by Reverend Annie Kirke.

"…some of the issues that people are raising around toiletries not being available; toothpaste, toothbrushes weren't provided... I think for three weeks… [Women] *have often complained of not having access to sanitary towels or pads. These were some of the day-to-day realities."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"There was these bugs in and around there, because we were sleeping on those planks. Till this very day, I've got boils from that particular moment. Til this very day, I'm still living with boils, every day, no matter what I try… I'm still living with those boils… even now as I'm sitting here I have got four… from that particular camp that we thought we were going to be safe, and we were going to be treated with human dignity…" – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Ablution

"The water from the toilets, they say you must wash your hands [in protection against COVID-19]*, but the water is dirty, from the toilets."* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I was so disgusted with the toilet… and so I showed her [Reverend Annie Kirke] *a toilet that was infested with lice. Wherever you looked – basin, floor – it was just lice... Our pamphlet said that it's very important to wash your hands. There were 20 toilets? Now the 20 toilets also had basins, but of those 20 only two had running water (the basin)… those two had this brown liquid flowing out of it and it smelled like a sewer…"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 76: Contaminated water pumping from the tap in one of the toilets, 26 April 2020 (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

Video: Contaminated water pumping from the tap in one of the toilets. 26th April, 2020.

"Only two weeks ago we've been allowed to actually do washing with warm water… being given access to a basin. Otherwise, we… actually had to do our dishes, our washing, and our self-washing in the… same sink area… Only a week ago Jabulani gave us like soap to wash our clothes with… we've been here a month now." – A man audio-interviewed at Strandfontein by Reverend Annie Kirke.

Clothing

"…Seeing the donations coming in on a daily basis… we hardly ever got anything, and if they did, it was ladies stuff, and if it wasn't ladies stuff it was also oversized stuff. And we kept seeing this stuff, both at Culemborg and at Strandfontein, they had a blue tent that they kept filling with all the nice donations… The one Sunday they gave out clothing again and it was horrendous, I mean it was like that jacket that we saw just now [Figure 77]*, soiled clothing. And so, on the Monday morning very early… a group of guys…decided to go and with a knife open up the hoard tent, where they were keeping the stuff, and then rush into the tent… they didn't want to steal it to go and sell it, they wanted to show that the things that told us that they didn't have, like shoes. Brand new shoes, which we'd seen coming in in containers, so we knew it was in there… Of course, it was painted as if…we were being hooligans etc."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness, referring to Figure 77

Figure 77: Requests for clothing, with comments as per the presentation by Reverend Annie Kirke (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

SOCIAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Participants raised the lack of social care available at Strandfontein with great concern. Only one social worker was assigned to the site, serving The Haven Tent 2. With approximately 1 500 people on site, many of whom had complex needs, and in the light of a pandemic which has been globally recognised for its impact on mental health, Strandfontein was a developing human and social disaster.

> "…We begin by saying that homeless people are vulnerable and have complex needs, and then homeless people arrived at Strandfontein and there's nothing there… to respond to those needs appropriately…" – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

> "There was one social worker who was employed for the Haven Tent – and that was for 600 people. No other social workers for the remaining 1000 people." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

> "You know I was so amazed, in the sense that, there are NGOs assisting homeless people, but in Strandfontein there was none. We were all alone." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Those who experienced Strandfontein expressed their distress at the lack of support as well as the ill manner in which sensitive matters, such as special needs and the death of an occupant, were handled by site staff.

> "[The tent manager] *comes in and says… he comes right inside of the tent. He goes and said: 'All those that is mentally challenged, could they come to me.' I said* [to myself] *'Now how can these people think if they're mentally challenged?'… I said: 'You know, wait, wait, wait… listen here: you give me the price of a human life? Just tell me the price of a human life?'... A learned person go and engage with people like that…* [but with him] *it was just nonchalant."* – John Hufkie, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

There was great concern over the presence of minors on site, who would have been exposed to the horrific conditions described within this section. Based on a photo presented during The Inkathalo Conversations,

showing a child behind the Strandfontein fences (see Figure 78), a facilitator inquired as to what happened to children and whether there were acts of parent and child separation.

> "On the day that I went with Commissioner Nissen, which was on the 7th of April [two days into its opening], we saw three or four children in Tent 2… We reported it to… the Tent 2 Haven operator, and we reported it to the site manager. The site manager said that… on arrival, if any children had been found, they, with their parents, had been removed. But we said that's not true, there are children here… When we went back for the independent assessment, as we arrived at Tent 2, the only social worker was leaving the tented area with about – I'd need to check the figures – but, like, a line of minors, who had been found in Tent 2. So, there was still, even by the 11th, under-18s in the camp, who were then removed that day." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

> "We were totally shocked to see the kids there that first night… It was The Haven staff that, every time that visitors came, they used to… tell the mothers to hide their children so that, otherwise their children would be taken away from them. That was basically the threat that they were under. And so, the mothers used to hide them in the tents, and they would stand outside the tents. I'd say that the under-18s, I think there were 12 of them. There was separation, the kids were taken, eventually after the Human Rights Commissioner intervened, and the parents were left behind." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 78: Evidence of minors inside Strandfontein, date unknown (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

A SENSE OF IMPRISONMENT

The treatment of individuals is not only defined by verbal or physical actions but by the unconscious abuse that may be imposed on them. The injustices experienced at Strandfontein are representative of the everyday experiences of homeless individuals, explored in Chapters 1 and 4. During The Inkathalo Conversations, individuals recounted how the following conditions at Strandfontein reinforced the feeling that they were criminals:

- Law Enforcement and SAPS rounded up homeless individuals across the city, loading them into trucks, police vans, and busses. In contrast, Law Enforcement officers in the Bellville area agreed not to wear uniforms to facilitate the transportation process to Paint City, so that individuals would not feel as if they were being criminalised.

- Residents of Strandfontein were offered prison overalls as clothing.

- The site was enclosed, guarded by both private security and Law Enforcement, and occupants were not allowed to leave the site.

- Over 200 safety and security staff were deployed to the site, far exceeding staff offering any other form of care.

- Individuals were asked about their criminal history upon arrival.

- Access to lawyers was prohibited, as was access to the site by visitors who sought to help those within.

The comments to follow surface the common theme of criminalisation, the sense of imprisonment among Strandfontein occupants, and a complete disrespect for their human rights and dignity.

A Criminalising Approach

From the relocation to the arrival at Strandfontein, participants encountered various law enforcement agencies, including the SAPS, the City's Law Enforcement, and private security. When asked which agencies were present when individuals got on and off the buses, a participant responded:

> "Law Enforcement all the way. The Law Enforcement has to do the screening. It was Law Enforcement all the way. That's how we were treated. We were treated as if we were criminals." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> "150 private securities, and a hundred Law Enforcement, anytime... Going round and round and round, up and down the hills... [Sighs deeply] We were in any case being caged, so what were they doing?" – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The following further made individuals feel criminalised: a criminal check as part of their COVID-19 screening process; the searching of their belongings; taking of their photographs; and the assignment of a number to each occupant, as opposed to using their given names. Among the clothing given to occupants were prison clothes.

> "From there we then went... up to the area where we were going to be screened. At that area, the very first question asked was, 'Have you ever been arrested?... And at which police station?' – that was even before any questions pertaining to TB or COVID..." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> "After you've done all the screening, they take a picture of you... we had to hold numbers... so I asked, 'why are these pictures being taken, are we going to be shown on papers?' Nobody gave me an answer for that." – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> "I was number 331." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I was one of the first people on the bus, number 19." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I think it was Law Enforcement that searched us, you know… they take our bag and they throw it out and all our stuff's lying there and they look through it, and then they tell you pick it up, and there you go..." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"When we asked for the donations that were coming in by the busload, we got orange prison clothes." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Some members were given prison clothes to wear." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

Figure 79: Occupants in orange prison clothes (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

Captivity

Numerous accounts described feelings of captivity, imprisonment, and a lack of freedom of those who were at Strandfontein.

"Ons is aangehou soos gevangenise hierso."

[Translation**:** "We are being kept like prisoners here."]– A man video-interviewed at Strandfontein, recorded in the presentation by Reverend Annie Kirke.

"We were kept there as animals, treated as criminals – whereas this justice system of South Africa states and stipulates that every human being in this country has rights, but those rights were taken away from us." – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"...I've never been in jail, so going in there was very, very, very scary for me. These people – they didn't want to be there. It's like people were being treated like they were animals. They were there already [inside the tent] *and I needed to go in there... I got scared, I got very scared, and my thinking was okay, you've been living with HIV for how many years, so maybe it's my time, you know, time to go, you know, and maybe this is where it's gonna happen. So that's kinda what went through my mind..."* – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"...Instead of assisting people in a good manner so that they understand, [they were] *forcing people. I mean, you are taking their rights away, like* [they] *did not have a choice. I mean, do I have a choice, I mean, I need to know..."* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 80: A man pleading for assistance from outside the site (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

The Use of Force

An audience member during The Inkathalo Conversations referred to Strandfontein as *"another Marikana"*. This resonated with a participant, who referred to events during and at the closure of Strandfontein:

"It's the very same thing that happened to Marikana... We told everybody we are not moving... On that day, let me give you a picture – you see Tent 2, there is a fence – around the fence it was Law Enforcement [with] *live ammunition. Gave us how many minutes? Seven minutes to* [get on] *buses. If not, they're going to do what? To shoot us? I'm just giving you why it is the same as Marikana. And then people started to get scared..."* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"And then when we wanted answer, nobody answers. The only thing we get: rubber bullets... There was a guy, he was on crutches, when we were trying to fight with the Law Enforcement, they beat him with... those shield things." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"People managed to get out of some of the fenced areas quite early on at Strandfontein and were demanding services but also demanding to leave. And as you can see [in Figure 81]*, that Casspir-like vehicle has been mobilised. There's police here with batons, Law Enforcement with shields and*

batons and so on. And that became quite volatile. Definitely rubber bullets were fired that day, and reports of that were quickly quelled." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace, referring to Figure 81.

Figure 81: Occupants of Strandfontein demanding services outside of the fenced area (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

On 17 April a drug raid took place at Tent 2. The scenes described were violent, with Law Enforcement agents forcing occupants out, forcing their way into the tent, and assaulting people in the process. A 65-year-old man was reportedly assaulted, along with those who opposed the forceful entry.

"…they were searching people's belongings without the people being present. You know you've got to stand with your stuff when you're being searched… that's the protocol. And they came in with their dogs and they just shoved people out…" – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I was physically abused, basically, by Law Enforcement at Strandfontein. And God knows, He gave me strength to bypass seven of their riot people and actually enter the place, with the shields… I was emotional about the situation, that they wouldn't allow me, or anyone else, back into the tent while their sniffer dogs and drug units and gang units and everyone there, basically searching people's stuff…" – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 82: Haven Tent during a Law Enforcement raid, 17 April 2020 (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

"On the 17th of April, after allegations that a Haven member of staff was bringing drugs into the camp, and a number of other substances, and cigarettes were still being smuggled in, there was a raid at the tent… this was horrific… there was no communication, Law Enforcement just arrived, they came in, they demanded everybody in the tent get out of the tent. People… scrambled around to put their shoes on… people didn't have time, and so as people were asking just for time… and also to take some of their things, they need their money or their ID, or anything they wanted to protect, there was then conflict and Law Enforcement pushed them out." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"I also refused to have Carlos' things… taken, because he had things that were confidential about the committee… that we had formed, and… we couldn't afford to lose [that]*… It was so important that I put my body on the line for that."* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"They had a very unsuccessful one – a drug raid, the one day. And there were lots of drugs there. But as usual they were unsuccessful." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The overwhelming presence of Law Enforcement and the display of Law Enforcement's hardware – battons, shields, guns, dogs and caspers – exceeded the requirements of maintaining civility at the camp and became a show of force, intimidation, and threat to the oocupant population. For homeless people who experience daily and frequent Law Enforcement threats and raids in their daily lives on the streets, the 24-hour presence and visibility of over 300 Law Enforcement officers with riot gear equipment rapidly moved from the maintenance of civility to the forceful infliction of trauma on the homeless occupant population. The presence of the officers was no longer to maintain peace and calm, but to transfer messages of intimidation. Any trauma specialist will be able to confirm that the short term response to such visible intimidation and threat will be one of protest, anger and, ultimately, rejection violence. A clash between the two groups would be inevitable.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Aside from the obvious concerns about human rights violations, individuals at Strandfontein also faced obstacles in accessing justice.

> *"So my question was, why is the* [response] *so fast when it's one of us that has done something wrong, but when it's one of the Law Enforcement officers* [that does something wrong]*, nothing is being done about it?"* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Access to J88 Forms

According to Medical Protection South Africa[136], "*the J88 is a legal document that is completed by a medical doctor or registered nurse, documenting injuries sustained by the victim in any circumstance where a legal investigation is to follow. It may be the only objective information available in a legal case*."

> *"… Lance, after he was assaulted by Law Enforcement, went to two hospitals to… be seen by a doctor and requested* [a] *J88. He wanted to open up a case. He was refused* [a] *J88 in both hospitals, and he was also not taken to a police station by the site management. He was refused access to justice in that way."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

After obtaining injuries in a clash with Law Enforcement during a drug raid, Lance Fish required medical assessment:

> *"They took me to Mitchell's Plain. They said they don't have any J88 forms for me to fill out there, they can't see me. All of a sudden these guys don't have* [any] *J88 forms. And then it came to Somerset, and Victoria Hospitals as well, they all said, 'no sorry we don't have any J88 forms at this hospital, you should actually go the police station first and pick that up'… almost like they're blocking you from basically… reporting this injustice."* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In response, Carlos Mesquita explained further:

> *"Even a prisoner has access to a lawyer. There are basic human rights, no matter who you are, criminal or not. We were not criminals! The whole scenario at Strandfontein was,* [that there was] *no access to police, because you couldn't lay the charge, and when you went to hospital – it's not only Lance, we had uncle Derek as well… a 65 year old man that was also accosted by the Law Enforcement and he had a cut this deep in his eye socket – also, nothing."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Missing or Removed Identification Documents (IDs)

As discussed in Chapter 4, many homeless individuals have experienced the loss or removal of their IDs during encounters with law enforcement agencies, such as the removals to Strandfontein. Removal of an individual's ID is a criminal offence as it constitutes a stripping of one's rights as a citizen. Without an

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[136] Medical Protection South Africa*: https://www.medicalprotection.org/southafrica/junior-doctor/volume-5-issue-2/the-j88-not-just-another-medical-form*

identity document, an individual cannot redeem a social grant, vote, obtain access certain education and healthcare services, open a bank account, or apply for a job. Replacing an identity document is both financially burdensome and time consuming.

> *"This is a list of everybody who lost their IDs during their removal to Strandfontein, and they wanted to have them… replaced. We've heard already over the last couple of weeks a number of situations where homeless people have their ID documents removed by Law Enforcement on the street. And this was another… example, a number of people had lost their IDs."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace*, referring to Figure 83.

Figure 83: List of confiscated, lost, or stolen ID documents as presented by Reverend Annie Kirke (blurred for the protection of personal information; Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)
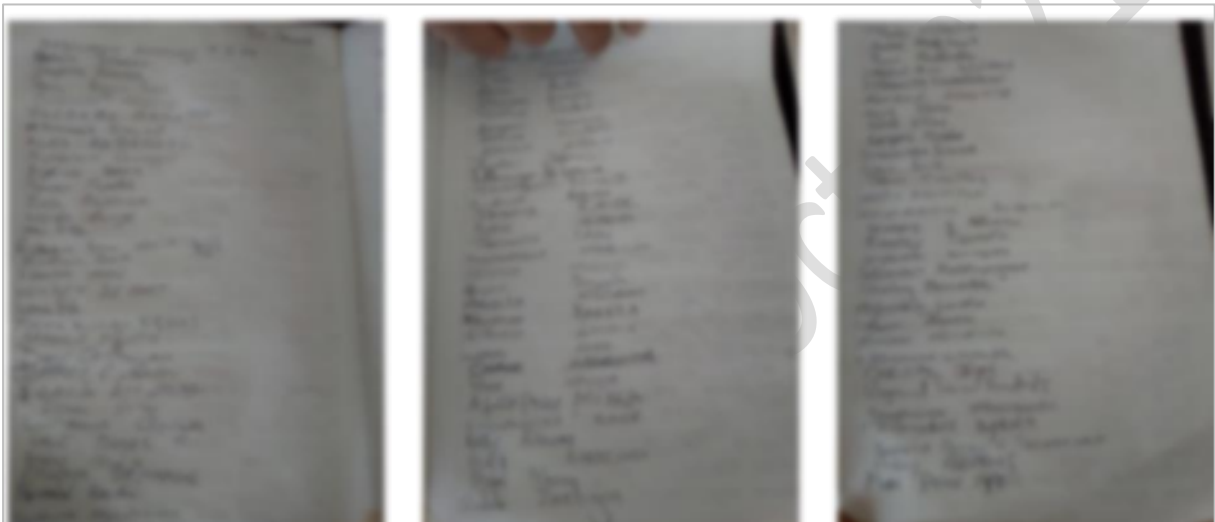
ILLICIT ECONOMY

Presentations and comments about Strandfontein described the existence of an illicit economy at the site. Occupants and human rights monitors reported what they had witnessed.

> *"I explained to her what was happening with regards to illicit trading, be it drugs – everything was available there – cigarettes at R30* [each] *etc. Security guards even bought sex, and then had sex in our kitchen area at night, for R20. So, everything was, you know, available to be sold at Strandfontein… They took everything off people, they knew people were desperate for cigarettes, they weren't doing their drugs… so they needed cigarettes. The ones who could afford it were doing drugs as well… These hampers* [of bread, sugar and peanut butter supplied by Jabulani] *were very sought after by the security guards and by the service providers…"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 84: Illicit economy, 18 April 2020, as presented by Reverend Annie Kirke (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

With reference to Figure 84, Carlos Mesquita explained that service providers would bring items into the camp in exchange for payment in the form of food or money. He was asked to clarify what the man circled in red in Figure 84 was doing:

> *"Is the man in the circle taking food for sale to the truck? And how much money would he get for that?"* – Lorenzo Davids, Lead Facilitator: The Inkathalo Conversations

To which Carlos Mesquita responded:

> *"He's taking it* [food] *to the truck. He's going to pay the guy for whatever he's brought, whether it be dagga or whatever* [drugs, cigarettes, etc.] *he brought that day."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"One of the reasons the illicit economy flourished was because of the complete restriction of people's rights of movement and their rights to, for example, go and collect their SASSA grants, access their own bank accounts, go outside of Strandfontein to a shop and buy things that they might need… A question regularly asked is: 'why is there no shop here where we can purchase things if we're not allowed off site, but why can't we go to the shop and buy these things that we need?' "* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

CONTRASTING CULEMBORG AND STRANDFONTEIN

As a matter of comparison, Reverend Annie Kirke provided a summary of the Culemborg Safe Space and Strandfontein as comparative COVID-19 responses:

Culemborg	Strandfontein
• 250 independent tents • Access to Grants and Special Needs	• 600 people initially in Tent 2 – reduced to 400 in Tent 2 and 278 in Tent 5 • No access to Grants and Special Needs

• Permits to leave site for up to 3 hours per day • Access to clean drinking water, ablutions (noted only cold water) and toilets • Three meals per day	• Access to cold drinking water (which was removed after the first few days, and so people made coffee/tea using shower water) • Access to toilets – contaminated water reported in hand basins • Access to showers – lukewarm water • Same sinks to brush teeth, wash plates and clothes • Three meals per day (varying quality but mostly sub-standard, including lice found in some meals)

"[At Culemborg] you were allowed out for about three hours per day in order to go and do whatever you needed to do, be it go to the bank… or if you had medical issues, go and get certain things that you needed to eat, if diabetic… they gave you a permit and you went out. You were fed three times a day…"
– Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 85: Culemborg Safe Space 2 (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

Figure 86: Occupants kicking at fencing from within the Strandfontein site (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

THE END OF STRANDFONTEIN

On 29 April 2020, the City announced the phased closure of Strandfontein. Dr Zahid Badroodien, in a press release, stated that no further intakes will be conducted at Strandfontein and envisioned that the site would be decommission by the 20th of May 2020. Buses and trucks began to arrive over the next 4 weeks to transport people to various shelters and back to the streets. A court order obtained by a group of residents had ruled that a group of 31 individuals (exposed to COVID-19) were to be relocated to a quarantine site. The lack of planning around the exit concerned occupants and led the Strandfontein Homeless Action Committee (SHAC) to resist a mass exit, demanding that COVID-19 safety protocols be followed. The SHAC called on the SAHRC for support in managing the exit process. The City responded by banning human rights monitors from entering the site from 30 April 2020 and proceeded with court action against them.

The dialogue to follow captures the main developments over the course of a few days.

Leaving Strandfontein

> *"Based on what happened on the 29th of April 2020, which we later found out was the fact that the City decided to not go any further with these court cases, because they had the Human Rights Commission on the one hand, there was a big problem with the ratepayers – and so they decided, with all the bad press they're getting, they are going to close the camp.*
>
> *Now that put them in a very big predicament, because they had got a thousand, by that stage it was 1600 people left in that camp, and if they're gonna close it by the 20th of May, which they announced on the 30th* [of April]*, then they're gonna have* [a] *problem because… there's gonna be no place to put these people… There are not 1600 beds available in Cape Town, at that point in time especially, because the shelters were already full.*
>
> *So, their solution to this was: they knew people were very eager to get to their banks, and to do things on the outside. So* [they decided to implement a system] *if you wanted to do your things, you'd have to leave the camp and you could not come back. So they gave people an opportunity, as of the 1st of May, to leave the camp."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.
>
> *"People wanted to leave already on the 30th* [of April] *because they made the announcement on the 30th after the court case. And then on the 1st* [of May] *they released about 700 to 800 people…"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.
>
> *"With the build-up that there was, that people wanted to get to shops etc., the City used this to their advantage so that they had less people to work with."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Due to the lack of a comprehensive exit and decommissioning plan by the City of Cape Town for the Strandfontein site, as well as their realisation that they did not have the approximately 1600 beds available in the City to relocate the Strandfontein occupants to, they used the strategy of saying to people that if they wanted to go to the shop, bank, SASSA office, day hospital to do their thing, they could do so, but they

would not be allowed to return to the camp. These occupants who exercised this right would have to make plans to take their possessions with them. In this rather devious manner the City created a system of natural attrition to reduce the number of occupants that they had to find alternative bed space for.

At this point, the Strandfontein Homeless Action Committee (SHAC) challenged the City's decision to send everyone back to the streets. They were sceptical that suitable accommodation had been arranged and concerned about the lack of controls to prevent the spread of COVID-19. They requested that the SAHRC be invited to mediate the way forward.

> *"You* [the City] *told us that we had a choice – do we want to go back onto the streets, do we want to go back to Culemborg which had been built up as a site, or do we want to go to the shelters, existing shelters… On the 29th* [of April] *that happened, and on the 30th they announced: 'those of you that want to go back to the streets or wherever you came from, you're welcome, we'll organise you transport. You'll not be dropped off where we picked you up, but you'll be dropped off at the nearest police station'…*
>
> *We said* [to them that] *the Human Rights Commissioner must come in as a mediator… We don't want to fight them* [the City]. *We want to tell them do not do this,* [because] *it's criminal. They don't know… whether* [any occupants] *contracted Corona…* [They did not] *know who might have* [been infected]*… but they were gonna let people out… We didn't know where those people were going to end up.* [We were still under lockdown conditions and they said to us they were] *supposed to look after us until after lockdown, that's what they said they were going to do."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

SAHRC Monitors Banned

On 30 April 2020, the SAHRC monitors were denied access to Strandfontein, having been accused of inciting violence and revolt amongst the occupants. The City of Cape Town sought a court order to prevent SAHRC monitors from entering and monitoring Strandfontein. This prohibition led to confrontations between the occupants and those guarding the site as a group of individuals within the site formed a protective barrier around SAHRC monitors, bringing them into the camp.

> *"This was the piece of paper that I was handed on the 30th* [of April] *– no logo, no letterhead, no signature. I was told it had been passed down from the City, so from an official… no name on it. So, from this moment on we as the monitors who had been there since the start were barred from coming in. We were accused of inciting violence and revolt… From that moment the City of Cape Town sought a court order to prevent the South African Human Rights Commission from monitoring Strandfontein any further."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace, referring to Figure 87.

Figure 87: Notice to the SAHRC Monitors, 30 April 2020 (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)
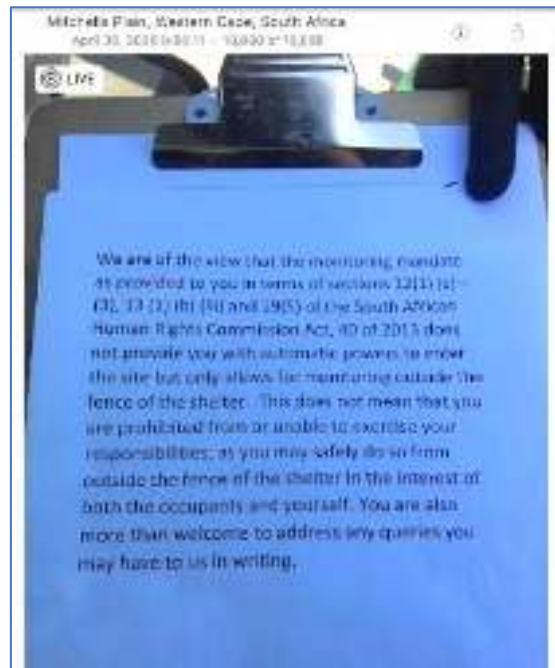
"Here you've got a group of people waiting to come mediate – not incite violence – mediate, between the City and us… security guards came, Law Enforcement, and everybody. And so one of the human rights monitors, Zelda, put her foot on the middle line of the gate, and so they arrested her. She wasn't on this side of the gate… they arrested her. And so, when the gate was opened to arrest her, Mr Monwabisi… and his group came and formed a semi-circle around the human rights monitors and they were leading them into the camp… that's [when they] *started throwing the teargas, etc. We were peacefully just standing there… the place where we had a meeting. And the SAPS… escorted the human rights monitors safely out of the camp because they were threatened by Law Enforcement… because we were threatened by Law Enforcement again… so the SAPS came and actually saved the day."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 88: Returning to the streets, 1 May 2020 (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

Back to Culemborg

"It's the very same thing that happened to Marikana. A day before… we left Strandfontein… we had three papers [lists] *on our table.The list indicated people who wants to go to Culemborg, who wants to go to shelters, who wants to go… back to the streets…. The people, as part of the people who wanted to go to Culemborg, we told them* [the officials] *that we are not moving until they finish the site* [referring to the completion of the Culemborg Extension Site]*… We told everybody we are not moving. On that day, let me give you a picture – you see Tent 2, there is a fence – around the fence it was Law Enforcement* [with] *live ammunition. Law Enforcement gave us seven minutes to board the buses. What were they going to do? To shoot us. I'm just giving you why it is the same as Marikana. And then people started to get scared…"* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"We had four people that opted for shelters like The Haven. We had 178 opting for Culemborg, and we had 17 people opting for the streets. The street people left on the 14th of May. The people that were going to shelters obviously went to the shelters when the camp closed on the 20th of May. And then we had those of us that had given our names to the City that wanted to go to the Culemborg site that they had advertised. At that point in time they had now decided to withdraw Culemborg as an option, because… the Culemborg buildings hadn't been completed as yet. So that is where our court case changed and we demanded to know where we were going to on closure of the camp, and also what services would be provided… From the 14th of May we demanded to be quarantined as well." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"The group that… had contact with [an occupant who had tested positive for COVID-19] *were meant to be taken to the Lagoon Beach Hote,l which had been set up as a quarantine site. And when they were taken there on Thursday the 21st of May, they arrived only to find that they weren't expecting this group at all… so then they waited… maybe three hours… before they were then taken back to Strandfontein…"* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

To this Carlos Mesquita added:

"We then went to Melkbosstrand… this was supposed to be our last day at Strandfontein. And they had just come with their court order and we… didn't want to jeopardise anything, we had the court case going etc…. out of the blue we were put onto this bus… All the committee was going, so we appointed people that could report to us what was happening at the camp, because they were supposed to now leave for Culemborg. And so we went on a seven… eight hour journey to nowhere… our cell phones went dead, we couldn't speak to the lawyers, the lawyers were in overnight discussions with the City… We didn't ask for anything but accommodation at Culemborg, which we had been promised and to be tested and quarantined… On that night, the lawyers are going on. The lawyers could not get hold of me, they can't get hold of Anda… and we are going from pillar to post.

From Blouberg they send us to the Melkbos… Cultural Centre. The lady there said to us that they're not expecting us either. The few good officers in Law Enforcement are usually the higher-ranking ones, and so two of them came to calm us and to tell us we're going back to Strandfontein. On arrival at Strandfontein, what a surprise, the group that was supposed to have gone to Culemborg was also still there. So on the 20th we felt our first victory, because they wanted to close the whole Strandfontein camp by the 20th, and we kept it open another day…" – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"On the 21st, those that were meant to go to quarantine were then taken again on a bus. This time they were taken to the Signature Hotel, which wasn't set up as a quarantine site… and what we subsequently discovered… was that they were there just for a few days and then they woke up one morning and Law Enforcement ordered them all out [of the hotel] *again. [They]* put them in a van, and then dumped them under the bridge at Culemborg. So, they never actually went through a quarantine and testing process, after that had been agreed [to]."* – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"The court order stipulated that the City was to provide accommodation to the group represented by SHAC; that accommodation had to include medical facilities on site, three meals a day. The City had then come up and said but they're not ready with the site, and the site will only be ready on the 11th of May. It was very, very ugly of the City to dump us [at Culemborg]. [We ended up living at and] *looking into, you know, through the fence, at a completed structure – all the structures were there, it was just the water that had not been connected – leaving a group of 178 people outside of an area which was supposed to be our home, according to the court."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"When we came out of Strandfontein, we were dumped outside of Culemborg… on that first Sunday it was raining heavily… a lot of people didn't have their tents anymore, and those of us that did, they're summer tents, they don't take rain and wind very well." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Figure 89: Leaving Strandfontein, 1 May 2020 (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

A CATALYST FOR SOCIAL ORGANISATION

In the absence of NGOs and support structure within Strandfontein, homeless individuals came together to form a committee that sought to engage meaningfully with occupants and other stakeholders. Naming themselves the Strandfontein Homeless Action Committee (SHAC). This group built grassroots support and represented the needs of those within the site as a unified voice. As the events of Strandfontein unfolded, the SHAC became the voice of occupants to service providers, site management, the media, lawyers, the SAHRC, and the City, even taking the City to court. Subsequent to Strandfontein, the SHAC renamed themselves the Homeless Action Committee, seeking to represent the cause of homeless individuals in the City as a recognised social organisation.

> *"Our initial meeting with the City was actually not to criticise the City… we had listed all the problems that we are listing here now, and our problem was with their service providers. So, we were saying, please speak to us… they decided to not recognise us as a committee… And so we started working towards the lawsuit against the City of Cape Town with the Lawyers for Human Rights. And our initial thing was gonna be about the service provision. That started changing after that day…"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"When we sent our amendment papers, they stole our first amendment papers! I had to call people again, convince people, people let's stay together, let's do this, let's fight this system."* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"We tried to build something that can actually stand, and stand for our rights as homeless people…* [Strandfontein] *gave us an opportunity* [in spite of] *every homeless individual being kept as captives there. Because what we really wanted to do was speak out to each and every homeless person to try and understand our concept and what we stand for… We wanted to speak about certain things that were happening, injustices that was happening within the camp, but knowing*

that it was gonna be broader… Now it has even grown from what we saw. Because from there we saw a small picture of it without looking at the bigger picture.

But we came across and we started to put our heads together and see things quite differently – where this thing can go. It has grown to what it is – today we are sitting all here having these conversations. But we also need to focus on what's really there, what's really on the core values, and what the sector is not doing right, what the sector has been failing in for the people that are homeless… they pretend to understand what the cause of homelessness is…" – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"See what came out of Strandfontein? A committee. I think that is also empowering by uplifting homeless people." – Tina Brandt, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The formation of the Strandfontein Homeless Action Committee was the clearest indicator of the agency of marginalised people in an oppressive ecosystem that parades under the banner of care but silences engagement. SHAC is an indicator of what capacities exist within the homeless ecosystem if people are given the opportunities for self expression and sociological leadership. The purity of agency is most powerful when it arises out of the corrupted soils of disempowerment and incarceration.

TRAUMATIC REFLECTIONS ON STRANDFONTEIN

Those who shared their experiences of Strandfontein relayed its deeply traumatic impact:

"If you see the pictures of the tent, you see the size of it, the… number of people in the tent… That's a concentration camp, it really is... People say at least you had something to eat, at least you had a safe space to sleep. The idea, basically, of… endangering people's lives with a disease, COVID-19, Coronavirus, for example, disrespecting them like that… that's what happens in concentration camps. They actually used to do it… where they say well just put them all together so that everyone catches it and dies, and we've got a reason to eliminate or reduce the numbers in our city… so it's the whole ideology of the workings of concentration camps, that is basically what we were exposed to." – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Strandfontein was the worst experience in my life. My family told me to come home, but I stayed there, I don't know why… We were the biggest targets of getting Corona and the officials didn't care." – Kevin Pillay, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Six weeks is like six years in that place." – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"The despair and the anger and the trauma that we just saw deepened… and really just signs of chaos… just really horrifying scenes." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"Strandfontein… is an issue I think I will carry… for the rest of my life…" – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

In an emotional account, Lance Fish spoke of an opportunity he had to regard the site from the outside, thanks to an intervention by Reverend Annie Kirke:

"I looked up into the camp, and… I looked up and I said this isn't right [became emotional]*… and then I broke down* [started crying]*…"* – Lance Fish, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"And when he saw it from the outside – because if you live in it, we actually became so used to the violations against us, that we no longer became emotional about it – but when [Reverend Annie Kirke] *took him out and they were having a talk and he looked out at the tent from outside, then he saw the horror that we were in. That's when he broke down."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"You people took us to Strandfontein – you destroyed our lives in Strandfontein…" – Oliver, an individual who has experienced homelessness, in response to the City of Cape Town's Social Deveopment Department's presentation

Many expressed their trauma over the death of Boet Archie:

"*Boet Archie died there… imagine if there was Corona and someone died in the tents… and there is a virus that is killing people outside. And when we wanted answers, there were only rubber bullets*." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"The second day there a person that was found dead… I was one of the first people to see that particular guy. And what was done about it?" – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"I lost a dear friend… He was dying there that morning, they let him lay there for the whole day… We as human beings, from this tent, could have died, like our best friend. I want to ask you – how do you sleep at night?... But I hope and I pray that God must forgive you." – Oliver, an individual who has experienced homelessness, in response to the City of Cape Town's Social Development Department's presentation.

Carlos Mesquita mentioned on numerous occasions that the trauma was starting to show itself amongst

residents at Our House, a temporary living arrangement accommodating some individuals after Strandfontein. Now that individuals have had a safe place to live, albeit temporarily, their experiences were beginning to catch up with them – he noted incidents of outbursts and arguments.

> *"Nothing has been as traumatic* [as Strandfontein]*… when all is said and done, and people start calming down and getting to their jobs etc, then that trauma will manifest."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

> *"There's also good that came out of Strandfontein, but you can't hide the fact that we still go through that particular trauma – because* [this] *trauma is something that we* [will] *go through for the rest of our lives, because you can forgive but you can never forget what really happened."* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

REFLECTIONS ABOUT AND BY STAKEHOLDERS

Those who shared their experiences regarding Strandfontein reflected on what this event depicts about the value placed on the lives of those experiencing homelessness. These reflections could be grouped on three levels, with associated comments in the pages to follow:

- **Reflections on NGOs and Service Providers** – The treatment and behaviour of service providers emerged as a significant concern. Recognising that the service providers contracted to Strandfontein continue to provide services to homeless individuals in the city, these reflections by Strandfontein occupants and other stakeholders are noteworthy.
- **Reflections on the Government and the City of Cape Town's Actions** – Reflections surfaced about the City of Cape Town's actions and the response from government agencies, begging the question: who was Strandfontein set up to protect? Many of the decisions made regarding Strandfontein are still the subject of litigation and continue to receive media attention. The Inkathalo Conversations reaffirmed the need for a dedicated inquiry into Strandfontein and what has been described as a human rights violations.
- **Reflections on the Soul of the City** – Stakeholders maintained that Strandfontein was symptomatic of a deeper societal attitude towards homeless individuals, described in Chapter 1. The reflections should challenge our humanity and call into question our individual responsibility towards one another as human beings, recognising that the treatment faced by homeless individuals is an indication of a deep collective brokenness.

Figure 91: Strandfontein site welcome sign, reading "If you are safe = We are safe!!!" (Source: Reverend Annie Kirke)

Reflections on NGOs and Service Providers

"There were three… groupings of NGOs that were appointed to provide services to the City of Cape Town at Strandfontein. It was Ubuntu Circle of Courage… it was Oasis, and it [was] *then The Haven… All the tents had logos on… when they tried to put up The Haven logo, it was pulled down by the residents of Tent 2."* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Haven Night Shelter… there's a guy called [mentions name] *there,* [he said]*, 'I'm just a messenger'…"* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"The occupants of Tent 2 refused to let The Haven logo be put up on the tent… I think that was a powerful moment for the occupants really to stand up and say no – to the abusive treatment, the service, lack of services, and the administrative corruption which they wanted to highlight…" – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"Oasis gave us the [opportunity] *of living properly… They were very well organised, we got clothing, we got the right things we needed. They came to interact with us, came to find our problems, they took us to our homes to see who can be reintegrated into family lifestyle…"* – Michael Eaves, an audience member and individual who has experienced homelessness.

"For me, Ubuntu Circle of Courage were the best service provider at Strandfontein." – Tina Brandt, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"Those guys, I asked them each and every day when I had an argument with them, that, 'Do you have children? What do you say to your kids when you go [home]*…how was work?' You know when you are working, you come home… your wife asks you, 'hey, how was work?' What do you tell your wife? How was work? The way they were treating people at Strandfontein… feeding people sour food."* – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"A group of pastors were invited to Strandfontein, essentially to give it… a stamp of approval. And one of the things they were told was that they weren't going to be able access any of those tented areas and speak to anybody. And so Carlos and others watched this group of pastors walk around with the Mayor, staring at them, you know, spectating from afar. And these people, locked up, whose human rights are being degraded, violated, just faced with so much cruelty – and just not able to reach anyone for assistance. Watching the church, essentially, walk around and leave, without even one conversation… and not even questioning that they were being refused access, just being complicit. And they subsequently came back for a church service, the group of pastors with the Mayor, and a stage was set up at a distance, and songs were sang at people… some people would kind of scale the fences and were singing…" – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

To this, Carlos Mesquita added:

"[The stage] *was far… it was a huge stage, and they were performing for a group of 30 individuals, the top brass of the City… we were not allowed to* [attend]*… It was not for us…"* – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

The co-option of religion by the state to provide justification for inhumane conditions and practices is a well known practice throughout the world. The silence of religious leaders amid the visible pain, hardship and injustice, made this co-option a far deeper violation than most others. The fact that a religious environment was created that preached and prayed for the occupants but would not allow any engagement with any of occupants or give any of the occupants access to the presence of a caring community is a complete violation of the very tenets of compassionate religion. What was portrayed by religious leaders at Strandfontein was a bizarre ritual of political loyalty and moral emasculation.

Reflections on the Actions of the Government and the City of Cape Town

"The City has not taken a single responsibility… There's no way that one moves on without taking responsibility for their own actions…" – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness, in response to the City's Social Development presentation.

"They had planned for Strandfontein as a homeless holding cell." – Carlos Mesquita, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"…Right at the heart of things, I'd say, there's an ideology that we have to be frank about, and I think that's why people want to talk about Strandfontein, because otherwise… we're being asked to embrace cognitive dissonance – because Strandfontein came out of that ideology. The fact that we begin by saying that homeless people are vulnerable and have complex needs, and then homeless people arrived at Strandfontein and there's nothing there… to respond to those needs appropriately…" – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace, in response to the City of Cape Town's Social Development Department's Presentation.

"We showed these guys around… when they came here, and these guys still said, 'ja, this is not right, we're going to do something about it'. But nobody really did anything about it. And today

we're still sitting here and expecting the government to do something about what really happened at Strandfontein… I love what this gentleman… mentioned the other day that, that was Marikana, because our human rights was taken away from us, in the particular sense that the government was well aware that that particular things was happening… We're doing this process [The Inkathalo Conversations]*, and we're hoping this process will work, but will the government this time come around?"* – Anda Mazantsana, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

"From a management perspective of Strandfontein, serious questions need to be asked about who was contracted to manage that site, appointed, and the tender process. Why was a Law Enforcement officer put in charge of essentially a health and quarantine site during COVID-19? He had no prior experience with ever running anything like that... where were the protocols, the SOPs – the standard operating procedures – there appeared to be none." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"My sixth sense, it never tell me a lie. So, I would just like to know… is there still personal vendettas against Strandfontein people and the court case that our committee won against you? Because everywhere I also go, I am being followed. Even profiled…" – Alice (not her real name), an individual who has experienced homelessness, in response to the City of Cape Town's Social Development Department's presentation

"All of us are needed to resolve the challenges that we are faced [with] *Strandfontein really leaves trauma with people, that needs not to be omitted. We need to look at that* [as] *a serious matter..."* – Councillor Ncumisa Mahangu, City of Cape Town

Reflections on the Soul of the City: What Does Strandfontein Say About Us?

Participants in The Inkathalo Conversations had the following reflections about what Strandfontein reveals about the soul of the City.

"It's not like the City went rogue. Something there deeply reflected what is the day-to-day reality of homeless people in the City." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"Listening over yesterday and the conversations last week, I feel like we are getting to this point of the systemic reality of homelessness and the injustices, human rights violations, corruption, the economic landscape… and the active role players who played a role in perpetuating that." – Reverend Annie Kirke, Human Rights Monitor/More Than Peace

"It probably is the most visible insight into how some people are human, and others are fodder. Humans dress up to protect themselves, the rest are scum that may die, and hopefully they die – that's what that picture [

Figure 65] *tells me… You take people off the streets to be safe, and then this is what you qualify as safety. As a City, we should be ashamed of ourselves. That we took people who were sleeping on their own, to protect themselves, practicing their own social distancing on the streets, and shoved them into tents of five hundreds, and queues of a hundred; it just boggles my mind. There's a fundamental problematic narrative here… this is not justice. When NGOs can dress… themselves up in the best PPE… to protect themselves and their staff, but will let homeless people stand body to body, not caring if any of them may die – that's not the democracy we fought for…"* – Lorenzo Davids, Lead Facilitator: The Inkathalo Conversations, referring to

Figure 65.

"You can go to the streets… if you wanna look at a picture, how homeless people have been treated: Strandfontein. Go to Strandfontein. Strandfontein will tell you." – Monwabisi Sijaji, HAC/an individual who has experienced homelessness.

PART IV: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PHASE ONE OF THE INKATHALO CONVERSATIONS

1. RECOMMENDATIONS AT AN ECOSYSTEM LEVEL
- **A. Recommendations on our Duty to Deepen Democracy, Justice, and Humanity**
- **B. Recommendation on Intergovernmental Coordination**
- **C. Recommendation on Broader Housing Policy Considerations**
- **D. Recommendation on Prevention Strategies**
- **E. Recommendation on the Decriminalisation of Homelessness**
- **F. Recommendation on Socio-economic Levers**
- **G. Recommendation on Education and Skills Development**
- **H. Recommendation on Community Involvement and Active Citizenship**
- **I. Recommendation on Responsible Giving Campaigns**
- **J. Recommendation on Addressing the Legacy of Strandfontein**

2. RECOMMENDATIONS THAT ADDRESS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STREET PEOPLE POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY
- **A. Recommendation on Establishing the Rights of Homeless Individuals**
- **B. Recommendation on Policy Direction and Coordination**
- **C. Recommendation on Data Management and Integration**
- **D. Recommendation on Permanent Housing, Accommodation and Tenure**
- **E. Recommendation on Traditional Shelter and Safe Space Interventions**
- **F. Recommendation on Intervention Framework for Holistic Development**
- **G. Recommendation on Socio-economic Development Opportunities for Homeless Individuals**
- **H. Recommendation on Inclusivity, Health, Safety, and Security**
- **I. Recommendation on Ablution and Storage Facilities**

3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONS AND PROGRAMMES
- **A. Recommendation on Existing Shelters and Safe Spaces Interventions**
- **B. Recommendation on Substance Use Interventions**
- **C. Recommendation on Socio-economic Interventions**
- **D. Recommendation on Psychosocial and Family Support**
- **E. Recommendation on Grief and Bereavement Counselling**
- **F. Recommendation on Co-Creation of Interventions and 'Client' Feedback**

The recommendations are compiled largely from the written and oral submissions made by participants in Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations, while some recommendations are informed by the synthesis of emergent conversations and what was heard during the dialogues (as captured in detail in Part III).

While Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations sought to provide recommendations into the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* and the development of a strategy, the recommendations received during the conversations were found to be applicable beyond the reaches of the *Street People Policy.* The recommendations received from participants may have meaningful implications for stakeholders at National, Provincial, and city level, as well as for civil society organisations, communities, and individuals.

It is to be noted that The Inkathalo Conversations was not a policy review process, but a pre-public participation process to receive public input for an upcoming policy review process. As such, the recommendations do not seek to address elements of the current policy directly unless raised by participants.

The recommendations have been structured in a manner that seeks to support meaningful reflection and action at multiple levels within the ecosystem. The recommendations are grouped as follows, and are further categorised under each heading:

1. **Recommendations at an Ecosystem Level;**
2. **Recommendations that Address the Development of a Street People Policy and Development of a Strategy; and**
3. **Recommendations for Interventions and Programmes.**

The recommendations ask, 'how might we respond?' The word 'might' is an invitation to re-imagine – an appreciative inquiry into the praxis of homelessness, and an invitation to think critically about what is emerging in the system in a new way by using creative, critical and problem-solving mindsets.

The recommendations also serve as thought pieces, to provoke, challenge, and stimulate our collective thinking. While the report intends to invite new thinking about the concepts, practices, and structuresthat constitute the current ecosystem, it seeks to question the intentions of these thinking frames, in the hope that we will continually seek to strengthen, undo, and re-commit ourselves and our efforts towards the common good.

The preamble to the Constitution calls on us all to "*heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights*" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Democracy is deepened when our collective contemplations and their ensuing narratives are willing to place our most vulnerable and marginalised individuals in the centre of our nation building, economic prosperity, and justice conversations, and they are acknowledged and responded to with due recognition of their kindred humanity and dignity. The Inkathalo Conversations was conducted through a dialogical approach. As a result, the process surfaced deep insights and rich ideas that invite us all to engage with "*a profound love for the world and for people… an intense faith in humankind, faith in their power to make and remake, to create and re-create, faith in their vocation to be more fully human*" (Freire, 1968).

1. RECOMMENDATIONS AT AN ECOSYSTEM LEVEL

A. RECOMMENDATIONS ON OUR DUTY TO DEEPEN DEMOCRACY, JUSTICE, AND HUMANITY

Recommendation 1:

1.1 All laws, by-laws, policies, strategies, and implementation plans must be reviewed by competent persons from government, academia, and civil society for adherence to national and international standards, including compliance with the Constitution and United Nations protocols on dealing with vulnerable or marginalised individuals. Kindly refer to Chapter 4 and the Special Feature on Strandfontein for context.

1.2 The State should bring a diverse group of agents and civil society actors together with the State to develop a Social Contract, Social Covenant, or Social Compact, which we'll refer to as The Social Contract. This must become an overarching framework to establish the guidelines, mechanisms, and underlying values for discussion and organisation towards the collective goal of conducting constitutionally-aligned dialogues in alleviating and eradicating homelessness in a manner that cuts across institutions, sectors, organisations, and government planning horizons.

1.3 Recommendations in the study *Evaluating the Impacts of the Cape Town Street People Policy on Street People* (Dellacroce et al, 2019) support the idea of forging a collective Social Compact with sector role-players to address growing tensions between homeless individuals, the State, various law enforcement agencies, and citizens.

1.4 The Social Contract should remain in place as an agreement between the State and its citizens irrespective of who the governing party is, allowing its work of alleviating and eradicating homelessness to continue across governing party dispensations.

1.5 Mechanisms should be agreed for how amendments to The Social Contract are to be done when governing parties change.

1.6 It is recommended that The Social Contract be reviewed for amendment and renewal every three years.

1.7 The Social Contract should be organised around the notions of seeking concrete expressions of ubuntu-solidarity, asserting and mediating respect, dignity and justice (de Beer, 2015:1). As an example, and as described in this report, the Tshwane Homelessness Forum forged a Social Contract with multi-sectoral stakeholders, which gave rise to a 5-year participatory policy development process and established operating relationships that could be relied upon during the crisis of COVID-19. See Chapter 2 for more detail.

Recommendation 2

2.1 The State must commission and collaborate with urban planners, academics, and social justice agents, all with experience in inclusive design and justice-aligned work to conduct specific benchmarking research into the residual effects of Apartheid as a foundation of homelessness,

with particular attention on Spatial Apartheid. Kindly refer to Chapters 5 and 6, which highlight the legacy and ongoing impact of Apartheid on homeless individuals and will become the basis for our understanding of the issue.

2.2 Thereafter, the State must commission additional and updated research every two years into the latest data, street polls and current outcomes of State and civil society efforts to design inclusive and constitutionally aligned interventions to alleviate and eradicate homelessness. This research must form the basis of all policy setting, strategy design, and planning work.

Recommendation 3:

3.1 The State must establish multiple platforms for facilitated civil society open dialogue and conversations on homelessness across multiples sectors, such as economics and homelessness, policing and homelessness, food security and homelessness, the Constitution and homelessness, transport and homelessness, healthcare and homelessness, sanitation and homelessness, trade and homelessness, and housing and homelessness, at fixed and regular intervals.

3.2 The notions of respectful dialogue; human rights and justice; and non-violent, inclusive and equitable values must be embedded into the architecture of all engagements that seek to address the development of policy and the implementation of structures and outcomes.

3.3 The State and civil society must use the existing 'Hierarchy of Knowledge' (see Chapter 2) to draw attention to the issues of homelessness through engagements and partnerships between NGOs, academic institutions, and practitioners by recognising that those who live on the street are the true experts in homelessness and bringing them into every conversation on homelessness. It is important to bring into these conversations not only those who were formerly homeless, but also those who currently still experience chronic homelessness. It is critical that dialogues and engagements merge experience and expertise in collaborative ways towards collective and more just and improved efforts and outcomes.

Recommendation 4

4.1 The State must clarify to its various national, provincial and municipal governments and its civil society partners where homelessness is located within the national social-welfare ecosystem and which department takes specific responsibility for it.

4.2 The State must declare all national and international protocols, mandates, and agreements that we have signed by publishing these as part of all policy and strategy development practices, and clearly stating our duties and obligations to it when it comes to homelessness with specific reference to issues such as disasters, crises, and matters of human rights.

B. RECOMMENDATION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Recommendation 1:

1.1 In light of recommendation 4.a. and in light of the occurrences of homelessness in every municipality and province, the State must consider the establishment of an inter-governmental agency made up of government departments, civil society agents, and homeless people with the mandate and responsibility to facilitate collaborative systemic policy, strategy, and solution development across multiple national, provincial, and municipal regions and government departments.

1.2 The State must ensure that such an agency would be able to effect both vertical and transversal collaboration, based on the demands of Chapter 9 of the Constitution, between the spheres and departments of government (including departments responsible for social development, housing, health, education, and economic development) on policy, strategy, and practice, as well as collaboration with civil society organisations, advocacy groups, communities, and most importantly, effective representation by homeless individuals through the development of multiple context-specific structures. Kindly refer to Chapter 2 for additional context.

1.3 While the clarification of the location of mandate to manage homelessness within the State is being addressed, the provincial Departments of Social Development must conduct a broad consultative process across various municipalities and other provincial departments in their regions, e.g. the Western Cape, on homelessness, in order to develop, deepen, and align provincial, municipal and City area policies and strategies on homelessness.

1.4 This broad provincial Department of Social Development policy and strategy consultation work is vital in order to develop a coherent plan of action to support provincial and local governments in their programmes and interventions. As stated earlier, it should be noted that clarity should be sought on who holds the provincial competency to address homelessness. Kindly refer to Chapter 2 for additional context.

1.5 The City of Cape Town, together with the Provincial Department of Social Development and the Department of Human Settlements, must, with immediate effect, ensure that a localised Disaster Management Plan specifically mitigates the risks of large-scale disasters (e.g., COVID-19) on the homeless community. This will ensure more organised, coherent, and coordinated efforts and support that are compliant with the law and other regulations (see 4.b.) in dealing with crises. Kindly also refer to Chapter 2 and the Special Feature on Strandfontein for additional context.

1.6 The Resilience Department within the City of Cape Town and its counterpart agency within the Department of Social Development in the Western Cape should facilitate direct engagement opportunities with homeless individuals to gain deeper and more valuable insights into the lived experiences of homeless people. They should use this information and data to explore pathways to improving government policies and interventions, as well as civil society interventions with

homeless people, in order to build a more resilient ecosystem. Kindly refer to Chapter 2 for additional context.

1.7   In the interim, both Local Government and Provincial Government must ensure that their strategies and budgets to address homelessness consist of both interventions and solutions that will be reported on through independent research every two years, with key impact indicators that are developed in consultation with homeless people. All strategies must contain strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that track implementation and impact. Kindly refer to Chapter 2 for additional context.

1.8   Both Local and Provincial Government must ensure that the budget exists to provide adequate support to exiting and planned shelters, Safe Spaces, and other related interventions in order to allow them to operate optimally, i.e. to address health, safety, human rights, mental well-being and nutritional support, and appropriate next-stage development pathways.

1.9   Government budgets to address homelessness must be drawn up from costing a comprehensive service model as opposed to a minimalist intervention approach. They must take into account studies conducted within the sector, such as *The Cost of Homelessness* report, released by U-Turn in 2021. Kindly refer to Chapters 2, 3 and 6 for additional context.

1.10   Under the leadership of the Department of Human Settlements' various housing programmes, such as the Upgrading Informal Settlements Programme, the Social Housing Programme and the Housing Development Agency, provincial and local governments should consider providing tenure on vacant land and in abandoned facilities and expropriated 'problem buildings' that are   already occupied by homeless individuals. Meaningful exit strategies will require forms of social housing and longer-term accommodation interventions for which land and buildings must be secured, refurbished for purpose, and made available. For further clarity, kindly refer to the transitional model described by the Development Action Group in Chapter 6 and the MES Housing Pathway in the same chapter.

1.11   The State and, in this case, the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Department of Social Development, should develop a rapid service delivery pathway with The Department of Home Affairs to expedite and intensify issuance of national identity documents, birth certificates, and other civic registrations to homeless individuals. This is to ensure that no citizen is excluded from social benefits, social grants, the ability to vote, and other activities that require proof of identification. The development of this rapid service delivery pathway must address the specific challenges pertaining to those experiencing homelessness (such as time and travel constraints). Kindly refer to Chapter 4 for additional context.

1.12   The cost of applying for identity documents that have been confiscated by Law Enforcement activity should not be borne by homeless individuals (refer to Chapter 4 for context on the illegal removal of identity documents). To this effect, the Department of Home Affairs

should waive this fee or, alternatively, the cost should be borne by the agency or entity responsible for the lost document, based on a statement made to the South African Police Services. Reefer to Chapter 4 for additional context.

1.13   The State should also consider setting up a physical address for homeless people in a given area so that issues such as applying for jobs, obtaining legal documents, and release from prison can be facilitated within the stipulations of Chapter 9 of the RSA Constitution.

1.14   The Department of Home Affairs should improve efficiency in providing official refugee status to refugees among the homeless community in order to allow them equal access to work and accommodation opportunities, and to ease integration into the economy and society. Refer to Chapters 2 and 5 for additional context on homelessness among refugees and foreign nationals, noting that this topic was not explored in depth during Phase One of The Inkathalo Conversations and requires greater attention.

C.   RECOMMENDATION ON BROADER HOUSING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Recommendation 1

1.1 The City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Government must design and develop an Inclusionary Housing Policy that will lead to more stratified housing communities instead of the rather exclusive and linear communities that currently exist. Several flagship projects of this nature with much success do exist.

1.2 The City of Cape Town should include Homelessness on the list of circumstances that warrant emergency housing in terms of the existing policies (e.g., Issuing of Housing Kits Policy, Policy Number 20005, City of Cape Town – similar policies exist across local municipalities). Lack of housing opportunities remains a considerable challenge with more than 600 000 people estimated (July 2020) to be on the provincial housing waiting list.

1.3 The State must consider the development of a Housing First Policy as a framework for interventions focusing on more permanent forms of housing and government subsidy schemes.

1.4 Social sector housing experts must engage with the Department of Social Development, the Department of Human Settlements and its Social Housing Regulatory Authority to map out models of housing and available subsidies with homeless people and homelessness agencies that can be used to address chronic homelessness. All programmes of housing for homeless people should always have a well developed Social Development support services structure.

1.5 The City must address gentrification in middle- to low-income communities as a direct cause of homelessness. Often, where well-positioned homes are sold due to the high costs of rates and levies, the knock on effect is that large percentages of the occupants become homeless (see Chapter 6).

1.6 In areas at risk of gentrification and its subsequent direct impact on homelessness, the government must consider reviewing the cost of basic services such as electricity, water, and rates and taxes, through engaging with ratepayers' associations. Additionally, the state should consider subsidies or tax relief programmes for long standing residents with a qualification framework or a progressive rates system based on household disposable income. Families becoming homeless and migrating to the street as a result of gentrification is a greater cost burden to the State than lowering their taxes or increasing their subsidies to enable them to remain housed.

1.7 The Government must ensure that there is alignment of objectives, terminology, and mechanisms between the new *Street People Policy and Strategy,* the *Allocation Policy: Housing Opportunities, Policy Number 11969*[137] (City of Cape Town, 2015), and *Issuing of Housing Kits Policy, Policy Number 20005*[138] (City of Cape Town, 2014), to facilitate the housing of homeless individuals. It is recommended that the Allocation Policy expands and aligns the definitions of its 'special needs category', to include 'street people' and 'other vulnerable groups' – this is to be aligned with the City of Cape Town's *Street People Policy (2013)* to address the needs of thousands of homeless individuals in the City.

D. RECOMMENDATION ON PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Recommendation 1:

1.1 If homelessness is to be prevented in a meaningful way, it must be undertaken on at least two macro fronts: addressing systemic issues like land, housing, and employment, and addressing the health of the community ecosystem with regard to family, mental health, food support, and safety.

1.2 It must be emphasised and understood that without agreement between government departments, academia, and civil society on the root causes of homelessness, the prevention of homelessness will remain largely a lost cause. The process of arriving at agreed common root causes of homelessness should include:

    a) Addressing systemic matters essential for economic vitality and good governance at community level. This includes issues such as land, housing, employment, and access to justice.

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[137] Policy Number 11969:
https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Bylaws%20and%20policies/Allocation%20Policy%20-%20Housing%20Opportunities%20-%20(Policy%20number%2011969)%20approved%20on%2025%20March%202015.pdf

[138] Policy Number 20005:
https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Bylaws%20and%20policies/Issuing%20of%20Housing%20Kits%20Policy%20-%20(Policy%20number%2020005)%20approved%20on%2029%20May%202014.pdf

b) Addressing a healthy community ecosystem and a healthy family/caregiver ecosystem – working effectively to minimise family breakdown and a decline of relevant community ecosystem values affecting service delivery, education, mental health, and safety and security.

1.3 The Government must respond to or remedy evidential causes of homelessness as soon as they become evident. These are summarised as:

a) Having a stronger focus and resource investment by the Department of Social Development on their area-based programmes (e.g., Family Unit Programme) especially in communities with the highest number of learner dropouts, gang related activities, unemployment, violence, substance use, and cases of abuse reported by social workers working in schools and in the communities.

b) Targeted government and NGO programmes directed at learners that drop out of school as they are more prone to engaging in gang related activities, criminal activities, and substance use that will lead to longer term homelessness (kindly refer to Chapter 5 for additional context).

c) More state and state-subsidised social workers and trained community development workers must be deployed to schools to assist with the vast number of cases. Referral pathways must also be strengthened. The current number of social workers is insufficient to deal with the high volume of cases, which leads to many children not receiving the help and assistance they desperately need. It is recommended that capacity constraints be addressed through training and capacitation of volunteers (where appropriate) in local communities to strengthen prevention work and referral pathways.

d) School social workers must make concerted and consistent efforts to identify and deal immediately and effectively with cases involving sexual, physical, and emotional abuse at home.

e) School Governing Bodies – including Principals – must look at alternative mechanisms in schools to ensure that fewer learners at primary and high school get suspended or expelled, especially children from disadvantaged communities. Truancy must be followed up.

f) Primary and High School learners should be exposed to more developmental and empowerment programme options afterschool.

g) Concerns around child placement issues must be addressed, as many homeless individuals experience secondary sexual and physical trauma in foster care facilities, safe houses, and with extended family members. To this effect, thorough vetting of agents of assistance

must occur to ensure an improved social and economic support structure, especially in cases of minors and individuals who require high care. Vetting to be expanded to the entire family and not only the individual.

h) Design and launch a public advocacy programme and multi-media campaign aimed at changing attitudes, mindsets and behaviour toward homeless individuals by raising public awareness, educating and sensitising the public toward homelessness and its varied causes, including both push and pull factors that lead to homelessness. An inter-sectoral approach is highly recommended.

E. RECOMMENDATION ON THE DECRIMINALISATION OF HOMELESSNESS

Kindly refer to Chapter 4 for an indepth understanding of the experiences and accounts that substantiate these recommendations.

Recommendation 1:

1.1 City of Cape Town officials within Law Enforcement, Metro Police, and the Department of Social Development and Early Childhood Development must be trained, sensitised and held accountable with regard to human rights violations. In this respect, the co-creation of programmes dealing with concerns specific to Cape Town Law Enforcement practice towards homeless individuals is recommended. This is in promotion of the Constitution (1996), which clarifies in Chapter 2, The Bill of Rights, that "*The state must respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights*" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

1.2 The City of Cape Town, and all other municipalities, must review and amend all by-laws that seeks to criminalise homelessness without just cause. It is noted that court cases have been launched against the City as a result of these by-laws and their application. Recommendations in the study *Evaluating the Impacts of the Cape Town Street People Policy on Street People* (Dellacroce et al, 2019) support this: "*a constitutional review of the Public Spaces and Nuisance by-law and the Waste Management by-law.*" Refer to Chapter 4 for further context.

1.3 Where amendments have been made to policies, laws, operating procedures, and practices, these should be clearly communicated through retraining of implementing agents (e.g., Law Enforcement officers) with sufficient corrective measures to be taken against those who do not conform to new operations. Kindly refer to Chapter 4 for context on the discrepancy between stated operating procedures and incidents reported.

1.4 Officers should undergo psychosocial screening before and during their term to ensure they have the appropriate skill set to interact with citizens – the housed and the unhoused. Members of the force should regularly participate in behavioural programmes to understand the social needs of vulnerable groups, including homeless individuals. To this end, programmes must consider

practical situations that officers may face in the course of their day-to-day duties and include basic social work training and information about appropriate referral pathways.

1.5 Establish a convention or network of stakeholders (including groups such as the Bellville Joint Operations Committee, Homeless Action Committee, Tshwane Homeless Initiative and key City departments) to explore solutions and alternatives to help combat the criminalisation of homelessness.

F.   RECOMMENDATION ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVERS

Recommendation 1

Chapter 5 describes numerous socio-economic obstacles to exiting homelessness, some of which revolve around financial independence, autonomy, and access to City services. As suggested earlier, a low-hanging fruit may include offering those who are homeless a registered address where mail can be sent. This will allow homeless individuals the opportunity to access services that require a reference address, such as opening a bank account or registering for an informal trading permit. This will require the creation and management of an inter-sectoral database of homeless individuals and service providers – such a system is proposed in Chapter 2.

1.1 Chapter 5 recounts the rising tensions between homeless individuals and low wage earners within the security industry. Security officers earn as much as an approximate 40% of their current wage levels by demanding 'cooldrink money' from homeless people. It is strongly suggested that a review of the current wage levels for CID and officers in the public protection services be conducted and compared to the cost of living. In addition, the code of conduct, corruption policies, and public complaint channels in this regard must be reviewed and appropriate interventions designed that will protect the homeless from exploitation by security agents.

1.2 Security officers must face disciplinary charges for extracting money from homeless people. A dedicated telephone call line must be established to report such incidences.

1.3 The State should appoint a competent person to undertake a financial review to assess the financial viability of caring appropriately for those experiencing homelessness through programmes and interventions compared to the costs currently incurred through reactive and punitive responses to homelessness. In this respect, U-Turn has published a study on *The Cost of Homelessness* in 2021, which will be a useful reference point on the various costs. Refer to Chapters 2, 3, and 5 to gain context on this issue.

1.4 The State, in collaboration with SASSA, should strongly consider a more humane, efficient and cost-effective process of applying for and administering social grant payments. In this respect, those experiencing homelessness should be further consulted on their specific challenges in accessing grants. Refer to Chapter 5 to understand these challenges.

1.5 The City of Cape Town should consider the viability of a R1 levy contribution towards homelessness interventions by all homeowners, which may be considered a voluntary tax to extend housing to others. The income from this levy, which could amount to as much as R18 million a year, is to be used solely to provide appropriate shelter and housing opportunities for homeless people.

"It's everyone's responsibility, everyone should get involved… the best example of this is seen in LA where 0.25% of the tax goe sto expenditure for the homeless." – Workshop participant: Funding, Facilities and the Future.

G. RECOMMENDATION ON EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation 1:

1.1 Governmental interventions and NGO programmes must improve access to education and skills development initiatives for homeless person by means of appropriate assessment criteria. Not all homeless individuals should be placed in the same job-readiness programmes as they have varying educational and developmental backgrounds and goals, e.g. some may want to complete their schooling, others would like to pursue tertiary education, and some may not want to return to school but have a willingness to learn a new vocational skill. Furthermore, the format and content of skills development interventions must cater for individuals requiring specialised occupation support, such as those with mental health challenges.

1.2 EPWP employment opportunities are limited not only in the number of opportunities and duration of employment, but also in the programme's developmental framework. Though helpful in filling an employment and income gap, it does so only temporarily and in a generic manner. In the context of homelessness, the programme should be adjusted around the needs and challenges of homeless participants, with gap-filler supports services such as counselling, life orientation, family reunification services, independent living, and career guidance to round off the employment experience.

1.3 Most homeless individuals trade with goods that they have obtained through waste picking but do not have a valid permit to sell their goods legally at marketplaces across the City. The City of Cape Town must assist homeless individuals that have legal goods to sell to access trading permits without the complications. (Chapter 5 describes this challenge in detail).

1.4 Opportunities exist for partnerships between government and the public to create employment and skills development/ training opportunities for homeless individuals. For example, the Fisantekraal Centre for Development grew out of a partnership with Learn to Earn, which researched community needs in the larger Durbanville area. Business and community leaders in turn organised the outcomes of that research into a response model to address the researched needs. Today it provides a valuable public service and complements public sector interventions.

1.5 Opportunities exist for increased collaboration between businesses, NGOs, and government authorities to utse the range of existing funding avenues for the development of skills growth and refinement programmes, e.g. businesses can play their part by providing paid internship opportunities to homeless individuals.

1.6 Entrepreneurial development and training must be encouraged, supported and invested in. Many homeless individuals with good business ideas require some resources to get started. Some of the key investments would be financial, business model development, obtaining tools of trade and licensing.

H. RECOMMENDATION ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Recommendation 1:

1.1 Local Networks of Care (LNOC) and/or new central operational platforms (such as those described in the City of Tshwane in Chapter 2) may be established or improved through increased citizen involvement.

1.2 Government and sector organisations are encouraged to support and resource these efforts through:

a) Supporting the efforts aimed at increasing agency and promoting active citizenry among homeless communities through the provision of necessary resources to attain that goal.

b) Improving the representation and visibility of homeless individuals by ensuring meaningful engagement with associations, collectives, and other established coalitions and networks. Support and resource their efforts to build inclusive and effective justice advocacy groups as well as business networks.

I. RECOMMENDATION ON RESPONSIBLE GIVING CAMPAIGNS

Recommendation 1:

1.1 The City, Province, and other partners with 'responsible giving' campaigns should review their public communication (refer to Chapters 1 and 2 for context) on this issue to reflect an understanding that a range of intervention agencies are involved in the homeless ecosystem.

1.2 The language and wording used in these campaigns must be chosen carefully as it has the potential to offend homeless individuals, perpetuate stigmas, and incite unfair treatment of the homeless. For example, the 'Responsible Giving' campaign of the City of Cape Town leads with the statement "*give in the right hands.*" That message conveys the idea that homeless people's hands are not 'the right hands', thereby creating negative stereotypical perceptions from the public about homeless people such as that homeless people as irresponsible. Intentional co-development of the language used to talk about homeless people is advised. The opportunity exists to reshape narratives and improve the public consciousness through the use of language that recognises the dignity of individuals.

1.3 Accuracy of information, like that about the adequacy of the services advertised, is important. It is not accurate for the City of Cape Town to claim the Give Responsibly Campaign is the way for caring citizens to pay for a bed for homeless people. With over 14 000 homeless people in the City and only approximately 2400 beds available for homeless people, this campaign cannot meet its promise to the public. It angers the public when they see homeless people on the streets after they have 'bought a night in a bed' for a homeless person at a shelter. This campaign,which positions itself as the best way to fulfil a charitable duty towards homeless people, is currently untrue and irresponsible.

1.4 The City must ensure that the specific services that will be provided to homeless individuals are clearly stipulated in the advertisement to the public so that the public will know how their donations will be utilised. This speaks to the principle of transparency.

1.5 The City must ensure that each NGO that receives donations from the 'Give Responsibly' campaign has successfully undergone due diligence. These NGOs must provide local and/or provincial government with a report on how they have spent their portion of the donations given to them, showing what impact that donation has had on the lives of the homeless individuals they provide services for.

1.6 The City must ensure that each NGO benefitting from government-driven public donation campaigns signs an agreement with the local and/or provincial government indicating the amount they received, the services they commit to providing, and the timeframe in which they will provide them. This is in line with good governance principles.

1.7 It is further important that if bed-space at shelters is subsidised by both the Department of Social Development and the 'Give Responsibly' campaign, shelters must abolish all fees they charge to homeless people to access a bed.

J. RECOMMENDATION ON ADDRESSING THE LEGACY OF STRANDFONTEIN

Recommendation 1:

1.1 The Provincial Government and The SA Human Rights Commission should lead a comprehensive, independent, and competently staffed investigation into the Strandfontein homeless intervention, addressing issues of human rights, governmental mandates and actions, and experiences at the camp. The investigation must look into specific concerns that were raised in relation to treatment of inmates and costs of the project and follow up on the conditions of the frail and aged after the closure of the camp (see Special Feature on Strandfontein). It must also report on the number of inmates who died during their internment at the camp, the reasons for their death, and how this was reported. As an output of such an investigation, recommendations made by participants of The Inkathalo Conversations included the call for a documentary, a research report, and a book on the Strandfontein Camp.

1.2 The investigation must also look into how and to what degree the City upheld the *United Nations' Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture* (OPCAT) and Section 12 of the Constitution (the Prevention and Combating of Torture of Persons Act) during the 2021 lockdown of homeless people at the Strandfontein camp; and investigate how the City banned the SAHRC and its Human Rights Monitors, effectively stopping it from carrying out its constitutionally enshrined oversight role.

1.3 The State must recognise the limitations of the Disaster Management Act in respect of homeless people, and ensure the development of a comprehensive crisis response plan specifically for those experiencing homelessness.

1.4 The City of Cape Town must engage with and support the need for psychosocial support for homeless individuals who experienced various forms of trauma at Strandfontein.

1.5 The City of Cape Town must host a public engagement with the homeless sector to debrief on the Strandfontein court judgements and its responsibilities in respect of these judgements.

1.6 It is recommended that the service providers involved at Strandfontein pursue reflective and restitutive actions in response to their involvement in the trauma the homeless experienced at Strandfontein. This should happen in consultation with the Strandfontein occupants, particularly as these organisations continue to serve homeless individuals in the City.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS INTO THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN'S STREET PEOPLE POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY

A. RECOMMENDATION ON ESTABLISHING THE RIGHTS OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

Recommendation 1:

1.1 The new proposed Street People Policy and Strategy must identify, design, and ratify an accessible mechanism by which homeless individuals can lay formal complaints or open criminal cases when they are mistreated by the public and officers of the various law-enforcement agencies.

1.2 Such complaints by homeless people must be received and recorded in a manner that is non-discriminatory, eliminates bias, and ensures that such complaints are considered fairly.

1.3 Such a mechanism must make allowance for:

- o Recording and investigation of incidents of harassment, injustice, and crimes perpetrated by members of the police, law enforcement agencies, CID, private security companies, and private individuals.

- o A full investigation of the complaints recorded by officers (to be assisted by social support professionals where possible).

- o Each case must be issued with a case number in order to track and monitor the progress of the case. An investigation report must be made available to the individual filing the case or complaint upon request.

- o Due process must be followed for complaints raised by homeless individuals, as with any other member of society, especially in cases of rape, assault, theft of personal belongings, and harassment. The lack of an adequate system, as well as the frustrating of homeless individuals when they wish to lay such complaints and desire to be treated with appropriate justice in their respective matters, is a violation of their rights enshrined in the Criminal Procedure Act, related legislation, and The Constitution of 1996.

1.4 The government should extend the mandate of the City of Cape Town Social Development Department field workers to assist homeless individuals to file their complaints with the City or to file criminal cases with the SAPS, as many may not know how to access the complex criminal justice system as a victim of crime.

1.5 The government must stipulate and have mechanisms for ensuring that J88 forms* are present at all police, Law Enforcement, and medical facilities, as well as at state-funded temporary accommodation facilities. *The J88 form is a legal document that is completed by a medical doctor*

or registered nurse, documenting injuries sustained by the victim in any circumstance where a legal investigation is to follow.

1.6 The government must define a code of conduct within the proposed Social Contract for all agents – law enforcements agents from all agencies, security personnel, Social Development workers, field workers, and all related personnel, that will standardised how homeless people ought to be treated, in line with the necessary Constitutional principles. This conduct protocol must be co-created with sector-based organisations, homeless individuals, law enforcing agencies, private and semi-private security initiatives and agencies, and ratepayers' associations. The code of conduct must clearly outline appropriate behaviour when dealing with homeless individuals and operationalise clear measures to control the harassment and exploitation of homeless individuals as described in this report, (with specific recourse for common law and human rights violations against the homeless). In entities where codes of conduct currently exist, they should be tested for alignment to the Chapter 9 provisions of the Constitution. Adherence to these must be prescribed by the policy, with an emphasis on eradicating discriminatory application thereof.

1.7 The government must establish ethical standards to prevent the exploitation of homeless individuals through addressing, among other things:

- The use of homeless individuals' stories to secure funding opportunities;

- The photographing and publishing in any marketing material of homeless individuals without their permission;

- That the payment of stipend rates by NGOs to homeless persons who are required to do work within that NGO are in compliance with minimum wage regulations;

- Ensuring the privacy and protection of personal information in cases where the data of homeless individuals is collected by agencies or government entities;

- Ensuring that all policies, strategies, and implementation documents adhere to national and international standards, including compliance with The Constitution and the United Nations protocols on dealing with vulnerable or marginalised individuals.

B. RECOMMENDATION ON POLICY DIRECTION AND COORDINATION

Recommendation 1:

The following are important for an effective new Street People Policy and Strategy:

1.1 The government must clearly define a broader range of stakeholders, including actors and their roles and responsibilities, reporting lines, delegation of authority, and operational interactions

between the various stakeholders in an effort to close gaps, improve accountability, and prioritise budgets. In this regard, an updated stakeholder map must be developed as a matter of priority.

1.2 The government must ensure that the new policy is developed within a reasonable timeframe as the current *Street People Policy 2013* is outdated in terms of data, statistics and proper interventions, and large components of the policy are no longer relevant or effective. The absence of policy direction creates a legislative and administrative gap, which makes it difficult for the NGO sector and local government to effectively and efficiently align and coordinate their work to address homelessness in the City of Cape Town.

1.3 The new policy must be updated annually, initiated by the government, highlighting where amendments have been made to the policy and to related policies and practices.

1.4 The new policy should consist of short, medium and long-term plans and interventions, which are measurable with key impact indicators that are budgeted for.

1.5 The new policy should incorporate a co-designed monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track implementation and impact. The government must develop this in collaboration with the sector and with homeless individuals. It should create a framework for acceptable minimum standards of service provision, appropriate outcomes, and an end to unclear exit pathways from the streets.

1.6 The new policy should establish a participatory policy review process to engage all stakeholders, with an emphasis on the inclusion of homeless individuals, to draw up public policies. This can be initiated through a summit held with participation of homeless individuals as well as government officials (e.g. the Tshwane model) to initially start drafting a policy.

1.7 From that inaugural summit, the policy should mandate the appointment of a body of homelessness sector stakeholders, including local and provincial government, NGOs, and homeless individuals, all with extensive experience in the sector, to attend quarterly or half-yearly update meetings on the progress made on policy development, policy implementation, and strategy roll out and implementation for transparency and accountability purposes.

1.8 Through a co-creative approach, the policy must address holistic development and pathways to ensure a unified understanding and acceptance of the interventions approach.

1.9 It should design a mechanism for improved co-ordination between task forces, with the Displaced Peoples Unit as a centre for all Law Enforcement engagements with homeless individuals.

1.10 It should address succession or policy continuity plans to ensure that a change in government does not hinder progress towards ending homelessness.

1.11   It should allow for effective advocacy and lobbying practices in relation to the policy and strategy, by defining effective engagement avenues to do this.

1.12   The new Street People Policy and Strategy must be aligned with the *Allocation Policy: Housing Opportunities, Policy Number 11969*[139] (City of Cape Town, 2015) and *Issuing of Housing Kits Policy, Policy Number 20005*[140] (City of Cape Town, 2014), ensuring that the objectives and terminology between these policies facilitate the housing of homeless individuals. It is recommended that the Allocation Policy expands and aligns the definitions of its 'special needs category', which includes 'street people' and 'other vulnerable groups', with the new Street People Policy and Strategy to address the needs of thousands of homeless individuals in the City.

C.   RECOMMENDATION ON DATA MANAGEMENT AND INTEGRATION

Recommendation 1:

The Street People Policy and Strategy must:

1.1 Define and operationalise a data and information management system. It is proposed that this be initiated by the City of Cape Town and co-created with multiple stakeholders to ensure that data is collected and managed accurately and ethically. Refer to Chapter 2 for additional context and proposals.

1.2 Be preceded by a proper plan (by the City and Province) to annually enumerate homeless individuals. This is critical as no plan or strategy will be effective if it is not informed through accurate data.

1.3 Define the protection of information about homeless individuals in accordance with the POPI Act.

1.4 Commission the use of data to map the needs of housing the homeless community against the number of spaces in temporary, long-term, and permeant housing currently available to attain the shortfall in housing solutions available. This should inform policy and strategy reviews in the future.

D.   RECOMMENDATION ON PERMANENT HOUSING, ACCOMMODATION AND TENURE

The South African Local Government Association states that, in line with relevant directives and memorandums: "*Municipalities must continue to identify and make available sites to be used as*

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[139]Policy Number 11969:
https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Bylaws%20and%20policies/Allocation%20Policy%20-%20Housing%20Opportunities%20-%20(Policy%20number%2011969)%20approved%20on%2025%20March%202015.pdf
[140] Policy Number 20005:
https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Bylaws%20and%20policies/Issuing%20of%20Housing%20Kits%20Policy%20-%20(Policy%20number%2020005)%20approved%20on%2029%20May%202014.pdf

shelters for the homeless individuals, where still necessary, and submit the lists in the template provided by the Department of Social Development to Provincial Joint Operation Centres." (SALGA, 2020)

Recommendation 1:

Therefore, the Street People Policy and Strategy must:

1.1 Define 'homelessness' as part of the circumstances which warrant emergency housing in terms of existing *Issuing of Housing Kits Policy, Policy Number 20005*[141] (City of Cape Town, 2014) and develop the supporting strategic, operational, and financial mechanisms to identify land and erect housing for homeless individuals. Similar policies exist across local municipalities and must be consulted accordingly.

1.2 Facilitate the registration of homeless individuals and families on the City's Housing Database in order to include them in the housing allocation process. The existing *Allocation Policy: Housing Opportunities, Policy Number 11969*[142] (City of Cape Town, 2015) currently dedicates 20% of new housing opportunities to individuals outside of targeted areas and makes allowance for a 'special needs category', which includes "(f) Street people who constitute a family and who have successfully been rehabilitated via the City's Assessment Centres; and (g) Other vulnerable persons…" In consultation with the Provincial Department of Human Settlements, it is recommended that 5% of new housing opportunities be allocated specifically to homeless individuals.

1.3 Earmark land and buildings for the development of progressive accommodation needs to offer diverse housing options that address the complexities and pathways associated with exiting homelessness, as described in Chapter 6 of this report. Consider the 'housing ladder' and evolving models, such as transitional housing described in Chapter 6, as a more suitable alternative to social housing for homeless individuals to transition into existing government housing programmes (permanent housing).

1.4 Include a social support programme budget for any and all housing interventions for homeless individuals, in order to address social and economic needs, physical and mental health needs, family strengthening programmes, etc.

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[141] Policy Number 20005:
https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Bylaws%20and%20policies/Issuing%20of%20Housing%20Kits%20Policy%20-%20(Policy%20number%2020005)%20approved%20on%2029%20May%202014.pdf

[142] Policy Number 11969:
https://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Bylaws%20and%20policies/Allocation%20Policy%20-%20Housing%20Opportunities%20-%20(Policy%20number%2011969)%20approved%20on%2025%20March%202015.pdf

1.5 Identify government-owned buildings and existing infrastructure and create densified units for permanent housing solutions in the CBD and other business nodes.

1.6 Identify and allocate well-located land parcels that can be developed for Inclusionary Housing. Land that has already been identified should be rezoned and developed for permanent housing solutions.

1.7 Where possible, identify and regularise land that is already occupied – zone, register, and allocate title deeds to stand occupants. This can be done in collaboration with the Department of Human Settlements Upgrading Informal Settlement Programme.

E. RECOMMENDATION ON TRADITIONAL SHELTER AND SAFE SPACE INTERVENTIONS

Recommendation 1:

Traditional shelter and Safe Space interventions are deemed to fall at the nexus of local and provincial government responsibilities. As such, a collaborative and coordinated effort is required between the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Government. Together, these entities must:

1.1 Address the high volume of homeless individuals unable to access shelters by establishing more shelters and Safe Spaces in the communities they are living and working in.

1.2 Identify, plan, and budget for land and buildings to be purchased and equipped as shelters and Safe Spaces.

1.3 Review the norms and standards applicable to shelters, including first, second, and third phase shelters, to ensure their efficacy. These norms and standards must apply to all shelters – whether funded by the state or privately – to ensure adherence to good governance, quality of services, treatment, and practices.

1.4 Develop a clear external Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for shelters and Safe Spaces. It is strongly recommended that this becomes a mechanism for peer review of operations of shelters and Safe Spaces by homeless individuals, civil society experts, and the NGO sector. The framework should outline these engagements and the process of rectification should these spaces be found unsuitable. There must be transparency of findings and independent verification of these evaluations.

1.5 Ensure that all facilities managed by external service providers undergo a strict vetting and due diligence process to ascertain their suitability and expertise to manage sites. Furthermore, they must possess the capabilities to deal with the complex needs of the homeless individuals under their care and must be able to foster strong partnerships with other service providers that will render specific professional and social services on site.

1.6 Define monitoring frameworks that allow for regular unannounced visits to these shelters and Safe Spaces by Local and Provincial government. In addition, Health and Safety inspectors must conduct regular visits to these facilities and draft reports to the Local and Provincial government.

1.7 Review the three month limitation on shelter stays as well as the rationale behind it. Facilities should provide for a greater level of basic security, allowing for an individual to work deeply on healing and planning, preferably over a longer period of time where that is needed.

1.8 Make allowance for shelters and Safe Spaces to provide a minimum standardised package of unified services and treatments across all shelters and Safe Spaces, to improve the overall level of service and consistency of services among these facilities.

1.9 Address matters of inclusivity in shelters and Safe Spaces, particularly for homeless individuals in the following categories: older people (55 and above); frail, disabled and terminally ill; LGBTQIA+ individuals; abused women and young girls; and families who live on the streets. Provision must be made to urgently address this glaring gap in the system and prioritise these groups of homeless individuals.

1.10   Prescribe regular training and professional development for shelter and Safe Spaces staff on management of facilities and human rights awareness, etc.

1.11   Require that a Code of Conduct be developed which all shelters and Safe Spaces must adhere to, with consequences for any breach.

1.12   Consider a long-term strategy towards the development of more home-based, community-focused shelter models all around the City, using the current shelters as service centres and harm reduction centres – this would not shut down shelters but repurpose them.

F.   RECOMMENDATION ON INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK FOR HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation 1

The Street People Policy and Strategy must:

1.1 Provide information and clarity on the types and stages of interventions available in the City, taking a 'pathways' approach with a clear view towards exit strategies for homeless individuals.

1.2 Cater for greater individualisation of services and interventions, as the traditional concepts of reunification and reintegration have proven to be inappropriate in many cases. Kindly refer to Chapters 3 and 7 for further context.

1.3 Adopt a harm-reduction and trauma-informed view of behavioural and substance use issues, understanding the complexity of these realities and addressing them with care as opposed to criminalisation.

1.4 Address a holistic support system, considering the use of 'one-stop' support facilities. (Only one privately funded facility currently offers holistic support that includes drug rehabilitation support, skills development, and other social interventions).

1.5 Address the current funding structure, which does not meet the requirements of the sector or civil society:
- o Funding is not available for developing new innovative solutions;
- o Large institutional NGOs are the primary recipients of government funding. Government should pay greater attention to broader civil society organisations that work in locations of great need.

1.6 In alignment with Western Cape Department of Social Development norms and standards, as well the City's stated strategic objectives to be *"A Caring City"*, stipulate minimum acceptable standards for service provision, requiring that all shelters, Safe Spaces and similar NGOs, should they have adequate funding, have the following services and professionals available:

- o Social workers;
- o Psychosocial services;
- o Trauma informed counselling, including grief and bereavement counselling;
- o Harm reduction services;
- o Clinical support (e.g., opioid support);
- o Substance use disorder counsellors and services;
- o Health and nutrition;
- o Mental health practitioners, including psychologists and psychiatrists;
- o Skills development practitioners;
- o Inter- and intrapersonal relationship practitioners;
- o HIV/AIDS and TB services and counselling;
- o Personal development practitioners;
- o Economic empowerment; and
- o Financial literacy.

G. RECOMMENDATION ON *SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOMELESS* INDIVIDUALS

Recommendation 1:

The Street People Policy and Strategy must:

1.1 Facilitate mechanisms for meaningful economic access by homeless individuals and creation of new economic opportunities, including access to the informal sector; e.g. removing bureaucratic 'red tape' to obtaining informal trade permits, such as the need for a permanent address.

1.2 Facilitate the inclusion of homeless individuals into entrepreneurial support and incubation programmes offered by government agencies, and provide support for homeless entrepreneurs (e.g., skills development, business incubation tools, seed funding).

1.3 Make provision for homeless individuals to gain access to internet facilities through the use of public libraries or shelters. A plan must be devised to allow homeless individuals access to these facilities in order to apply for jobs or to support e-learning.

1.4 Consider specific support of homeless individuals through the social grant system.

1.5 Develop pathways for job assessment and placement, and provide for the necessary skills development interventions towards marketplace reintegration.

H. RECOMMENDATION ON INCLUSIVITY, HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY

Recommendation 1:

The Street People Policy and Strategy must:

1.1 Define and operationalise increased access to specialty shelters and other accommodation interventions assisting the specific needs of these groups of homeless individuals:

- o Frail care
- o Disabilities
- o Mental illness
- o Couples and families
- o Gender-based violence
- o LGBTQIA+
- o Elderly

1.2 Advise on appropriate frameworks for homeless individuals being discharged from facilities (hospital, correctional facilities, and mental health facilities). In many cases, individuals are stabilised within facilities only to be discharged without support. Consider the long-term implementation of step-down or Safe Space facilities that offer the necessary support.

1.3 Specifically address the transitional needs of individuals who are released from care when they reach 18. The current Child Protection Act assists children with accommodation until the age of 18, after which there is no transitional plan to assist these individuals.

1.4 Advise on the development of a harm reduction strategy for homeless substance users, in collaboration with the Cape Town Drug and Alcohol Committee.

I.   RECOMMENDATION ON ABLUTION AND STORAGE FACILITIES

Recommendation 1

The Street People Policy and Strategy must:

1.1 Make allowance for homeless communities across the City to be provided with 24-hour access to adequate and free ablution facilities, access to showers and waste facilities, all located close to the largest groupings of homeless populations in the City and surrounding areas.

1.2 Through collaborative efforts between departments, ensure these facilities are managed by the City of Cape Town to ensure that they are regularly cleaned and operate properly. In addition to the obvious basic human needs and rights to these services, many homeless individuals struggle to maintain hygiene and appearances for work while transitioning to permanent living/independent living arrangements.

1.3 Ensure that homeless individuals are provided with safe and secure storage spaces to store their personal belongings. Building a collection of personal assets is a core part of ensuring a viable exit strategy from the streets. When personal assets are destroyed through Law Enforcement raids, it has the adverse effect of entrancing people on the streets.

1.4 Consider the recommendations captured in the study *Evaluating the Impacts of the Cape Town Street People Policy on Street People* (Dellacroce et al, 2019), which include the decriminalisation of sleeping on the streets, redrafting policy by-laws that are particularly problematic for street people, and improving NGO and City collaboration and the environment for homeless individuals in Cape Town.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONS/PROGRAMMES

The recommendations below are intended to strengthen existing interventions and provide support to the sector serving individuals experiencing homelessness. As such, these recommendations are for the City's attention and may inform Policy and Strategy considerations, but seek to inform all stakeholder efforts.

NGOs and organisations serving those experiencing homelessness are invited to re-examine their oversight role of homeless individuals within their institutions, and to consider establishing systems, structures, and practices that will allow homeless individuals within their programmes to co-create and self-organise as illustrated through existing models. (Chapters 3 and 8 provide context in this regard.)

A. RECOMMENDATION ON EXISTING SHELTERS AND SAFE SPACES INTERVENTIONS

Recommendation 1:

1.1 It is recommended that current service providers consider the following interventions:

   a) Develop a holistic intervention framework that caters for greater individualisation of services;

   b) Provide for a greater level of basic security, allowing for an individual to work deeply on healing and planning;

   c) Implement internal monitoring and evaluation processes, as well as reflective practices, to ensure that services truly meet the needs of their clients;

   d) Ensure that staff are trained and sensitised to the rights and dignity of their clients.

B. RECOMMENDATION ON SUBSTANCE USE INTERVENTIONS

"Substance Use Disorder is a treatable disease and needs to be sanctioned in a way that would not further stigmatise those suffering its grip." – Ashley Potts, Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre

Recommendation 1:

1.1 The City and its agencies, civil society organisations, and communities should seek help to reframe their understanding of substance use among homeless individuals as a health concern as opposed to a criminal concern. In response, harm reduction strategies should be adopted.

1.2 Interventions should cater for field-based and site-based services, in order to better serve those who require support.

1.3 Outpatient treatment for specific addictions, such as heroin and alcohol, are often found to be ineffective and inpatient treatment services should be expanded and made more accessible.

1.4 The range of services must be broadened to assist those who need treatment, including holistic programmes for rebuilding.

1.5 The sector must investigate how referrals into inpatient recovery can be made more accessible for those living on the streets. According to Richard Bolland, extensive paperwork, social work referrals, and the access to internet and phone calls required, make the chances of someone living on the street getting into inpatient recovery slim to none.

C. RECOMMENDATION ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTERVENTIONS

Recommendation 1

1.1 Facilitate the inclusion of homeless individuals into entrepreneurial support and incubation programmes offer by City agencies.

1.2 Consider support for homeless entrepreneurs (skills, tools, seed funding).

1.3 Restructure the Expanded Public Works Programme to extend the length of these programmes.

1.4 Assist the individual in re-mapping their social and economic support structures and network, and identify and introduce new sources of social and economic support structures into their current network.

1.5 Interventions must incorporate a focus on leadership development and self-empowerment to facilitate greater independence.

D. RECOMMENDATION ON PSYCHOSOCIAL AND FAMILY SUPPORT

"We need more social workers to talk to the homeless and people living on the streets" – Ilse Maartens, MES

Recommendation 1:

1.1 Interventions must be redesigned around trauma-informed responses.

1.2 Specialists, such as occupational therapists, who work using evidence-based and trauma-based approaches, must be used to assist individuals in processing physical, emotional, and social well-being.

1.3 Holistic intervention, which includes working with the individual's family, is important – especially where there has been relational breakdown and reconciliation is a possibility.

E. RECOMMENDATION ON GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING

Recommendation 1:

1.1 Curative/Statutory intervention: As part of the social support/development and NGO services, screening for bereavement and intervention already received should be assessed and offered as part of the psychosocial support provided to the individual.

1.2 Early intervention: Receiving grief counselling at a much earlier stage could potentially prevent someone from entering into homelessness – especially if the individual who has passed away was a primary source of social and economic support.

F. RECOMMENDATION ON CO-CREATION OF INTERVENTIONS AND 'CLIENT' FEEDBACK

"The people should have some sort of say in the direction that NGO wants to go." – Rudy Basson, an individual who has experienced homelessness.

Recommendation 1:

1.1 The NGO sector in partnership with homeless individuals can co-create a framework for the key capabilities that would develop and sustain the resilience of homeless individuals, and how they will support this outcome.

1.2 Shelters must consider offering or partnering with organisations who support entrepreneurial, creative thinking, and problem-solving skills programmes to support homeless individuals in channelling their agency and building internal capacity to deal with personal and practical challenges.

1.3 NGOs must create an anonymous feedback system in order to receive honest inputs from their clients, and to reflect and adjust their practices where necessary. Kindly refer to Chapters 3 and 8 for further detail.

Note that the study *Evaluating the Impacts of the Cape Town Street People Policy on Street People* (Dellacroce et al, 2019), referred to by participants, contains meaningful recommendations for broader policy considerations such as the forging of a collective social compact with sector role players.

CHAPTER 9: NOT A SINGLE STORY: STORIES FROM THE STREETS

The causes and experiences of homelessness cannot be captured in a single story. The Phase One Report contains a selection of diverse stories that depict some of the many different pathways into homelessness as well as the variety of experiences of individuals living on the streets.

As part of its commitment to social justice and hearing the voices of the marginalised, The Inkathalo Conversations took to the streets to engage directly with people who would not have had the means to access the Claremont Civic Centre. These are their stories, retold using the language and references made by the speakers. We have not used the actual names of the individuals to protect their privacy.

Maria

When asked, Maria will give you a sly smile, showing off her few teeth, and with a mischievous glint in her eyes, she will tell you that she was born on the 7th day of the 7th month in 1961. She looks far older than her 59 years. Maria would not define herself as homeless. She wasn't chased away from home; she lives on the street because she chooses to – she was tired of living by the rules of others. She was tired of being in other people's way and not getting on with her own life. They only way to achieve that was to leave. But leaving was easier said than done. The streets was the only place she could leave to. With trepidation, she left the home she knew for the life of independence she needed. She says she realises that she bothers people – even on the streets – and she's aware that she has a strange smell and that her shoes are dirty. These things live with her. But, she says with quiet strength, the day she decides to get up and go home, she can do so. Where she is now, she can define herself and live her life the way that she wants to.

George

> "Everyone has a different reason for living on the street, and it is possible for anyone to end up on the street – you can have the best job in the world, envied by all, but one wrong turn can lead you to end up on the street as well."

According to George, currently residing in Van Riebeeck Park in Oranjezicht, the one outcome of choosing a life on the streets is implicitly choosing to build a family. For no one can survive on the streets alone if they don't build a family on the streets. He points to the people around him and says, "*these guys here, they're my family. We stick together.*" George says that sometimes as a man on the streets, you are expected to be strong, which is difficult because one has to set an example and stand steady on your own two feet. He says it's difficult to survive on the streets, but at the end of the day, he believes that "*God will provide.*" He says that just as a seed endures much hardship before it becomes a tree, so it is necessary to go through rough times before you can pluck the fruits of your labour.

George was in and out of prison for many years, but one day he decided that change was necessary. At first, he found it difficult to interact with people as prison had changed him and people did not understand his "*prison language*". He then realised that the change required was far greater than what he had

anticipated, and he eventually made the decision to leave the life of crime behind completely – except for smoking some dagga, which insulates him against the cold.

The people who live with him in Van Riebeeck Park are his family. He now looks after the younger ones and has a sense of great responsibility, which he says is helping him to grow and mature so that he can take care of a family of his own one day. He feels ready to start his own family; he is just waiting for the right woman to cross his path.

The Van Riebeeck Park homeless site was started by four people, George being one of them. When they first arrived there was only grass, and they had to fend off snakes and build their shelters from the ground up. Today they are an established community who look after one another. They all work together and encourage each other. They have realised that to get what one needs to survive, you have to stand up and go get it – you can't sit back and wait for things to come your way. That is why he started his small business of selling plants on the side of the road.

Unfortunately, Law Enforcement is always on their tail and they often come and take down their shelters, while the fire brigade regularly puts out their fires for fear of the mountain being burned down. George doesn't take anything for granted. He stated that not all people on the street are dangerous, and that people do not have to be afraid of them.

"Almal verlang maar na hulle eie plekkie [Everyone longs for their own little place]."

Sarah is from Mitchells Plain, where she used to stay with her mother until she moved to Bellville with her boyfriend. They lived in a parking lot until Law Enforcement picked them up and took them to Blikkiesdorp. At first, Sarah thought that Blikkiesdorp was where she wanted to be, because she had a roof over her head and a place to call home, but she soon found that it was a terrible place, even more unsafe than the streets. She could not walk to the shops without being robbed, and she could not go to sleep at night without fear of a break-in or being raped. After 12 years on the streets, and a brief period in Blikkiesdorp, Sarah still prefers living on the streets of Bellville to the roof over her head in violent Blikkiesdorp.

The homeless camp where she currently resides has rules. There is no crime allowed, and you can only set up camp there with permission. This permission is granted after assessing the credibility of your story for being on the street. Sarah was clear in her view that homeless people are not all violent and do not all commit crimes. She points out that most of the crime and violence are commited by those men who are relased from prison and come to shelter on the streets.

At an early stage in her life, she realised that if you do not have money, you have to do something about it. Washing cars, hustling, and the like were all ways she accessed much needed money. For this reason, she has respect for prostitutes and believes that sex work is simply another way to earn an income.

They always try and keep their current location clean, but without basic facilities such as rubbish bins, this task has proved near impossible. She says if she was a government advisor, she would give everyone a home, as she believes that noone deserves to live like this. She says everyone deserves a space of their own, a place to call home. Even though Sarah has a daughter who has a job and a house, she has decided

to stay where she is and protect her camp until everyone there gets a home. In Sarah's own words, "*Almal verlang maar hulle eie plekkie [everyone longs for their own little place].*"

Second Chances

If the government gives everyone a home, there will be less crime and fewer 'skarrelers', according to David, who lives on the street rather than in Blikkiesdorp, which is his only other option. His life on the streets allows him agency, he says, to *"do things on my own terms, and to take matters into my own hands."* The streets allow him to determine his prosperity, while in Blikkiesdorp he will be stuck with no way to earn an income.

David is on the streets because he uses tik and mandrax; he does not wish to burden his brother, who is currently living in their mother's house with his family. David has a good education from a technical high school and did not struggle to find work. He worked at Carlton Refinery until he lost his job when he did not pass the drug test. David has many regrets, but he believes one always has a second chance. If given the chance to go to a rehabilitation centre, he would take it, as he was clean for three years until he relapsed due to his mother's passing.

Besides housing, David feels that government can provide support by providing rubbish bins to support the cleaning up of the areas the homeless frequent. He also wants additional facilities for homeless people as well as clean running water.

A Women's Cooperative

The group of women residing in a camp in Bellville wish to establish an organised community, with many facilities such as a rehabilitation centre and workshops with tools and supplies donated by the government. They want to build things like cupboards and Wendy houses. One of the women piped up and bragged that she is a 'jack of all trades', and that she can build anything with a few tools.

The women all agree that if one does not know how to hustle ('skarrel'), it is difficult to survive on the streets, which is why many women turn to prostitution. Women are willing to engage in acts for a mere R10 or R20. They have seen girls as young as 12 years old selling their bodies and taking all the work from the other prostitutes as men queue for them. These women, however, will call the police if they see such a young girl prostituting.

Another woman in the group told her story: she was in an abusive relationship for six years and ran away to the streets. Now, however, she has a good boyfriend, and she is happy in Bellville. Her daughter is being taken care of by her grandmother, so she does not need anything further herself. She is content. The only thing she wants are trash bins, water and toilets for the area they live in. Food parcels are always welcome, as she and some of the other women love to cook.

Cigarette Entrepreneur

A foreigner from Tanzania, Henry has been homeless in South Africa for six years. He came to South Africa for better job opportunities, but he has struggled to find a job because people think he is a drug dealer because of his Tanzanian ethnicity.

During the first few months of the Coronavirus lockdown, he started his own business selling cigarettes. Most of his customers are other homeless people, but he has had all sorts of people purchasing cigarettes from him. His business is doing well, and he supports his daughter who lives in Bellville. Despite his self-supporting lifestyle, he is still discriminated against because he is a foreigner.

Sharon

Sharon comes from a relatively privileged background. She was raised and educated well, and was married to a chief engineer at Safmarine, until her cousin introduced her to chrystal meth at the age of 33. Now, at 48 years old, Sharon is a prostitute trying to make ends meet. She does not enjoy it, but it enables her to feed herself and to send some money to her children, who are currently studying at UCT and CPUT. Her family does not have space for her to live with them. Her mother provides accommodation for her two children and sees to their needs. She senses that her family is exhausted by her lifestyle ways and do not approve of it.

Sharon turned to prostitution after she was released from prison. She was arrested for housebreaking and theft – crimes she committed to feed her drug addiction. She would only want to go to rehabilitation, however, if she knew where she would be going afterwards, as she sees no use in getting clean only to end up right back where she is now – on the streets.

Even though Sharon has many skills, her biggest love is children, and she is passionate about nursing and the human body; but she struggles to find a job now because of her age.

Sharon had everything she thought she wanted, a nice house, electricity – but she did not appreciate it. On the streets, she is grateful for the small things that provide meaning to her life. She now has the power to define herself, and she has created a family for herself where she is not ashamed of who she is and what she does.

> *"Everywhere I go, I fit in, on the street you are not a strange species [*like at home*]."*

Sharon wants the government to initiate programmes that will assist homeless people to be more useful to society by helping them to equip themselves so they can get jobs and feed themselves.

Larry

Larry has a photographic memory. He was first in his grade every year from primary school through to high school, and even at university he was at the top of his class. He studied law at UWC, after which he worked for the City of Cape Town. Unfortunately, he had to forsake his law career when both his parents developed diabetes and became very ill. He was the only one of his siblings who had compassion, and he decided to take care of them as he did not want to send his parents to an old age home. He recalls that in the seventies, Cape Town old age homes were notorious for treating the elderly badly and abusing them, which is why so many homes later closed down.

After his parents passed away, he developed a brain disease caused by high pressure in his brain, and so he ended up on the street. Larry does not believe Alzheimer's disease will get him, saying, "*Alzheimer's is curable, as long as you eat the right food … and only healthy food is going down my throat.*"

Now 60 years old, Larry will shock you by reciting the whole Bible, and remembering your ID number a year from now. Larry is ready to put on a show to put his knowledge to the test.

Fatima

Fatima ,43, has been on the street for five years. In her thirties, her husband, son and cousin were killed. The trauma of that experience caused her to turn to drugs. She did not want to be with anyone after her husband died but the loneliness and drugs led her to a life on the streets.

She now has another family, her street family, that accepts her, and she is like a mother to the community. They want a rehabilitation centre and workshops to fine-tune some of their skills, as many of them have skills. Fatima believes that everyone deserves another chance, and that homeless people just want a chance to prove themselves. If they get the chance, they will grab it with both hands.

Jonas

Jonas,40, is originally from Ravensmead and currently lives in Van Riebeeck Park.

Living in such close quarters with other people leads to friction, and a lot of tension can build up very quickly. They prefer to release that energy by getting jobs so they can get away from each other during the day. This helps to ease the tension. As a group they struggle to communicate with others as they have been hurt and rejected so many times, sometimes because of their own behaviour. They know that people view them negatively. It comes with being homeless. Jonas believes that if people were to take time to get to know them or live with them they would experience a different reality – they would see a beautiful group of humans that are lovely to be with.

They have made a few mistakes; "*ons het opgemors* [we messed up]," says Jonas, but they want a second chance to become part of society again. They wish to be with their families again. He says everyone makes mistakes, but they did not have anyone to correct them when they started taking the wrong path. In the past, someone would give you a hiding if you did something wrong, but today nobody cares when you mess up – this has made Jonas and his community lose hope that people would support there wellbeing and has led to them giving up on any help from anyone.

He says the government could help them by curbing the sale of drugs and preventing alcoholism, as that is one of the main reasons why people end up on the street. They wish there could be one facility that could provide the necessary training and skills that everyone needs, as they want to move forward and break out of the cycle of their mistakes.

Drawing strength from his faith, Jonas shared a few scriptures from the Bible in Afrikaans, reading from Matthew 6:25-26:

> "*Daarom sê Ek vir julle: Moet julle nie bekommer oor julle lewe, oor wat julle moet eet of drink nie, of oor julle liggaam, oor wat julle moet aantrek nie. Is die lewe nie belangriker as kos en die liggaam*

as klere nie? Kyk na die wilde voëls; hulle saai nie en hulle oes nie en hulle maak nie in skure bymekaar nie; julle hemelse Vader sorg vir hulle. Is julle nie baie meer werd as hulle nie?"

English translation: "Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

Leanne

Twenty-seven-year old Leanne grew up with her grandparents in Mitchells Plain. Her own mother was on the streets, and her grandfather was the only breadwinner in a house with twelve grandchildren. She had a very abusive upbringing: at the age of eight her grandfather started raping her and sexually abused her until the age of 12. When she finally mustered the courage to speak up, her grandmother beat her and nobody would believe her.

At 15, she met her father's family for the first time and went to live with them. Her father and uncle were in prison, so her uncle's wife looked after her and made sure she went to school. However, when her father was released from prison, everything changed, and she was sent to an orphanage in Mitchells Plain. She was subsequently placed in multiple orphanages, but she kept running away. When she turned 18, her social worker gave up on her as she was difficult to manage. Leanne believes that this is where the system failed her, and that if there had been a place that would look after her when she turned 18, her life would have been very different.

She was on the streets in Cape Town for three years, before moving to the streets of Parow where her mother was also on the street. Here she started using crystal meth and mandrax, and ended up going to prison for a year.

She decided to go to Sultan Bahu Rehabilitation Centre, where she got treatment, and was then referred to one of the City's Safe Spaces. She has now been clean for two years and two months, and her life has completely changed – she was broken when she arrived at Sultan Bahu, but she received counselling and decided to change, not only for her son, but for herself as well.

She shares that her 7-year-old son is the sweetest thing in her life. Leanne realised that her son is not a burden, and that being a mother is a wonderful thing, "*jy makeer nie jou kind nie, jou kind makeer jou,* [you do not need your child, your child needs you*]*" says Leanne.

She has done a few courses, but she is still struggling to find work. The shelter manager is always there to support her, and he is like the father she never had. She is happy at the Safe Space and is dealing with her addiction by changing her 'PPTs': *Places* she used drugs, *People* she used drugs with, and the *Things* she used to do. She believes God has a plan for her, and she thanks Him every day. If she gets a job, she knows she will be able to put her life back together.

Daniel

Daniel, 59, has been living at a Safe Space for three years, where he has been treated well. Daniel has been on the waiting list to receive an RDP house since 1999.

When his father got sick, his sister took him to the housing department where he unknowingly signed the house over to her. She is still living in their parents' house, but he has to live on the streets.

For Daniel, the worst part of living on the street is the cold: sometimes shelters are full, or security will chase you away from a warm place, and then you have to sleep between buildings until Law Enforcement chases you away.

He has written many letters to the housing department, but they consistently tell him that he must wait as he is on the list. He would consider going to an old age home, but the application process takes on average four years. Daniel does not want to wait that long, so he hasn't applied to go to an old age home.

Daniel wishes that the government would make use of all the land in our country to build more houses.

Christiaan

> "People ask, 'who robbed you?' But it's dark and they all look the same, they have dirty clothes on, and when you go to the police they don't take you seriously because you are homeless."

Christiaan feels very discriminated against because he is white, and he feels he is being targeted. He currently has two court cases against people who robbed him.

Christiaan used to have his own security company, but he lost everything due to a poor business decision. Being on the streets has caused him to turn to drugs, but he is currently trying to get clean through a new virtual reality program with Sultan Bahu. It's is the first programme of its kind in the world. He is trying to get his life back but is struggling to find a job, as he is often told he is too dirty. He also feels that his qualifications are too high for most jobs.

Christiaan has unfortunately garnered a bad reputation amongst the shelters, after he was kicked out of one in Bellville when someone attacked him, and he put it on Facebook. Now all the shelters are against him and tell him they have no space. He sees others being booked into shelters but he has to sleep outside on the street. He says he is often robbed and assaulted – so he uses drugs to stay awake. He feels very neglected by the government and thinks that they should ensure that shelters aren't misusing donations and that they are treating people fairly.

Feeling Safe at a Safe Space

Jerome has been at a Safe Space for 37 days – and he has been clean for 37 days. He has used crystal meth for over 15 years, and heroin for the past three years. It all started when he was partying with his friends, and they put meth in their cooldrinks. From there he started to smoke it and inject it, and his usage kept getting worse and worse. This is his third time getting clean, but this time he is doing it for the right reasons: he is doing it for himself, not his mother or his daughter. He realised that he had hit rock bottom and his life had become unmanageable.

He has an 8-year-old daughter in Pretoria, who is his inspiration. He wants to be able to steal her heart again. Safe Space is equipping him with useful tools, and he realises that he must be motivated and willing. He is currently going through outpatient rehabilitation with Sultan Bahu's 7-week programme, while receiving counselling at Safe Space. He has not told his parents he is in rehabilitation yet, as they will think he is repeating his old pattern. Only his friend Jerome knows that this time it is different. He has kept his trauma bottled up and explains how difficult it is to work through his trauma while experiencing withdrawal symptoms. He is however committed to get through it.

Jerome is hoping to get a bursary to further his studies at a college, and then he hopes to get a job. He wants to save enough money to visit his daughter in Pretoria and his mother in America. Jerome is hoping to mend his relationship with his daughter's mother, but he knows he must prove himself. He realises that one cannot expect people to forgive and forget.

Safe Space has given him a structured daily routine, as well as a support structure to listen to him and help him work through things. It is a difficult path, but Jerome knows it will be worth it. When he was using drugs, he used to put God last. This time, he says, he is flipping the cycle. His belief in God is his foundation, and he has three priorities: "*God, family, me-time.*"

The Van Riebeeck Park Community

Chris

When they were rounding everyone up for lockdown, the social workers would not tell them where they were taking them. When they were released from Strandfontein, and eventually returned to the mountain, all their things had been removed.

At Strandfontein, the supplies and donations received were not divided fairly, and only a small amount was actually given to the homeless people. The food that they were given was not nutritious and it upset their stomachs. Everyone was split up, and things were not done properly. In Chris's opinion, one man who is very good at thinking of solutions is Carlos Mesquita, who ran the homeless people's committee at Strandfontein. He will always salute Carlos as he stuck with them and kept his word.

During lockdown, Chris and one of his friends washed the disabled people's bodies and clothing, and he felt very privileged to be in a position where he could help others, but those in charge at Strandfontein still treated him like he was nothing.

Chris is 38 years old and he has been on the street for 20 years. He became a chef when he was young, and had a good job where he got training for almost two and a half years. He was married, had a son and a home in Mitchells Plain, but he had to travel often for work. He sent most of his income to his wife, who spent it all on shopping and purchasing unnecessary items, which put a lot of strain on their relationship.

His wife's grandfather was a good man, but when his wife started stealing and selling her grandfather's furniture, John received the blame and her grandfather beat him up. The trauma, stress and pressure from his wife and her family became too much for Chris and after a while, "*jy weet nie wat de moer gat aan nie* [you don't know what the hell is going on]," said Chris. Therefore, he resigned from his job to receive the

small amount of pension money. He regrets his decision to this day and believes his life would have been very different if he kept his job.

He left his wife because she was too materialistic for him; as he puts it: "*Love isn't about gold and diamonds; it is about how you support each other.*" He went to Street People's Ministry in 2000, where he was helped by Lorraine, Shaun and Maxine, who are like family to him. They ran an independent shelter and treated people well.

John came back to the mountain after lockdown, as things are better for him there, but Law Enforcement often comes and searches their makeshift homes when they are away. They have planted drugs on them and in their camp in order to arrest them. Law enforcement beats them when they try to stop them from entering the places they have made as their homes. Law enforcement fails to treat them like humans, as if they do not have rights because they live on the streets.

Lydia

Lydia was attacked by a man just around the corner from Van Riebeeck Park. She hit him with a rock on his head to defend herself and inflicted a big gash on his head. He laid a case against her and she was sentenced to four years in prison. She spent two years in Pollsmoor prison, and two years in Lentegeur hospital. She used to do many drugs, including bath salts and tik, but she has been clean for four years now. She was released six months ago and has since returned home to her children, but she often comes to the park where she used to live to come and visit her other family.

The court had decided that she must go for one more month of observation, so she will return to Lentegeur hospital in January; afterwards she will be done with her sentence and can get her new life started.

Rodney

Sixty-five-year old Rodney is one of the people who started the camp approximately nine years ago. He does not use drugs, except for dagga, cigarettes and some beer and wine. His health is fine, but when he asked Law Enforcement to help him get into an old age home, nothing came of it. Law Enforcement often bully them and fine them when they make fires to cook food.

Maggie

> "*When you sleep on the streets, you need to sleep with one eye open,*" Maggie says, with her one eye open and the other screwed shut.

Maggie was raped three weeks ago in De Waal Park. All her things were stolen and her tent was burned down. She says one cannot make a case against gangsters, because they will hunt you down and take everything you have.

Maggie longs for change. She does not understand how people can curse her and set their dogs after her when she knocks on their doors and respectfully asks for something to eat. She does not steal; she is just hungry.

Maggie wants a qualification behind her name so that she can get a job. At 49, she has been on the street for 12 years. She used to work in a clothing factory in Epping and has learnt to make jewellery out of beads and to draw, but her parents kicked her out of the house for talking back to them. Maggie has daughters, and she prays every day that the same does not happen to them. Originally from Greyton, Maggie is a beautiful woman who follows the New Apostolic faith and believes that there is a man up there who doesn't sleep, and that if you believe, things will happen for you and God will provide.

She has overcome much in her life: she has been raped five times and is a cancer survivor. But she thanks God every day that she is free from drugs and she knows that with Him everything is possible; she truly believes miracles can happen.

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