

# Pathways out of homelessness



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# BACKGROUND

“For the development state, the street homeless are the proverbial skeletons of 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)

# BACKGROUND

The urgency of the matter

- not about intellectual discourse or research findings
- cannot be dealt with technocratically or bureaucratically

It is about life and death:-

- the dignity of every human being
- justice being done to all

To be steered by passion and vision and reflective action

- which will ensure policy, strategy, budgets, institutional infrastructure, appropriate skills & broad-based partnerships
- from below and from above

*For every day in which street homelessness is not prioritized it is another day in which we deem the most vulnerable among us to be worthless*

# BACKGROUND

**This presentation:-**

## **Part 1**

The *research project* > Summit > policy and strategy recommendations

## **Part 2**

*One year later* > developments / obstacles and challenges

## **Conclusion**

- City of Tshwane
- National collaboration

# PART I

## The Research Project

Birthered in activism > media reports > meeting with the EM

### **Purpose of the collaborative**

- To engage in an intensive research process
- To design, plan and host the first ever Tshwane Homeless Summit
- To propose a review of the current policy on street homelessness
- To draft and propose a strategy and investment plan to address homelessness



# An Engaged, Trans-Disciplinary Project

“Pathways out of homelessness”

## Research methods >

- 1 Documenting existing practices (40-50)
- 2 Documenting lived experiences / narratives of (former) homeless people
- 3 Policy appraisal in relation to other policies and literature
- 4 Tshwane Homeless Summit (25-26 May 2015)

➤ A combination of action research, ethnographic interviews, focus groups, documentary analysis, literature studies and open source technology





# Definitions



**Street homelessness refers to people**

- who live on the streets (on pavements, under bridges, in parks, etc)
- who fall outside a viable social network of assistance
- who are not able to find themselves shelter at a given time or place

# Definition

Hartshorne (1992) differentiates between

- Economic homelessness
- Situational homelessness
- Chronic homelessness
- “Near” homelessness



# The changing face of homelessness in South Africa / Tshwane today

100,000 – 200,000 street homeless people (HSRC, 2010)

Abolition of the Influx Control Act (1986)

City of Tshwane: 6,500 street homeless people

City of Tshwane: 32,1% (Gauteng); 52,1% (elsewhere in SA); 15,8% (foreign)

Suburbanization of street homelessness: 44% of street homeless people

21,1% over 65 years of age > 33,4% between 20 and 29

De-institutionalization of people with mental health problems

Refugees and asylum-seekers >>> GLOBAL URBAN MIGRATION

Recurrent theme with officials – there are “no homeless people”

# Tshwane Homeless Summit

## 25-26 May 2016

Between 400 and 500 people  
50% homeless and former homeless people  
50% officials, politicians, NGO leaders,  
religious leaders, researchers,  
business, police

Combination of research  
Feedback, World Cafe  
style conversations and  
round table interaction





# **Policy and Strategy**

## ***Towards a new kind of politics***

### **A politics of compassion**

- Compassion literally understood > solidarity and an assertion of our collective humanity

### **A politics of generosity**

- An ethical commitment , going beyond giving that violates the receiver > radical hospitality > reciprocity

### **A politics of justice**

- Addressing structural causes > affirming people's right to the city > ensuring spatial transformation

# Policy and Strategy

## *Guiding principles*

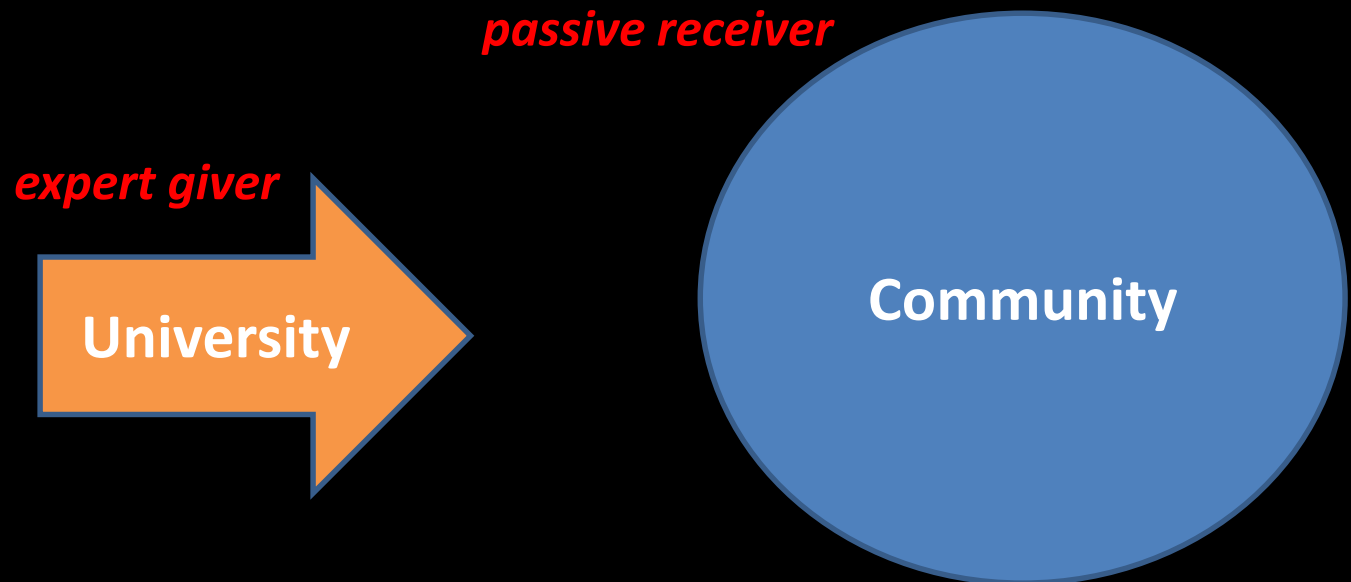
- 1 The city as home for all
- 2 Affirming the human dignity of every person
- 3 Bridging the gap of disparity
- 4 Encouraging and practising collective citizenship
- 5 Advancing social justice and holistic freedom

# EXPLORING COLLABORATIVE ACTION

- ① Beyond community engagement
- ② Beyond academic knowledge
- ③ Beyond policy documents

# EXPLORING COLLABORATIVE ACTION

## ① *Beyond community engagement*

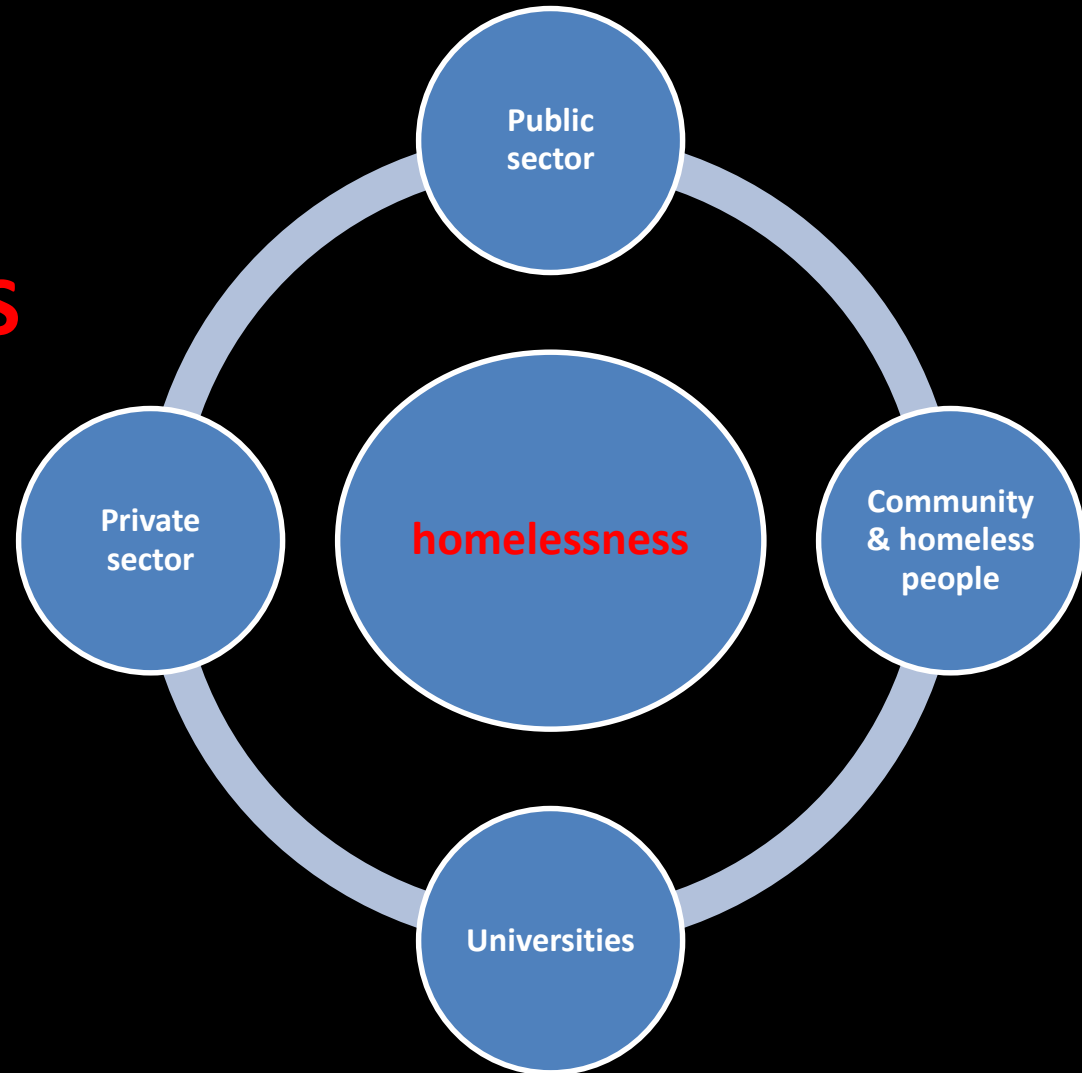




# EXPLORING COLLABORATIVE ACTION

## ① *Beyond community engagement*

**ENGAGED  
COMMUNITIES**



# EXPLORING COLLABORATIVE ACTION

## ② *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)

**TSHWANE  
HOMELESSNESS  
FORUM**



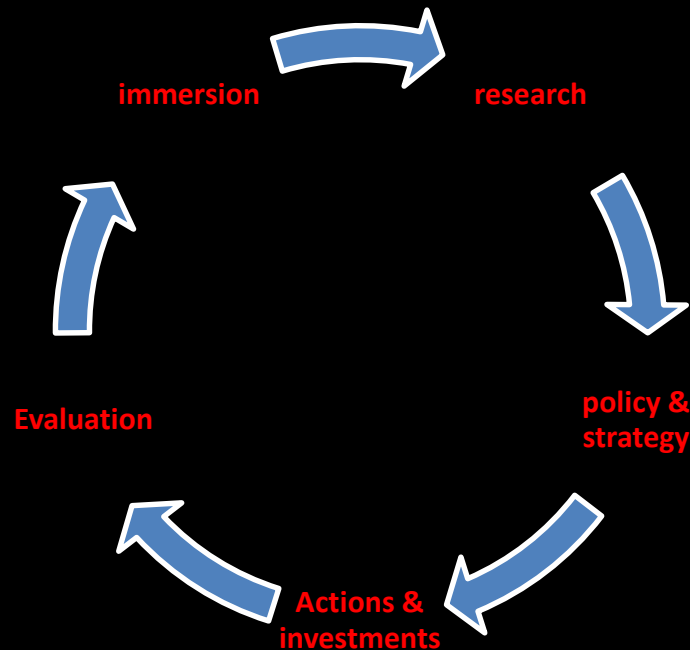
**WE SEE  
HEALTHY & VIBRANT  
COMMUNITIES  
FLOURISHING IN GOD'S  
ESENCE**



# EXPLORING COLLABORATIVE ACTION

## 3 Beyond policy documents

- A social covenant
- Broad-based collaboration
- On-going evidence-based research methodology





# EXPLORING COLLABORATIVE ACTION

## 3 Beyond policy documents

- A social covenant: 10 October 2016
- Broad-based collaboration
- On-going evidence-based research methodology
- Fostering shifts from charity / welfare to justice / investment
- Decentralize social infrastructure: proximity and access
- Senior citizens, substance abuse, mental health
- Introducing a street medicine programme
- Social housing companies thinking innovatively about integrating homeless people
- Beyond criminalization > economic development (recyclers)
- Self-help groups & employment
- Academic bursaries (UNISA)
- Awareness-raising
- World Homeless Day > a March of solidarity

# EXPLORING COLLABORATIVE ACTION

## 3 Beyond policy documents

### Strategic priority areas

- 1 Diverse housing options
- 2 Economic opportunity
- 3 Psycho-social-health infrastructure
- 4 Awareness-raising and public education
- 5 Institutional infrastructure

➤ Investing in change: from R 650,000 pa City Budget to R 20 million pa (proposed)

# ONE YEAR LATER: positive developments

Social contract being signed

Ground work being done for an institutional vehicle: NPO

Tshwane Homelessness Forum gaining momentum

Researchers staying committed: focusing on senior citizens, mental health, suburbanization of homelessness & student homelessness

Action plan drafted and implemented

Street medicine programme launched

Sub-forum to coordinate and replicate services

Senior citizens: housing and HelpAge

Inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers

Regional champions emerging

Religious leaders responding

Student homelessness (slowly but surely) acknowledged

# ONE YEAR LATER: obstacles & challenges

The above happened, mostly in spite of the City

Policy and strategy not yet adopted (in spite of social contract and public commitment)

Lack of city budget

Lack of appropriate and integrated policy at provincial and national levels

City shelter: growing crisis

Lack of executive leadership (and will?)

Break-down in communication between partners and the City

Regional 'champions': slowly emerging

Access to land or buildings (different regions)

Collaboration remains a challenge

Private sector still views homelessness (and organizations dealing with homelessness) as an issue for 'charity'

# Conclusion

## **So what? Anything new?**

- Proper framework for implementation
- Stronger civil society collaboration – universities & new partners
- Strong research impetus
- Strong pilot initiatives to be supported and sustained
- Growing awareness

## **City of Tshwane**

- Local organizing > increasing pressure > electioneering issue > mini-Summit in June

## **National collaboration**

- A broader-based platform – Tshwane, Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg, etc > engaging provincial and national policy, strategy and budget
- Research, civic and homeless community

# The 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”

(Pathways out of Homelessness, Research Report, 2015, p54)