



## Paper 3

**Pathways into homelessness: Understanding how both internal and external factors contribute to homelessness in Durban**

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# Pathways to Homelessness

## Internal Factors

- School dropout mostly due to addiction to drugs**
- Substance abuse**
- Alcohol abuse**
- Failure to secure permanent employment or long term contract**
- Lack of skills suitable to meet the market demand**
- Loss of support system (loss of parents)**
- Domestic abuse and violence**

## Quote

“I had already [started] smoking and I couldn’t stay at home while smoking it because I didn’t want them to find out. I would always ask money for this and that saying they want things at school, [but] came results time my dad was surprised that if I am studying then where are the results! He started getting sick after finding out that I was smoking instango [cannabis]. He asked me for how long have I been smoking and why didn’t I tell him because I was always asking money from him. He then got discharged and asked that we reconcile and I come back home, but the family always had that thing that I am a trouble child so it was not good at all. So now I am just a person, smoking and I think of him every now and then” (Young adult female participant).

# Pathways to Homelessness (cont.)

## External/Structural factors

- Lack of access to and supply of affordable housing
- Poverty and lack of resources
- Poor access to the labor market
- Poor access to services and service exclusion
- Barriers to inclusion and participation in society
- Marginalization from society and from social networks, including negative attitudes to homeless people resulting in stigma, prejudice and discrimination.

## Quote

“My dad passed away in 1999 then I stayed with my mother. Most of the time I was staying with my mother, then she got sick and passed away as well. Then I stayed with my half-sister from my dad, she was mistreating me. When I had money I would support in the house but when I didn't have and asked her for money she will swear at me, so we had a disagreement then I ended up beating her up... I ended up beating her so I just decided that let me just leave because I will end up doing wrong things. I took a taxi and came here. I never thought I can live this kind of life but I was not happy.” (Young adult male participant)

# Structural Determinants of Homelessness: Pathways

## *Immediate causes*

These are the most apparent and identifiable causes that act at the level of the individual and family. Eg household poverty caused by shocks to the household such as death of parent.

## *Underlying causes*

Situations that may predispose a individual/family/community to experience cases of homelessness. E.g low rates of job opportunity causing people to migrate in search of economic opportunity

## *Structural/root causes*

Larger societal and economical factors that create an environment in which people are placed on a path that ultimately results in homelessness

# Process and Stages of homelessness

Stage 1:  
Leaving  
home

Stage 2:  
transition  
to street  
lifestyle

Stage 3:  
conform  
to street  
lifestyle

Stage 4: Get  
comfortable  
with street  
living and  
accept  
homelessness

Constant  
yearning  
and hope for  
a better life  
off the street

"I am from [a certain place]. That's where my home is. But my children were abusing me, especially the boys. I didn't know if it was because they started smoking or what; the older ones especially. That's how I came to leave home for Durban. I came here looking for part-time work and when I did get some work things would not always go well, sometimes I sell chips and things like that, I get some money for the shelter, I go to [certain people] to beg. That's how I try to support myself..."  
(South African female)

"I do not have mother and father and I gave up on life. Sometimes we take life for granted. I was staying with my step-mother and things were not too easy so I just gave up. She was mistreating me and I just felt that I am useless. So I just saw there is no hope. The only hope is the streets, so I went on the streets. I have been staying on the streets for a long time!"  
( South African male)



# IKHAYA LAMI: UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS IN DURBAN

Using participatory action research (PAR) to explore the plight of the street-and shelter living community in central Durban, South Africa.

International Conference on Community Psychology

28-30 May 2016

ICC, Durban



# Symposium Overview

This symposium presents the methodology and key findings of the first phase of a community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) study that examines the plight of street-living in central Durban, South Africa. This on-going “*Homelessness study*” is conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council in partnership with eThekweni Municipality-Safer Cities unit and aims to understand a) the pathways to street-living; b) how people survive living on the streets; c) the support needs and challenges faced by the street-living; and c) the number of people who are currently living on the streets in central Durban. To achieve this, we adopted a mixed method, two-phase approach that incorporates life history interviews, focus group discussions and an upcoming census phase. This symposium will be presented in the form of six research papers.

Paper 1	Ms. Furzana Timol	Understanding homelessness: Research protocol of a multiphase mixed method community based participatory action research study
Paper 2	Dr. Ernest Khalema	Methodological Framework: Community-based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR)
<b>Questions of clarity</b>		
Paper 3	Mr. Kombi Sausi	Pathways into homelessness: Understanding how both internal and external factors contribute to homelessness in Durban
Paper 4	Dr. Candice Groenewald	“you have to know your story. You have to know who you are. You have to be strong”: Survival strategies of persons living on the streets.
Paper 5	Ms. Zinhle Mthembu	Challenges and Support needs of persons living on the streets: Findings from the ‘ <i>Homelessness study</i> ’
Paper 6	Dr. Chris Desmond	Reflections on the <i>Homelessness study</i> : Implications and recommendations for research, practice and policy
<b>Discussion</b>		