PATHWAYS OUT OF HOMELESSNESS

Research Report
2015
SUMMARY

TSHWANE HOMELESSNESS FORUM

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

CITY OF TSHWANE
IGNITING EXCELLENCE

UNISA | university of south africa

PATHWAYS OUT OF HOMELESSNESS

BACKGROUND TO AND ESSENCE OF THE PROJECT: *PATHWAYS OUT OF HOMELESSNESS*

Homelessness: An expression of social, economic and spatial inequality

The National Development Plan 2030 is about creating a society built on principles of social justice. It aims to remove poverty and reduce inequalities by 2030. This can only be achieved if the basic freedoms of people enshrined in the Constitution are assured.

Since the demise of apartheid in 1994 the South Africa landscape has fundamentally changed. The end of racially identified spaces has also contributed to a transformation of cityscapes. Migration into the cities is a global trend and in this regard South African cities join their world counterparts in finding ways to accommodate the influx of rural and cross-border migrants, both documented and undocumented. How we deal with this reflects our commitment to upholding the rights to basic freedom and framing our discourse and actions on development within this context as well.

the street homeless are the proverbial skeletons at the feast, the excluded poorest who enter unobserved and stand by, gaunt and starved, terrifying to the invited guests but deprived of any capacity to join the party (Cross, et al 2010, Development South Africa)
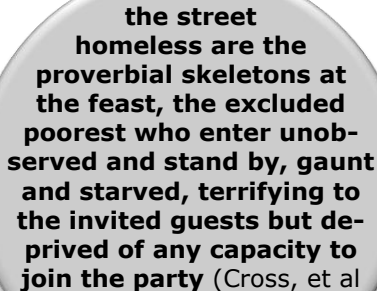
Activism: A catalyst for collaboration

In May 2014 residents of a shelter in the City of Tshwane were handed an eviction notice asking them to leave the shelter with one day's notice. No alternative accommodation was offered for 600 people residing in the shelter. This faux pas of the City of Tshwane became a catalyst for different actors in the City to challenge this inhuman action.

At a meeting convened between the Executive Mayor, the Tshwane Homelessness Forum and the MMC for Social Development, the City of Tshwane admitted the gaps in policies to specifically address issues of homelessness in the City. The previous attempts of trying to address issues of homelessness came to nought and it was agreed that a social contract be established between the different role players and in this way ensure that the basic rights contained in Chapter 9 of the Constitution are implemented.

A social justice imperative: The social contract as an act of collective commitment

Addressing homelessness required an innovative approach and previous experiences of the City of Tshwane actually demonstrated such an approach as essential in dealing with issues of homelessness. It was agreed that homelessness must be addressed as a social justice concern and not as part of a charitable context. This demanded expanding the representativity and now includes higher academic institutions, the City of Tshwane, NGO's, CBO's and FBO's and people who are homeless or formerly homeless.

This approach supported the signing of a social contract as representing a formal commitment to wrest homelessness out of a negative paradigm and locate it within a context where movement of people towards the city is accepted as part of a global social reality that is shaping the future and the cityscape. However, once people arrive in the city they often face precarious conditions. Their right to belong in the city, to share in the city's resources and to participate in city-making had to be acknowledged.

The different partners accepted the social contract as a visible and public act to formalise their collective commitment towards the eradication of homelessness in the City. This social contract is founded on principles of social justice and basic human rights and puts homelessness at the centre of its reflection. In this way, any policies designed to address homelessness have to incorporate these basic principles. It is formal document where principles of social justice inform the outcomes.

For the spirit of the social contract to be honoured, a workable implementation vehicle needs to be formed, to operationalise the collaboration of different role players. Mutual accountability and commitment is essential to realise an agenda to create just and sustainable alternatives out of homelessness.

Research agenda and process

The period leading up to the signing of the social contract was dedicated to understanding homelessness and creating a deeper awareness of the complexities and challenges in moving towards finding durable solutions to eradicate homelessness. The project partners agreed that such solutions must be people-centred and designed to create possibilities of reducing inequalities in the City.

In the *Research Report of 10 October 2015* details are provided of how the different research clusters contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges related to homelessness in the City of Tshwane. This opportunity to address homelessness in a holistic and comprehensive manner brought a whole range of disciplines and sectors together, that contributed different kinds of academic, non-academic and experiential knowledge.

To facilitate a conceptualising and a constant production of knowledge around homelessness, three clusters were created: documenting existing practices; documenting narratives of homeless and former homeless people; and doing a critical appraisal of policy documents in conversation with the global, national and local policy environment. All worked with the same brief of creating bodies of knowledge on homelessness to inform Policy and Strategy for street homelessness in the City of Tshwane as well as provide reflections on creating pathways out of homelessness.

Research conducted thus far points to the importance of, and supports using a multi-disciplinary and inter-sectorial approach. The different facets of homelessness actively challenge a "one-size fits all" approach for it goes against the grain of providing sustainable alter-natives to homeless in the City.

The physical, socio-spatial, medical and mental well-being of homeless people, and interventions aimed at addressing such concerns, was addressed by a cluster constituting experts form the social, medical and spatial resource areas. More than 150 narratives of homeless and former homeless people were documented. 76 interviews were conducted with practitioners representing 19 practices or services addressing homelessness in the City. Health assessments with homeless people were conducted. Spatial patterns were traced and GIS maps drawn up. Information from Statistics South Africa informed the spatial dynamics and concentrations of homelessness in the city. And an intensive engagement with literature has assisted in developing a conceptual framework.

Collecting narratives of homelessness and homeless experiences was essential in mapping the different trajectories that led to vulnerability and homelessness, but also gave cues and insights into sustainable pathways out of homelessness.

**Protecting and advancing
the rights of the homeless**

The research findings emphasized the importance of making homeless people and the broader public as well as law enforcement agencies aware of the socio-economic rights of homeless people.

The principal aim of this part of the project was to generate an acceptable and a credible body of knowledge on homelessness to ensure that such knowledge not only inform policy making but also empower homeless persons regarding their basic social and human rights as enshrined in Chapter 9 of the Constitution.

For the sake of providing an idea of the urgency in finding pathways out of homelessness, we cite figures from **Statistics South Africa 2011**. We consider these figures as a guide, for migration is a dynamic process.

Our experiences in the field show that influx into the City is a constant. While Statistics South Africa 2011 put the number of **street homeless people in the City of Tshwane at 6,244,** we argue that this is a conservative estimate which since 2011 has increased.

32,1% from inside Gauteng; 52,1% from other provinces in SA; 15,8% foreign migrants

60% are *in the inner city* and 40% *in the suburbs*

54% male, 46% female; 55% black, 39% white, 3,1% coloured, 2,1% Indian, 0,6% other

33,4%: **YOUTH** between 20-29
21,4%: **ELDERLY PEOPLE** 65 years+

DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF STREET HOMELESSNESS (Hartshorne 1992)
- Economic homelessness
- Situational homelessness
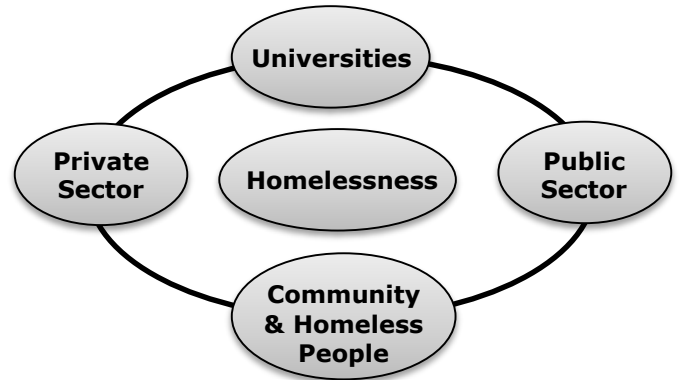- Chronic homelessness
- "Near" homelessness

Required: a new kind of politics
- A politics of compassion
- A politics of generosity
- A politics of social justice

Beyond academic knowledge

Local contexts as *studios* where practitioners, local government, and community members "work with academic researchers to jointly decipher the most urgent questions that require sustained action" (cf. Edgar Pieterse 2014)

Beyond community engagement

Beyond policy

➢ A social covenant
➢ A broad-based collaboration vehicle
➢ On-going evidence-based research methodology

1 The city as home for all
2 Affirming the human dignity of every person
3 Bridging the gap of disparity
4 Encouraging and Practicing Collective Citizenship
5 Advancing social justice and holistic freedom

**PRIORITY AREAS
FOR STRATEGIC
INTERVENTION**

Priority 1:
creating **diverse
housing options**

Priority 2:
facilitating **economic
opportunity**

Priority 3:
ensuring appropriate
and accessible
**psycho-social and
health care
infrastructure**

Priority 4:
facilitating an ongoing
**advocacy, education
and awareness-
raising programme**

Priority 5:
ensuring appropriate
**institutional
infrastructure:**
implementation,
resourcing,
assessment

VISION *The complete integration of street homeless people into the City of Tshwane's mainstream society through activities and interventions aimed at the prevention and management of street homelessness and the facilitation of sustainable pathways out of street homelessness.*

MISSION *To provide equitable, appropriate and sustainable policies, services, programmes and benefits, in partnership with homeless people, different institutions, service providers, and the community at large, through a holistic and integrated developmental approach, based on specific points of departure and guiding principles, preventing and reducing street homelessness, enhancing the quality of life of street homeless people in Tshwane, and contributing to a liveable, resilient and inclusive city.*

AIM AND OBJECTIVES of POLICY AND STRATEGY
The *AIM*
- to prevent and reduce street homelessness
- through effective, appropriate and holistic responses
- both addressing emergencies and creating long-term infrastructure to break the cycle of homelessness

The *OBJECTIVES*
- to humanize the approach to street homelessness
- to identify needs for care and support, facilitate the provision of appropriate care, and prevent homelessness whenever possible
- to provide sustainable, long term solutions to homelessness through a holistic re-integration strategy and action programme
- to move towards the systematic integration of street homelessness into all policies, plans, programmes and strategies at all levels and within all sectors and institutions of government
- to develop and promote a coordinated, inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary, integrated approach in designing and executing programmes and intentions regarding street homelessness – ensuring alignment between and coordination of policies and actions facilitating greater synergy
- to conduct on-going research and make reliable, up-to-date information on homelessness available in the City of Tshwane in order to inform policy makers and facilitate programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
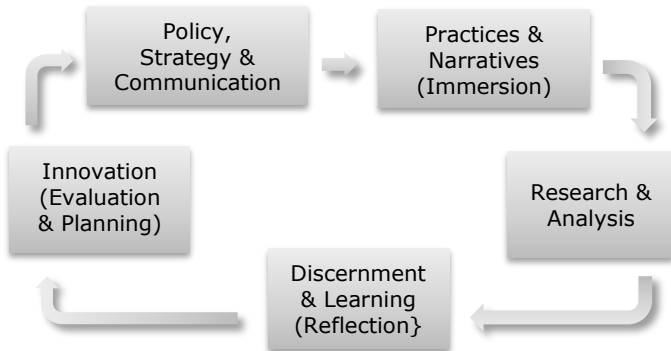
CONTINUUM OF CARE AND EMPOWERMENT

Listening Presence → Communities of care → Empowerment

	Pre-phase	Phase 1	Phase 2	Re-integration
Psycho-social-spiritual	Socially and emotionally disconnected	Street out-reach Drop-in/ assessment centres Street health care Counselling & referrals Support groups	Volunteering Participation in social networks, Churches & community forums Reconciled with children & family	Contributing neighbours & citizens
Physical	Home-less Near homeless	Overnight shelter Transitional housing	Social housing	Secure housing tenure
Economic	Unemployed Underemployed	Skills training Employment preparation Internships	Employment access SMME-creation	Long-term employment Sustainable livelyhoods

(Adapted from a Continuum of Care and Empowerment, developed by the *Tshwane Leadership Foundation*)
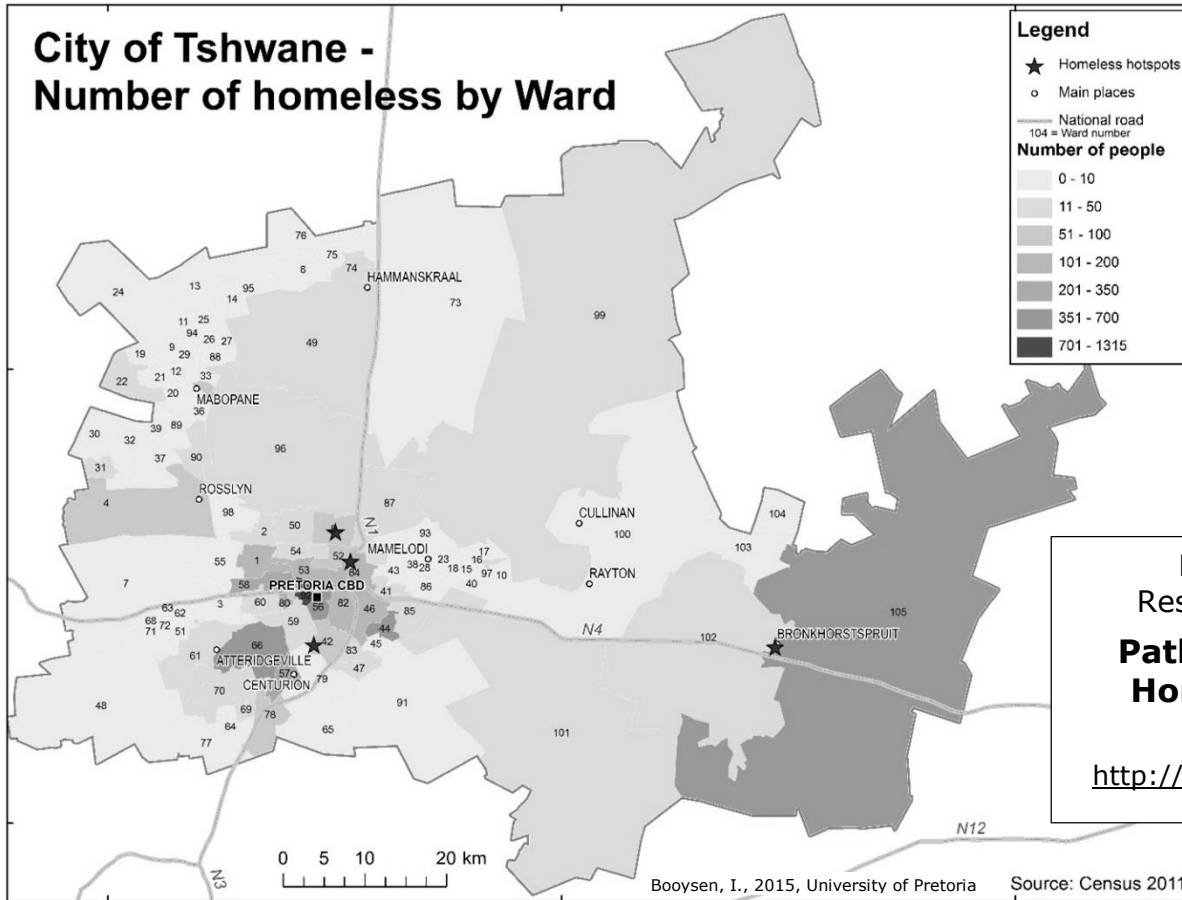
METHODOLOGY FOR RESEARCH-POLICY-ACTION

Policy, Strategy & Communication → Practices & Narratives (Immersion) → Research & Analysis → Discernment & Learning (Reflection} → Innovation (Evaluation & Planning) → (back to Policy, Strategy & Communication)

*(De Beer, S, 2015,**Pathways out of Homelessness**, Unpublished Research Report, University of Pretoria)*

City of Tshwane - Number of homeless by Ward

Legend
★ Homeless hotspots
○ Main places
— National road
104 = Ward number
Number of people
0 - 10
11 - 50
51 - 100
101 - 200
201 - 350
351 - 700
701 - 1315

We hereby express our deep appreciation to all organizations and individuals who associate themselves with this collaborative to find and support pathways out of homelessness.

For the full Research Report

Pathways out of Homelessness

go to
http://wp.me/P5FOOl-5J

Booysen, I., 2015, University of Pretoria   Source: Census 2011

Lay-out and design
Ernst Muller

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