

A Prelude Report to the

The Inkathalo Conversations on Homelessness: Phase 1 Comprehensive Report

Friday, 9 October 2020



1. Introduction

The Inkathalo Conversations is a dialogical 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. This particular conversation was structured around a robust engagement methodology with the aim of creating a safe, honest and engaging dialogue among stakeholders. The stated outcome was to make direct and meaningful inputs into the future decision-making process pertaining to the review of the Street People Policy (2013), as well as to table recommendations that will help to shape a humane and right-based city-wide strategy to address homelessness in Cape Town.

Using this dialogical approach, the narratives of the marginalised as well as those working alongside homeless individuals, surfaced several lived experiences. The understandings that emerged have been translated into recommendations for amending the Street People Policy and for developing a strategy that is founded on care, human rights and justice.

On the 31st of July 2020, the City of Cape Town, through the office of Cllr Badroodien, requested The Inkathalo Conversations to facilitate an independent process that would provide recommendations that would improve the City's policies and strategies to address homelessness.

The process was divided into two phases:

a. Phase 1: 19 August 2020 to 10 October 2020

- Phase 1 included public submissions, pre-public hearings, in-person interviews and site visits.
- Phase 1 pre-public hearings took place at the Claremont Civic Centre.
- Phase 1 pre-public hearings took place from Wednesday 19 August 2020 and concluded on Wednesday, 23 September 2020.
- 3 Focus Group Discussions were held with homeless individuals.
- 2 Workshops were held with stakeholders.
- 6 Public submissions were received.
- 35 In-person presentations and interviews were done.
- Site visits were made to:
 - i. Riebeeck Park
 - ii. Area around Robbie Nurock
 - iii. Bellville Haven
 - iv. MES

- v. Paint City Safe Place
- vi. Informal settlement under Bellville Bridge

The findings of Phase 1 of The Inkathalo Conversations on Homelessness will be contained in a report titled **The Inkathalo Conversations on Homelessness: Phase 1 Comprehensive Report**.

This report will be released to the public and the City of Cape Town on Monday 30 November at 2pm.

b. Phase 2: Further research into issues raised in Phase 1

- Phase 2 of the research will start on Tuesday 10 November 2020 and is set to conclude on Friday 29 January 2021.
- The Phase 2 Report will be released on Wednesday 3 March 2021.

2. The Inkathalo Conversations: Strengthening a Constitutional Democracy

The Inkathalo Conversations are guided by the preamble to the South African Constitution. 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;

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.

3. Summary Overview of the Phase 1 Engagement

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 the individual parts. As such, the comprehensive report will seek to:

- Document and present the conversations that took place through a systemic lens, with a deep appreciation for the interconnectedness of people, communities and social, civic and state institutions;
- Reflect the system's impact on people 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 that those who, familiar with being silenced, have bravely offered through their voices and their writing – as they, along with all of us, continue to believe and trust 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 all 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” (Paulo Freire, 1968).

The Inkathalo Conversations is a platform for real stories, trauma and deep reflections to be heard. Being heard forms such a fundamental basis to being accepted as a fellow human. The ongoing lament throughout Phase 1 was the voices of homeless people stating that they “are never heard.” Many homeless people are never heard, which leads to parts of society treating them as sub-human. Our obligation, as those who heard, is to develop a deep understanding, in order to treat one another with love, humility, compassion, and justice. Those who will read the Phase I Comprehensive Report might find their own personal beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, judgements, and assumptions reflected or challenged in many ways. It is our hope that the report remains an invitation to read with courageous humility and to engage with meaningful integrity.

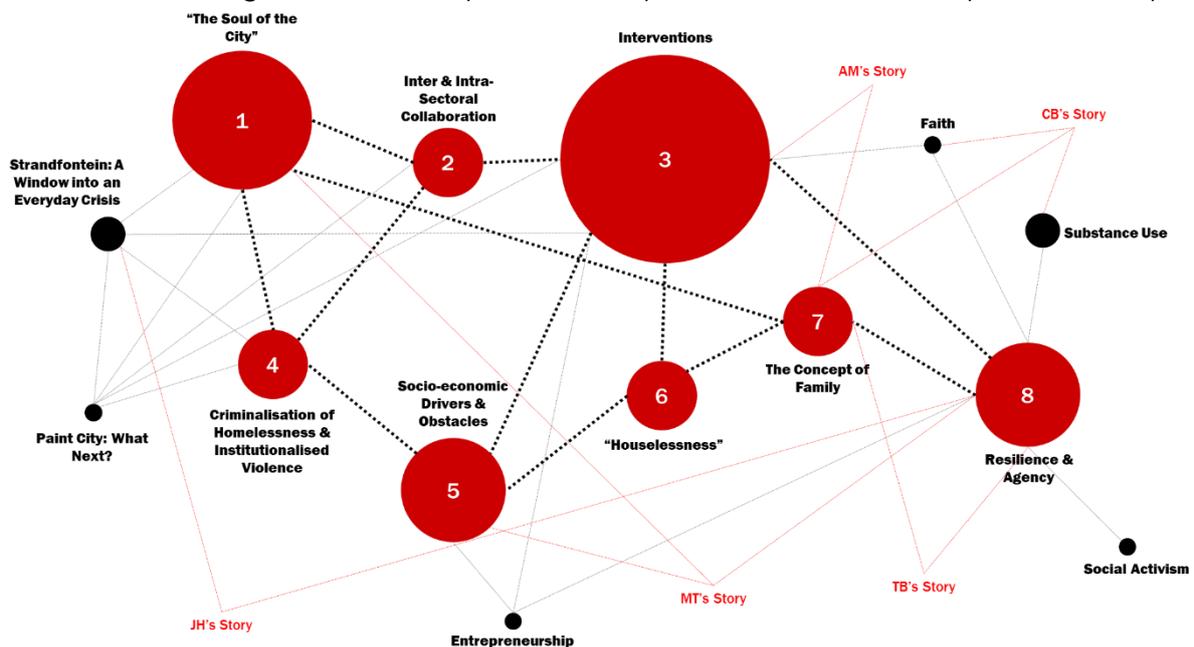
4. The Structure of the Phase 1 Comprehensive Report

The most prominent themes that emerged are grouped into eight core areas, also referred to as “Eight Emergent Conversations”. The size of the bubble below 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, which have taken place because of a number of interconnected actions, and trace their systemic consequences, which have surfaced in addition to the emergent themes, referred to above.

Thirdly, the report shares the stories of selected individuals – their varying pathways into their current circumstances and their experiences, showing that there is no single story and that our lives cut across multiple themes.

Figure 1: Preliminary Content Map of the Phase One Comprehensive Report



5. The Eight Emergent Conversations

A detailed analysis and synthesis of the submitted data and inputs received, reveal eight critical conversations that translated into eight chapters in the report. These chapters contain personal narratives, sector presentations and publications as well as local and international research.

Chapter 1: The Soul of the City

This chapter captures some of the ways in which society continues to perpetuate harmful and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours towards those who are homeless. It shows how homeless individuals navigate perceptions, stigmas, and derogatory treatment, and how these painful experiences impact on the identity, behaviour and responses of homeless people. Inputs received from suburban homeowners, community action networks, and faith-based groups reveal the dissonant narratives that exist among “the housed” towards the homeless. It also starkly highlights the need for all citizen behaviour to be aligned to the human rights stipulations of the South African constitution, and in particular, the aspirations stated in its Preamble.

Chapter 2: Inter/Intra-sectoral Connection and Collaboration

This chapter describes and seeks to analyse the institutional frameworks that seek to address homelessness across transversal public and civic 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 civil society groups/NGO sector in addressing homelessness. While it raises many of the challenges, shortcomings and even 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 ongoing abuse, violence and injustice suffered by homeless individuals in the City. This abuse, violence and injustice has been amplified by events such as Strandfontein, the ongoing municipal fines, and reports received of intimidation by law enforcement structures. The accounts provided by homeless persons overwhelmingly indicate that society and the State make a connection between homelessness and criminality. This informs the State's response to homeless people as one of criminal engagement. Ironically, the harassment, denial of justice, and in some cases, outright violence experienced by homeless individuals in turn render them the victims of crime.

Chapter 5: Socio-economic Drivers and Obstacles

This chapter describes the homeless ecosystem. It analyses the challenges experienced by homeless people in their attempts to build sustainable livelihoods within an ecosystem of extreme poverty and social and economic discrimination. Low economic growth, high rates of unemployment, and spatial inequality are just some of the macro-system challenges that influence personal circumstances. However, the chapter surfaces unexpected tales of resourcefulness and ingenuity that reveal a hidden world of economic opportunity.

Chapter 6: Homelessness - 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 psycho-social implications of constant insecurity. It explores the tension that exists 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

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 wonderful 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 other street-based persons and groups, faith-based communities, shelters, individuals who have aided them and even prison. The notion of family – in all its diverse definitions - remains a sought-after ideal.

Chapter 8: Agency and Resilience

This chapter explores the tensions between vulnerability and the inner strength, volition, and capability 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 incredible stories of courage, activism and self-organising.

6. Special Features

The Special Features section includes incredible stories of the entrepreneurial spirit of homeless individuals, the role that faith and street-learning has played in many individuals' lives, some of the more nuanced challenges associated with substance use, as well as inspiring accounts of active citizenship arising from surprising places. Within the Special Features section, the report presents the story of the Strandfontein 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.

7. Our Recommendations

Out of the eight chapters, the research team has compiled a wealth of recommendations for consideration and implementation at City, State and civil society level. These recommendations will hopefully be used to inform policies and strategies that will guide engagement with homeless people in conformity with the Constitution of South Africa as well as international best practices.

8. Our Hope

It is our hope that the soon to be released Phase 1 Comprehensive Report will serve the call in the preamble to the South African 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 deepens who we are as a people, as a country and as a democracy, and most importantly, invites you to be a part of that same journey.

This Prelude Report is submitted by:



Melene Rossouw



Lorenzo Davids

The Inkathalo Conversations is convened by Colleen Brocker, Director of The Inkathalo Conversations.

The Inkathalo Conversations Phase 1 Comprehensive Report will be edited by Melene Rossouw and Lorenzo Davids.

The Inkathalo Conversations Phase 1 Comprehensive report is compiled by the Research, Writing and Design Team. Below is a list of the team members as well as their primary role during this process.

Name	Role	Qualification
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)
Lynn-Joy Isaacs	Researcher, capturer and writer	MA in Child and Family Studies (UWC)
Catherine Dodge	Researcher, capturer and writer	Sitting for MPhil in Inclusive Innovation (UCT GSB)
Ashley Roman	Researcher, capturer and writer	Sitting for MPhil in Inclusive Innovation (UCT GSB)

The Inkathalo Conversations were supported by a Voluntary Advisory Council (VAC). The VAC members include stakeholders from NGOs, CBOs, the 'Local Networks of Care', various arms of Government, etc. Their names and organisations are as follows:

Full Name	Organisation
Lucien Lewien	Dingley Marshall Inc.
Quinton Adams	The Shack Builder
Saarah Salie	Cape War Room
Dr Heidi Sauls	Department of Social Development
Shehnaz Cassem Moosa	City of Cape Town
Peter Solomons	The Hope Exchange
Jesse Laitenen	Street Peoples' Forum
Hannes van der Merwe	
Karen Cain	
Vivien Plundemen Hobbs	
Jonathan Hopkins	
Anda Mazatsana	Homeless Action Committee (HAC)
Carlos Mesquita	
Chantal Sampson	
Lance Fish	
John Hufckie	
Phindiwe Ndzunga	
Monwabisi Kajola	
Caroline Powell	Warehouse Trust
Francois Bruwer	Fisantekraal Centre for Development & Vriende van Durbanville
Pat Eddy	CT CID
Wilma Piek	VR CID
Rev Annie Kirke	More Than Peace
Derek Ronnie	Mediator and Conflict Resolution Practitioner

The Inkathalo Conversations Phase 1 Comprehensive Report will be released on Monday, 30 November 2020.